

## CHINA

### Sun Yat Sen's Land Policy

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*From an article appearing in the "Nineteenth Century,"  
May, 1927*

"The land question is beginning to appear in China, owing to the enormous increase in land values in the neighbourhood of foreign settlements. For instance, the value of land in the neighbourhood of Shanghai and of Canton has increased, ten thousandfold in the past sixty years. Sun tells the story of a Cantonese who, in a fit of drunkenness, entered an auction mart and bought a piece of land for 300 dollars. The next morning he had forgotten the transaction, and when the deed of sale was brought to him, he was forced to ruin himself in order to raise the money. But in ten years' time the value of the property had increased to such an extent that this drunkard found himself a millionaire, the richest man in Kwangtung.

"The value of the land is increased by the fact of other people coming to live and carry on business in the neighbourhood. The increase of wealth is produced by the community, and not by the individual; consequently it ought to belong to the community. In order to remedy this evil, Dr Sun proposes a tax of 1 per cent upon all land. The value of the land is to be declared by the owner himself and the State is to have the option of purchase. By this means the landowner will be compelled to quote a fair price for his property; for if he quotes too high he will be taxed proportionately; if he quotes too low the State may demand to purchase his land at his own price. After this Sun would confiscate to the State any subsequent increase in value. Thus the profits derived from social progress and commercial enterprise will be reaped by the community instead of by private individuals. For the revenue thus collected by the State will enable it to dispense with all other forms of taxation. There will be no rates for water and electricity, and no levies to pay for repairing roads and policing. This settlement of the land question will solve one-half of the problem of 'The People's Livelihood.' It should be added, however, that improvements made by the landowner himself will be exempt from taxation. Such improvements may consist in buildings, trees, embankments, drains. . . ."

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