

History of corruption in china



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Many scholars has only concerned with studying corruption by restricting them to recent cases, or cases in the modern history. But with studying corruption in China, it is necessary to know that corruption has been widespread in the traditional China since the beginning of the imperial era. The long- term nature of corruption can be illustrated with several examples in China. Corruption in China, has been recorded as early as the 3rd century B. C. during the Qin dynasty, which the penal code noted the details of punishments for corruption (Lambsdorff, Taube & Schramm 2005). Due to the Chinese strong historical background of corruption, the main contributions were low salaries of government officials and poverty in most families, as well as the environments in which corruption has existed for many years in all dynasties of China (Csuka 2012). The most serious corruption was posed in Qing dynasty which was the last dynasty in China. In Qing dynasty during the 1800s, one of the most notorious corrupt government officials was He Shen, the prime minister of Emperor Qianlong (Guy, 2010). He was the most power leader and exerted power second only to the Emperors Qianlong. He used to be granted appointments in several top ranking positions of Qing's authority because he was a favorite of Emperor Qianlong (McMahon 2008). He Shen was so called a master of corruption in the Chinese history. In the Qing system, the capital official provided the top positions than other territorial officials, and therefore, most people were under suspicion of seek opportunities and to fill those roles in the capital. And some capital officials took opportunities to hire people that caused capital officials appointed to wealthy job applicants only if they could provide benefits to them. Guy (2010) thinks that it is inevitable that the Qing

dynasty fostered corruption. Based on two decades in office, He Shen could openly defraud and embezzle other officials to gain huge amounts of money and various of gifts. In his house was found 800 million taels of silver which could be expensed for ten years of government revenue (Csuka 2012). Due to the Qing dynasty's government structure and being favored by the Emperor, He Shen, therefore, became the most famous corrupt official in China's history.

Corruption causes the Failure of Nationalist (Kuomintang) Party

Corruption has a long- term existence in China, which has seriously disordered China's politics and society in modern history, and has even caused the collapse of a state. The first political party in China, the Kuomintang (KMT), had widespread corruption since the 1930s, and serious official corruption ruined the party during the civil war (Liu 2008). The Kuomintang, also known as the Chinese Nationalist Party, was founded by Sun Yet Sen in 1895. The ideology of the Kuomintang was the " Three Principles of the People", which was advocated by Sun Yat Sen, but in practice the " Three Principles of the People" has never been implemented in China (Lyon 1968). The Kuomintang government used to have the greatest potential under the leadership of Sun Yat- Sen, who was the initial democratic revolutionary leader in Chinese history. Sun Yat- Sen has dedicated to the democratic revolution for over thirty years in order to overthrow the imperial dynasty and establish a democratic state. However, the short- lived democracy in China was ended by power struggles, and they consequently caused the failure of the Kuomintang movement. There were some external and internal factors which caused the failure of the KMT

movement. Political corruption and economic mismanagement were the internal factors making the KMT party vulnerable to the Chinese Communist Party's threat. Under the leading of Chiang Kai-Shank, the KMT and China's economy were dominated by him and his family members. After the death of Sun Yat-Sen in 1925, the military leader was Chiang Kai-shek and he controlled the real military power, the economic power, and the political power, according to the United States President Truman's writing, "The Chiangs, the Kungs, and the Soongs were all thieves." (Bagby 1992, P. 65) Some military aid, sponsored by the United States, was hoarded by the KMT, and Chiang Kai Shank and his family took \$ 750 million in the United States aid during the Second Sino- Japanese War (Bagby 1992). Corruption of Chiang's family was not a secret at that time, and even the United States President Truman recognized how Chiang and his family had appropriated military aid and government funds for their private use during his office. In fact, Chiang Kai Shank's madame, Soong Mei- Ling and her family, the Kung family acted in collusion to control the entire Chinese economy and finances. Kung Hsiang- Hsi, was Soong Mei- Ling's brother- in- law, and was believed to be the richest person in China during the 1940s. He used to hold some executive positions of the KMT, such as, Minister of Industry, Minister of Finance and Governor of the Central Bank of China (" U. S. at War: The Mission of Daddy Kung" 1944; " China: Balance or Bust" 1993). By holding the main economic and financial positions, the well relations between the Kung and Chiang families could have an easy opportunity to appropriate government money easily. The United States government was concerned about Chiang and his family's corruption during the Chinese Civil War. Therefore the United States government gave limited aid to KMT

government, and caused the KMT armies to be defeated by Mao Zedong's the People's Liberation Army in 1949 (Haynes 2000). After the military victories, the leader of the Chinese Communist Party, Mao Zedong established the People's Republic of China, and Chiang Kai-Shek and his military fled to Taiwan which was no longer able to retake mainland China. According to Chiang Kai-Shek's diary in June 1948, he wrote that the failure of the Kuomintang was not by reason of external military invasion, but by reason of desegregation and rot from within (Bethell 2007). Chiang Kai-Shek was a politician and a military leader, and he knew, by reasons of the integrity, why a stronger military failed when faced with Mao Zhen-Dong's a weaken army. It was that corruption causes the incompetency of an economy together with political corruption and the government's reputation were the main reasons that were constantly in effect, and ultimately lost the leadership in mainland China.