Sun Yat-sen’s political ideas were an action-orientated system of belief also attractive to other Third World countries seeking to throw off imperial domination. They were particularly suitable because Sun Yat-sen’s theory did not assume developed political and economic individualism, provided for lack of experience of democracy, and endeavoured to introduce a socialist system that was not Marxist/Leninist and would therefore have a wider appeal. Sun’s economic theories faced the problem of modernising without totally Westernising. Three Third World countries whose revolutionary leaders were influenced by Sun Yat-sen were Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines.

**Indonesia**

In his famous Pantja Sila speech of 1945, President Sukarno of Indonesia explicitly acknowledges admiration for Sun Yat-sen. His very title ‘Five Principles’ (Pantja Sila) possibly shows the influence of Sun’s ‘Three Principles’ which in turn slightly echoed Abraham Lincoln’s definition of democracy and the French Revolution watchwords. In the Pantja Sila, Sukarno asserted that:

> If the whole Chinese considered Dr. Sun Yat-sen their preceptor, be sure that Bung Karno also, an Indonesian, with uttermost respect will feel grateful to Dr. Sun Yat-sen until he lies in the grave.

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A. Wells, *The Political Thought of Sun Yat-sen*  
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Throughout the Pantja Sila, Sukarno referred with respect to Sun Yat-sen which could show he was deeply influenced by Sun’s thought. However, it could be that Sukarno wanted to win support from the wealthy Chinese population in Indonesia, amongst which there was much admiration for Sun Yat-sen. At the beginning of the twentieth century the Chinese in the Indies had set up organisations, under the cover of reading clubs, supporting Sun’s revolutionary movement to overthrow the Manchus.2

Undoubtedly Sukarno did admire Sun Yat-sen’s teachings. However, despite Sukarno’s claims, the latter’s Five Principles did differ from Sun’s Three Principles, a difference that was partly the result of different cultural, geographical and economical problems.

Sukarno’s Five Principles were Nationalism, Internationalism, Democracy, Social Justice and Belief in God. Sukarno, a Moslem, emphasised the importance of religious belief which did not need to be of an Islamic nature. Sun Yat-sen was quiet on religious belief in China. This is unsurprising since China has never been an ecclesiastically organised society. As stated elsewhere, although a Christian himself, Sun Yat-sen belonged to a minority religion in China and he himself in any case was an unconventional Christian. Sukarno, on the other hand, believed that religious belief was necessary for the ethical life of the Indonesian people. Sun Yat-sen, however, coming from a different culture was aware that Confucian ethical teaching made a humanistic moral education possible. Thus Sun emphasised what he felt were the most important values in the Confucian tradition. Chiang Kai-shek elaborated on this in his New Life Movement which, however, had little influence on the moral fibre of the Chinese nation. Nevertheless, both leaders felt there was a need for moral teaching. Sukarno, in a society which was not essentially based on Confucian humanism, believed that Indonesian ethical life must be founded on monotheism, in which each religion should respect the other. In the Pantja Sila, Sukarno declared that his fifth principle was that Indonesian independence should be based on belief in the One Supreme God:

Not only should the Indonesian people believe in God, but every Indonesian should believe in his own god... the Indonesian state shall be a state where every person can worship his god as he likes. The whole of the people should worship God in a cultured way, that is, without religious egoism and the state of Indonesia should be a state which has a belief in God.3