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THE SEARCH FOR MODERN CHINA

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FOR MY STUDENTS

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Preface

No country, over the past few centuries, has been free of turmoil and tragedy. It is as if there were a restlessness and a capacity for violence at the center of the human spirit that can never be contained, so that no society can achieve a perfect tranquility. Yet in every country, too, humans have shown a love of beauty, a passion for intellectual adventure, a gentleness, an exuberant sensuality, and a yearning for justice that have cut across the darkness and filled their world with light. They have struggled constantly to understand the world, to protect themselves from its ravages, to organize it more effectively, and to make it a place in which their children might live without hunger or fear.

The history of China is as rich and strange as that of any country on earth, and its destiny as a nation is now entwined with all others in the search for scarce resources, the exchange of goods, and the expansion of knowledge. Yet for a long time China was a completely unknown quantity to those living in the West, and even today seems set apart by differences of language, custom, and attitude. Now that China has over 1 billion people within its borders, it suffers internal pressures that the rest of us can only guess at; and the swings of its political life, the switches in its cultural moods, the lurches in its economy, the fact that its stated hostility to foreign influences is so often accompanied by the flashes of a welcoming smile, all combine to keep us in a state of bewilderment as to China's real nature.

There is no easy way to understand China, any more than there is an easy way to understand any culture, or even to understand ourselves. But the attempt is worth making, for China's story is an astonishing one and has much to teach us. It is the contention of this book that in trying to

understand China today we need to know about China in the past; but how far back we carry that search remains, in a sense, the central question. China's history is enormously long; indeed no other society has maintained its vitality or kept so meticulous a record of its own doings over such a long span—close to four thousand years—as has China. One can plunge into that record at any point and find events, personalities, moods that appear to echo the present in haunting ways.

My narrative begins around the year 1600 because it is only by starting at this time that I feel we can get a full sense of how China's current problems have arisen, and of what resources—intellectual, economic, and emotional—the Chinese can call upon to solve them. In entitling this story *The Search for Modern China* I wish to emphasize a number of themes.

First, both China's rulers and Chinese critics of those rulers have sought repeatedly over this long time span to formulate strategies that would strengthen their country's borders, streamline bureaucratic institutions, make the most of their own resources so as to keep free from foreign interference, and sharpen the rigor of the intellectual tools needed to analyze the efficacy and the morality of political actions.

Second, even though it was not necessarily on any parallel "track" to the developing Western powers or to Japan, China was constantly adapting and changing in important ways, even as it was struggling to preserve certain immutable values. Much of the history we will be examining here is made up of overlapping cycles of collapse and reconsolidation, of revolution and evolution, of conquest and movements for progress.

Third, this remains a book about an ongoing search rather than about the conclusion of a search. I understand a "modern" nation to be one that is both integrated and receptive, fairly sure of its own identity yet able to join others on equal terms in the quest for new markets, new technologies, new ideas. If it is used in this open sense, we should have no difficulty in seeing "modern" as a concept that shifts with the times as human life unfolds, instead of simply relegating the sense of "modern" to our own contemporary world while consigning the past to the "traditional" and the future to the "postmodern." I like to think that there were modern countries—in the above sense—in A.D. 1600 or earlier, as at any moment in the centuries thereafter. Yet at no time in that span, nor at the end of the twentieth century, has China been convincingly one of them.

Fourth, I hope that the focus on the "search" for modern China as an ongoing act will make it clear how much China's history illuminates its present. China's Communist government can claim, with validity, revolutionary credentials. But it is also a giant bureaucracy whose leaders insist on their right, in the name of a higher truth, to define people's aspirations

in virtually all spheres of life. So it was in the late Ming and early Qing states of the seventeenth century. In relating to the outside world, China can also rightfully claim it is charting its own course. But in attempting to adapt certain aspects of advanced foreign technologies to solve its own pressing needs while preserving its people from corrupting influences, it is re-exploring ground surveyed with care in the nineteenth century. Governing 1 billion citizens inside a single political entity is also something no state has attempted before. But it was in the eighteenth century that China's population pressures first became acute; and the effects of these growing numbers on the land, the economy, and the administration of civil society can be observed in detail from that time on.

The presence of the past can also be seen in many other areas. The customs and practices that ensured the low social and economic status of women, the educational methods that were used to instill in children certain patterns of generational deference and concepts of obligation, the power of the family as an organizational unit, the ability of certain people within local communities to gain and preserve an abusive level of control—all of these aspects of Chinese society and culture can be seen in various forms from 1600 onward. So can the aesthetic aspirations and linguistic innovations in art and literature, the probing scrutiny of administrative structures and procedures, all of which have brought deep changes to China and have endured to the present time.

