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**“Our Final Awakening”**

by Chen Duxiu (written in 1916)

We, having been living in one corner of the world for several decades, must ask

ourselves what is the level of our national strength and our civilization. This is the “final

awakening” of which I speak. To put it another way, if we open our eyes and take a hard look at the situation within our country and abroad, what place does our country and our people occupy, and what actions should we take?

Our task today can be said to be the intense combat between the old and the modern

currents of thought. Those with **shallow** views all expect this to be our final awakening, without understanding how difficult it is to put [constitutional government] into practice. … There is no difference between the **shameful disgrace** of **submissiveness** of men of ancient times hoping that **sage** rulers and wise ministers will practice **benevolent** government and present day men hoping that **dignitaries** and influential elders will build a constitutional republic.

Why should I reject the desires of dignitaries and influential elders, who are after all a part of the people, to build a constitutional republic? Because a constitutional republic cannot be conferred by the government, cannot be maintained by one party or one group, and certainly cannot be carried on the backs of a few dignitaries and influential elders. A constitutional republic which does not derive from the conscious realization and voluntary action of the majority of the people is a **bogus** republic and bogus constitutionalism.

<http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/china/chen_duxiu_final_awakening.pdf>

Questions to answer:

1. What do you think the author meant at the beginning of the passage when he said “We’ve been living in one corner of the world for several decades?”

2. What conclusions can you make about the author’s attitude toward traditional Chinese culture? You may cite specific statements from the passage to support your answer.

3. In this passage, the author does not provide specific examples or events that happened in China’s history that made him feel so strongly about the path they were on as a country. **Based on past cultures that we have already studied in class, what do you think *might* have happened in China’s history that caused Chen (the author) to feel it was time for a change?** Please explain your thinking. (You may go onto the back if necessary.)