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Towards the Republic/For the Sake of the Republic 《走向共和》

Introduction:

Released in 2003, the drama *Towards the Republic* 《走向共和》 maps out the major historical events that happened in China between the years of 1894 to 1924. They include 甲午戰爭 the First Sino-Japanese War (1894), 戊戌變法 the Hundred Days' Reform (1898), 義和團運動 the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901), 晚清改革 the Late Qing Reforms (1901-1911), and 辛亥革命 the Xinhai Revolution (1911).

The drama has 59 episodes in total, and the video clip featured below is from episode 37. In this episode, the major events depicted include the late Qing envoys' visits to the U.S. and to Japan. They were referred to as the 'Qing political study group' by the interpreter to the American president Roosevelt, as the Qing envoys' mission was to inspect the constitutional administration of these countries in preparation for the Qing's own reform later. These visits took place around the end of 1905. The video clip we are looking at here is framed between the two visits by the Qing ministers and portrays a passionate fundraising speech by Sun Yat-Sen or Sun Zhongshan (孫中山), founder of Kuomintang (KMT 國民黨), which became the ruling party of the Republic of China (1912-1949).

Sun, revered as the Father of the Republic of China 國父 and the Forerunner of the Revolution 革命先行者, worked tirelessly to proselytise the ideas of democracy and republican government in the late Qing era. He made countless speeches in China and abroad, in which he elaborated on his political ideas of the Three People Principles as well as calling for financial aid to support the revolutionary cause. There is an interesting anecdote of anachronism in the drama here. Sun's fundraising in the U.S. in fact did not happen until 1909, four years after the Qing ministers' visit to the country, but these events were amalgamated together in the drama to contrast the two campaigns by the Qing Imperial Court and Sun's KMT. Sun went to the U.S. twice in 1909 for fundraising. The first time, he made his plea to American politicians and dignitaries, but he did not have much success there. He soon realised that he needed to change his targeted audience. On his second visit, Sun focused his efforts on overseas Chinese who were patriotic and dedicated to supporting Sun's proposal for revolutionary changes to imperial China. They soon became his biggest benefactors. In this video clip, we will see how Sun managed to persuade his audiences in the United States.

Translation of selected words:

<i>to 03'57''</i>		<i>from 03'57''</i>	
滑稽	comical, farcical	空幻	lit. empty and fantasised; illusory, unrealisable
上當	to be fooled, to fall for a trick, to be swindled	立憲	constitutional, to legislate constitutions
林肯	Abraham Lincoln	僑胞	overseas Chinese
總綱	general outline, overall guiding principle	血汗錢	hard-earned money, money earned after shedding blood and sweat

清廷	the Qing Imperial Court	募捐	to fundraise
專制	autocracy	債卷	[finance] bond
故曰	Therefore we call it ---, Therefore one said --- (曰 yuē = 說)	俟	wait until (= 等待, 等到)
亦曰	It is also called ---, one also says ---	憑	on account of, by virtue of, through relying on, also 憑藉, 憑著
達官貴人	the powerful and the noble, dignitaries	本息	capital and interest (abbreviated form of 本金和利息)
舊金山	San Francisco	債權人	creditor, lender
同胞	compatriots, siblings [often with sentimental value]		

Script:

The words highlighted in blue are listed in the above Translations of Selected Words and the sentences highlighted in green are explained in the section Some Points.