By starting our story at the end of the sixteenth century, too, we can achieve one other goal. We can see how often the Chinese people, operating in difficult or even desperate circumstances, seized their own fate and threw themselves against the power of the state. We can see how in 1644, again in 1911, and yet again in 1949, disillusion with the present and a certain nostalgia for the past could combine with a passionate hope for the future to bring the old order crashing down, opening the way for an uncertain passage to the new. And armed with knowledge of those earlier struggles, we can gain a sharper understanding of the forces now confronting each other inside China, and of the chances for or against the troubled nation at last claiming its place in a modern world.

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In the years that were spent writing *The Search for Modern China* I have incurred countless debts of gratitude. My deepest is to my Norton editor Steven Forman, who was my partner throughout the entire enterprise, cajoling, exhorting, encouraging and occasionally, in moments of greatest need, politely threatening. He not only read every fragment of draft at every stage, with bewildering speed and thoroughness, but worked on picture selection and captions, on the maps, on details of rights acquisition, and on every detail of placement and design. But Steven Forman also always acknowledged the help of those who helped him, as I too do here: Rachel Lee for locating and securing illustrations, Roberta Flechner for careful work on the art layout, Carol Flechner for tough copy editing, Wang Lianwu for help with correspondence and manuscript material in Chinese, David Lindroth for cartography of elegance and clarity, Antonina Krass and Hugh O'Neill for their impeccable design sense, and Roy Tedoff for efficiently producing the whole.

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This book was written, in just about equal parts, either in Yale's Cross Campus Library, or in Naples Pizza on Wall Street, New Haven. I would like to thank the entire staffs of those two admirable establishments for providing two complementary worlds in which to mull over, and then to pen, this record of the past four hundred years of China's history.

JDS
Naples and CCL
October 30, 1989

The Use of Pinyin

The pinyin system for romanizing Chinese has its origins in a system of romanization developed in Soviet east Asia in the early 1930s and employed later that decade in parts of China. With some modifications, pinyin itself was introduced by the Chinese in the 1950s. It is now the official romanization system in the People's Republic of China, has been adopted by the United Nations and other world agencies, and has become the system most commonly used in scholarship and journalism, largely supplanting the older Wade-Giles system. The pinyin system is pronounced as it looks, in most cases, the most important exceptions being the pinyin "c," pronounced like "ts," and the "q," which is pronounced like "ch." In some cases where the consonant break is unclear, an apostrophe is used to aid in pronunciation: hence the cities of Xi'an and Yan'an (to distinguish them from xian or yanan) or the name Hong Ren'gan (not reng-an).

The Search for Modern China uses pinyin romanization throughout, with some exceptions for place names and personal names that are long familiar in the West or difficult to recognize in pinyin. Thus Peking and Canton are retained in preference to Beijing and Guangzhou, and Chiang Kai-shek is used rather than Jiang Jieshi.

There follows a table of conversions between pinyin and Wade-Giles romanizations. The index to this book includes the Wade-Giles equivalents for all personal names entered there. Most personal names entered in the Glossary are followed by their pronunciations.

Pinyin to Wade-Giles*

Pinyin	*Wade-Giles*
a	a
ai	ai
an	an
ang	ang
ao	ao
ba	pa
bai	pai
ban	pan
bang	pang
bao	pao
bei	pei
ben	pen
beng	peng
bi	pi
bian	pien
biao	piao
bie	pieh
bin	pin
bing	ping
bo	po
bou	pou
bu	pu
ca	ts'a
cai	ts'ai
can	ts'an
cang	ts'ang
cao	ts'ao
ce	ts'e
cen	ts'en
ceng	ts'eng
cha	ch'a
chai	ch'ai
chan	ch'an
chang	ch'ang
chao	ch'ao
che	ch'e
chen	ch'en
cheng	ch'eng
chi	ch'ih
chong	ch'ung
chou	ch'ou
chu	ch'u
chua	ch'ua
chuai	ch'uai
chuan	ch'uan
chuang	ch'uang
chui	ch'ui
chun	ch'un
chuo	ch'o
ci	tz'u
cong	ts'ung
cou	ts'ou
cu	ts'u
cuan	ts'uan
cui	ts'ui
cun	ts'un
cuo	ts'o
da	ta
dai	tai
dan	tan
dang	tang
dao	tao
de	te
deng	teng
di	ti
dian	tien
diao	tiao
die	tieh
ding	ting
diu	tiu
dong	tung
dou	tou
du	tu
duan	tuan
dui	tui
dun	tun
duo	to
e	o
en	en
er	erh
fa	fa
fan	fan
fang	fang
fei	fei
fen	fen
feng	feng
fo	fo
fou	fou
fu	fu
ga	ka
gai	kai
gan	kan
gang	kang
gao	kao
ge	ko
gei	kei
gen	ken
geng	keng
gong	kung
gou	kou
gu	ku
gua	kua
guai	kuai
guan	kuan
guang	kuang
gui	kuei
gun	kun
guo	kuo
ha	ha
hai	hai
han	han
hang	hang
hao	hao
he	ho
hei	hei
hen	hen
heng	heng
hong	hung
hou	hou
hu	hu
hua	hua
huai	huai
huan	huan
huang	huang
hui	hui
hun	hun
huo	huo
ji	chi
jia	chia
jiah	chien
jiang	chiang
jiao	chiao
jie	chieh
jin	chin
jing	ching
jiong	chiung
jiu	chiu
ju	chü
juan	chüan
jue	chüeh
jun	chün
ka	k'a
kai	k'ai
kan	k'an
kang	k'ang
kao	k'ao
ke	k'o
kei	k'ei
ken	k'en
keng	k'eng
kong	k'ung
kou	k'ou
ku	k'u
kua	k'ua
kuai	k'uai
kuan	k'uan
kuang	k'uang
kui	k'uei
kun	k'un
kuo	k'uo
la	la
lai	lai
lan	lan
lang	lang
lao	lao
le	le
lei	lei
leng	leng
li	li
lia	lia
lian	lien
liang	liang
liao	liao
lie	lieh
lin	lin
ling	ling
liu	liu
long	lung
lou	lou
lu	lu
lü	lü
luan	luan
lüan	lüan
lüe	lüeh
lun	lun
luo	lo
ma	ma
mai	mai
man	man
mang	mang
mao	mao
mei	mei
men	men
meng	meng
mi	mi
mian	mien

