REPORT

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
"THE ROLE OF THE REPUBLICAN PERIOD IN TWENTIETH CENTURY CHINA:
REFLECTIONS AND RECONSIDERATIONS"
Venice, June 30 - July 3, 1999

The International Conference held in Venice was a particularly suitable occasion for discussions at the international level on new paths concerning the research on the Republican period. A number of scholars deeply involved in the domain have taken part in it.

Conference sessions started on July 1st at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, opened by the official addresses from Prof. Guido SAMARANI (Program Chair of the Conference - Department of East Asian Studies at the Ca' Foscari University of Venice, and member of the Board of the Marco Polo Centre for Asian Studies), Prof. Alfredo CADONNA (Fondazione Giorgio Cini - Istituto Venezia e l'Oriente), and Prof. Ka-che YIP (President of the Historical Society for 20th Century China). Dr. Chun-tu HSUEH (President of the Huang Hsing Foundation - USA) also gave a short address on the relevance of the Republican period.

The keynote lecture on "China's Republican Century" has been held by Prof. William C. KIRBY (Harvard University) who sketched the role of institutional, social and cultural changes occurred during the Republican period in the perspective of China's modernization process.

Session 1: "Historiographical Issues".
Prof. ZHANG Xianwen (Nanjing University) turned his attention to historiography in the People's Republic of China, outlining its development and the future perspectives; Prof. YAMADA Tatsuo (Keio University) dealt with politics in the 20th Century China, looking for patterns of continuity underlying the events; Prof. Axel SCHNEIDER (Heidelberg University) proposed a discussion on Chinese conservatism from the broader perspective of the meaning of "culture" and historical change in 20th century China.
Dr. Hsueh Chun-tu (Huang Hsing Foundation - USA) illustrated the role of Huang Hsing in the 1911 Revolution, often neglected for Sun Yat-sen; Prof. Suzanne Weigelin-Schwiedrzik (Heidelberg University) used the 1911 Chinese press editorials to analyse the construction of the meaning of "revolution"; Prof. Stephen Averill (Michigan State University) underlined the importance of intellectuals and cadres' social background in the Communist revolution, proposing a new approach in the shift from urban to rural setting; Dr. Antonia Finnane (University of Melbourne) analysed the symbolic field of clothing culture showing the occurring rupture between the Republic of China and the People's Republic.

Session 2: "The Political and Military Dimension".

Dr. Vitaly Kozyrev (Moscow State University) presented an analysis of the GMD efforts in the Nanjing Decade to build new power relations, confronting itself both with provincial military powers, at the regional level, and local traditional centers of power, at the county level; Prof. John Fitzgerald (La Trobe University) proposed a re-assessment of Republican China characterised as a "militarized society" analysing the attempts of civil authorities to re-gain control of local militia in Guangdong; Prof. Chen Hongmin (Nanjing University), through newly founded Hu Hanmin's correspondence, illustrated different elements of political conflict between Jiang Jieshi and Hu Hanmin itself; Prof. Margherita Zanasi (Texas University at Austin) proposed a reappraisal of the role of the GMD left wing in political life during the Nanjing decade; Prof. Roger Jeans (Washington and Lee University) examined the fate of the Third Force Movement after 1949, with a particular attention to that of Zhang Junmai (Carsun Chang).

Dr. Thomas Kampen (Leeds University) introduced his research on the origins and development of PCC secret services during the 1930s; Prof. ZENG Yeying (Institute of Modern History of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences - Beijing) took the personal papers of Jiang Jieshi's archives in Taiwan as a starting point to discuss the relevance of the military strategy of Jiang Jieshi in fighting the Gui Clique; Prof. Diana Larry (University of British Columbia) outlined the military skills of two republican generals, Bai Chongxi and Cai Tingkai, and the difficulties met by the Nationalists to fully utilize their abilities in the war against Japan and to resist the PLA; Prof. Yu Shen (Indiana University Southeast) attempted to catch the change of