五大臣來到了美國，羅斯福總統接見了他們，這只是個外交禮節罷了。可五大臣也談三民主義。這事兒很滑稽啊。我告訴你們，別上當！

一個，我翻譯的三民主義和我黨的三民主義有聯係，也有區別。我剛來美國的時候，我跟他們講三民主義，美國人聽不明白，後來，我就引用了林肯的三民主義。

我黨的三民主義，民族主義就是民有主義。天下者，天下人之天下，非一二人所可獨占。

民權主義就是民治主義。天下者，人人皆有治之之責，亦應負治之之責。

民生主義就是民享主義。天下既為人人所共有，那天下之利權，亦自當人人所共享。

我黨的主張千條萬條，三民主義是我黨主義之總綱。

那清廷的專制，是個什麼東西呢？普天之下，莫非王土。這不是民族主義，這是家族主義，一家一姓主義。故曰，專制。

民可使由之，不可使知之。這不是民治主義，這是治民主義。

國民從物質到精神，都永遠是奴隸。這種治民的主義，亦曰專制。

“朱門酒肉臭，路有凍死骨。”誰在享受呢？達官貴人。誰在受苦受難呢？國民哪。

這種奴役國民的主義，它更是專制。

一句話！我黨的三民主義之民，乃國民當家作主之民。而清廷所謂的民，不，我看不止是清廷，包括幾千年的封建專制，是一個永遠被奴役的民。

我黨的任務，便是以至公至正之三民主義去戰勝封建社會至歪至私的專制主義，去創建一個真正民主自由的共和國。

舊金山的同胞們，你們辛辛苦苦掙來的錢，是去支持那空幻的清廷立憲，還是支持我們，去推翻專制的封建社會，建立咱們自己的共和國。我真誠地希望你們好好想一想。當然，海外僑胞，背井離鄉，別妻離子，遠道他國，掙的都是血汗錢，尤其是舊金山的華僑同胞們，這裏，美國國土的每一寸鐵路，都侵染著一位華工的鮮血。每一根枕木下，都埋著一個華工的尸骨，我們黨不能白花你們的錢。

今天，我孫文到這兒，不是向你們募捐，我是請你們投資，給我們，給咱們自己的共和革命投資。這張債卷是10美元，俟革命成功之後，憑此債卷，還本息100元。我孫文說話算話，絕不戲言。大家購買此券，那就是我孫文的債權人。

Some points:

1. 五大臣來到了美國，羅斯福總統接見了他們，這只是個外交禮節罷了。

Lit. *Five big ministers came to the United States, president Roosevelt received and saw them, this is just a diplomatic etiquette and it's just that./The five Qing ministers came and the president received them. It is only for the sake of etiquette, nothing more.*

The five Qing ministers were 鎮國公載澤 the Defender Duke by Grace (a rank of nobility during the Qing dynasty) Zai Ze、戶部侍郎戴鴻慈 Minister of Revenue Dai Hongci、兵部侍郎徐世昌 Assistant Minister of Defence Xu Shichang、湖南巡撫端方 Governor of Hunan Duanfang、商部右丞邵英 Right Minister of Commerce Shao Ying. They were sent by the Qing Imperial Court to travel eastward (Japan) and westward (Europe and U.S.) in order to study foreign politics and find a good model for the Qing's later reforms.

罷了 means *that's all, nothing more*, and is commonly placed at the end of sentences collating with preceding adverbs such as 只、僅、不過。

2. 民族主義就是民有主義。天下者，天下人之天下，非一二人所可獨占。民權主義就是民主主義。天下者，人人皆有治之之責，亦應負治之之責。民生主義就是民享主義。天下既為人人所共有，那天下之利權，亦自當人人所共享。

Lit. *Ethnicism is just people-own (the country)-ism. (That) under the sky is what of the people under the sky, not one or two people can singly occupy. People's right-ism is just people-govern-ism. (That) under the sky, everyone has a govern it responsibility, also should shoulder/back a govern it responsibility. Democracy-ism is just people-enjoy-ism. (That) under the sky since is by every one together owned, then (that) under the sky's benefit and right, also naturally should be by everyone together enjoyed. /The principle of nationalism is exactly what President Lincoln meant by 'of the people'. The nation is the people's nation. It should not be owned by the autocratic few. The principle of the people's right to govern, that is democracy, is the same as 'by the people' in Lincoln's speech. Every citizen of the nation has the responsibility to manage it, and every citizen should be obliged to do so. The principle of the people's livelihood corresponds with 'for the people' as Lincoln said. If we already agree that the nation is owned by every citizen, then the nation's given benefits and rights must be enjoyed by its citizens.*

In 1863, during his Gettysburg speech that laid out America's purpose, Abraham Lincoln famously said, *'this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people,*

by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth'. Sun has astutely translated the phrases 'of the people' as 民有主義 *the principle that the people own*, 'by the people' as 民治主義 *the principle that the people govern* and 'for the people' as 民享主義 *the principle that the people enjoy*. In doing so, Sun is able to make an analogy for his own ideological framework The Three Principles of the People 三民主義, namely 民族主義 *nationalism*、民權主義 *democracy* and 民生主義 *welfarism*, making it immediately understandable and accessible to his target audience of overseas Chinese living in the United States. The idea to advocate for the people as the foundation of the nation has long existed in Chinese philosophy. For example, in the Classic of History - the Song of the Five Sons 《尚書·五子之歌》, it states 民惟邦本, 本固邦寧 *Only people are the foundation of the nation, when the foundation is consolidated, the nation is in peace*.

者 in 天下者, 天下人之天下 is a function word here that follows the subject of the sentence. It acts like the copula *to be* to introduce information or the speaker's opinion about the subject. It often goes with 也 at the end of the sentence, e.g., 民者, 君之本也 (from Guliang Zhuan 《穀梁傳》 722-481 BCE) *people are the foundation of the lordship*.

所 is also a function word in these sentences 非一二人所可獨占, 天下既為人人所共有 and 亦自當人人所共享. It links the verb with its agent, as 一二人 is doing the action of 獨占, 人人 is doing the action of 共有, and 人人 is doing the action of 共享. In these constructions 所 is placed in between agent and verb to indicate the subject-verb relation, or for rhythmic purposes. It is also often used to indicate attributive clauses, such as in the expression 己所不欲勿施於人 Lit. *(what) one does not desire oneself should not be applied onto others/Do unto others as you would have them do unto you*. Here, 己所不欲 could be written in full as 己所不欲之事 *the things that one does not want oneself*; the function of 所 is to link the agent and its action in an attributive/modifying clause.

3. 普天之下, 莫非王土。這不是民族主義, 這是家族主義, 一家一姓主義。
Lit. *Under the whole sky, nowhere is not the king's soil. This is not ethnicism, this is family/clan-ism, one-family-one-surname-ism. /It is said that the emperor owns everything, even every inch of land. This is not nationalism where the people own the nation. This is monarchism, governance by one family of the same surname only.*

4. 民可使由之, 不可使知之。這不是民治主義, 這是治民主義。
Lit. *People can cause follow it, cannot cause know it. This is not people-govern-ism, this is govern-people-ism. /The imperial system makes the people follow their orders but never gives them proper knowledge. This is not letting the people rule, but dominating and controlling them.*

民可使由之, 不可使知之 is quoted from the Analects 《論語》. We use the common interpretation of the quote here with the context in mind. However, what Confucius really meant has been widely debated not just because of the semantics of individual words, but also because of where the punctuations are placed in the sentence. As we know, classical Chinese lacks punctuations. If the sentence is read 民可, 使由之, 不可, 使知之, the meaning could be *if people are able, let them make their own decision, if they are not, educate them or if people can follow rules, let them be, if they cannot, guide them*.

The following examples illustrate some other possibilities for segmenting the sentence:

民可使, 由之, 不可, 使知之。 *If people can be ordered, let them be, if not, let them learn.*

民可使，由之不可，使知之。*People can be made to follow, we must not let them be but instruct them.*

民可使由之？不可，使知之。*Can people be set free to make their own decision? No, we must educate them.*

By using 民治主義 and 治民主義, Sun skilfully negotiates the syntactic features of the language with its rhetoric bearings, and hence delivers his message in a succinct, persuasive and memorable way. As a noun does not change its form according to its grammatical case in Chinese, its position in relation to the verb becomes important in how it affects how the audience understands information and in particular the noun's emphasised value. Hence in the phrase 民治 *people rule/democracy*, 民 is superior because of its position preceding the verb, while in 治民 *rule people*, 民 is inferior because it follows the verb. By toying with two expressions that use the exact same words in the same sentence, Sun's message becomes more eloquent and evocative to his audience.

5. 朱門酒肉臭，路有凍死骨。

Lit. *Red door alcohol meat stink, road has frozen death bone/Feasts are served and wasted inside the mansion's gate, out by the road are the bones of the frozen dead.*

This couplet is from Du Fu's poem *Song of My Thoughts on the Journey to Fengxian from the Capital* 杜甫《自京赴奉先詠懷五百字》. Venerated as the Saint of Poetry 詩聖, Du Fu is one of the most respected poets in Chinese literary history. In 2020, BBC released a documentary titled Du Fu: China's Greatest Poet.

Du Fu's poetry often has the power to evoke strong, poignant and empathetic sentiments from its audience as it masterly portrays the suffering of the common people in desperate times and conveys the deeply traumatised emotions of the poet himself. Here, Sun quotes Du Fu's well-known verse to neatly epitomise the fatal flaws of a feudalism system, and the impact of his speech is both immediate and compelling.

6. 我黨的任務，便是以至公至正之三民主義去戰勝封建社會至歪至私的專制主義，去創建一個真正民主自由的共和國。

Lit. *My party's task, then is using the three people-ism that reaches for the public and to the right to win over feudal society's autocracy-ism that reaches to the askew and for the selfish, to create and build a real democratic free country of republican/Hence, our party's mission is to defeat the most wrong and selfish autocratic system of the feudal society with the Three Principles of the People which are the most upright and altruistic, so as to found a truly democratic and free republic.*

Sun uses antithesis as a rhetorical device here: 至公至正 v.s. 至歪至私. 公 is antonymic to 私, just as 正 is to 歪. 至 here means *the most, or reaching the far end point*. Antithesis is an effective device in Chinese literature and speech to emphasise the artfulness and expressiveness of the writer's proposition, and the prosodic impact and evoked cultural refinement can make a strong impression on audiences. By using antithesis here, Sun makes a formidable argument that one system is undoubtedly the best cause to support, whereas by contrast the other is doomed to fail.

7. 美國國土的每一寸鐵路，都侵染著一位華工的鮮血。每一根枕木下，都埋著一個華工的尸骨，我們黨不能白花你們的錢。

Lit. *American land's every inch railway, all infected a Chinese worker's blood. Under every sleeper, all burying a Chinese worker's corpse, our party cannot in vain spend your money./Every inch of railway*

on American soil has the blood of a Chinese worker on it. Every railway sleeper has the corpse of a Chinese worker buried underneath. We, the party, will not waste a penny of your money.

Sun is likely referring to the construction of the transcontinental railroad in the west of the United States, which took place between 1863 and 1869. The large majority of the construction labourers were Chinese immigrants. Somewhere between roughly 15,000 and 20,000 Chinese immigrants worked tirelessly in treacherous and gruelling conditions, and it is estimated that over 1000 of them lost their lives because of accidents and disasters at work. To make matters worse, these Chinese immigrants were paid far less than their local counterparts, and were only offered tents to live in, rather than the rail wagons that were offered to the other white workers.

Sun's fundraising took place about forty years after the construction of the railroad. His reference to this story here testifies to his acknowledgment and appreciation that every penny donated to his party's cause by the Chinese community in the United States is hard-earned with blood, sweat and tears. Sun attempts earnestly to convince his audience and gain their trust, with the implication here being that the new world Sun will create with ideal system promises not only economic stability but also the eradication of the low social status and inequality that the immigrants have unfairly suffered in their times.

8. 我孫文說話算話，絕不戲言。

Lit. *I Sun Wen talk count what's said, absolutely no joke words./I, Sun Wen, stand by my promise, in all utmost sincerity.*

Sun Wen 孫文 is Sun's actual name given at birth, whereas Sun Yat-sen 孫逸仙 is a pseudonym that Sun decided to name himself. The story goes that Sun chosen the word 日新, meaning *refresh/renew every day*, as his Christian name from a sentence in the Book of Great Learning 《禮記·大學》: “苟日新, 日日新, 又日新” *If we can refresh our minds to rid the old and gain the new, we must do it every day and another day.* It was however recorded as 逸仙 because it is pronounced very similarly to 日新, and this alternative written form has been used instead ever since. Sun Zhongshan 孫中山, the name commonly used in mainland China and Taiwan, is an alias which Sun once used in Japan.

說話算話 is an idiomatic phrase meaning to be *as good as one's word*. 算 is the verb here which has the common meaning of *to count* and *to plan*. Here we can understand the phrase as meaning *what is being said are counted as my words*.

In 戲言, 戲 here means *to mock* and *to tease*.