*From *People's Republic of China: Administrative Atlas* (Washington, D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency, 1975), pp. 46–47.

Pinyin	*Wade-Giles*
miao	miao
mie	mieh
min	min
ming	ming
miu	miu
mo	mo
mou	mou
mu	mu
na	na
nai	nai
nan	nan
nang	nang
nao	nao
nei	nei
nen	nen
neng	neng
ni	ni
nian	nien
niang	niang
niao	niao
nie	nieh
nin	nin
ning	ning
niu	niu
nong	nung
nou	nou
nu	nu
nü	nü
nuan	nuan
nüe	nüeh
nuo	no
ou	ou
pa	p'a
pai	p'ai
pan	p'an
pang	p'ang
pao	p'ao
pei	p'ei
pen	p'en
peng	p'eng
pi	p'i
pian	p'ien
piao	p'iao
pie	p'ieh
pin	p'in
ping	p'ing
po	p'o
pou	p'ou
pu	p'u
qi	ch'i
qia	ch'ia
qian	ch'ien
qiang	ch'iang
qiao	ch'iao
qie	ch'ieh
qin	ch'in
qing	ch'ing
qiong	ch'iung
qiu	ch'iu
qu	ch'ü
quan	ch'üan
que	ch'üeh
qun	ch'ün
ran	jan
rang	jang
rao	jao
re	je
ren	jen
reng	jeng
ri	jih
rong	jung
rou	jou
ru	ju
ruan	juan
rui	jui
run	jun
ruo	jo
sa	sa
sai	sai
san	san
sang	sang
sao	sao
se	se
sen	sen
seng	seng
sha	sha
shai	shai
shan	shan
shang	shang
shao	shao
she	she
shen	shen
sheng	sheng
shi	shih
shou	shou
shu	shu
shua	shua
shuai	shuai
shuan	shuan
shuang	shuang
shui	shui
shun	shun
shuo	shuo
si	ssu
song	sung
sou	sou
su	su
suan	suan
sui	sui
sun	sun
suo	so
ta	t'a
tai	t'ai
tan	t'an
tang	t'ang
tao	t'ao
te	t'e
teng	t'eng
ti	t'i
tian	t'ien
tiao	t'iao
tie	t'ieh
ting	t'ing
tong	t'ung
tou	t'ou
tu	t'u
tuan	t'uan
tui	t'ui
tun	t'un
tuo	t'o
wa	wa
wai	wai
wan	wan
wang	wang
wei	wei
wen	wen
weng	weng
wo	wo
wu	wu
xi	hsi
xia	hsia
xian	hsien
xiang	hsiang
xiao	hsiao
xie	hsieh
xin	hsin
xing	hsing
xiong	hsiung
xiu	hsiu
xu	hsü
xuan	hsüan
xue	hsüeh
xun	hsün
ya	ya
yai	yai
yan	yen
yang	yang
yao	yao
ye	yeh
yi	i
yin	yin
ying	ying
yong	yung
you	yu
yu	yü
yuan	yüan
yue	yüeh
yun	yün
za	tsa
zai	tsai
zan	tsan
zang	tsang
zao	tsao
ze	tse
zei	tsei
zen	tsen
zeng	tseng
zha	cha
zhai	chai
zhan	chan
zhang	chang
zhao	chao
zhe	che
zhen	chen
zheng	cheng
zhi	chih
zhong	chung
zhou	chou
zhu	chu
zhua	chua
zhuai	chuai
zhuan	chuan
zhuang	chuang
zhui	chui
zhun	chun
zhuo	cho
zi	tzu
zong	tsung
zou	tsou
zu	tsu
zuan	tsuan
zui	tsui
zun	tsun
zuo	tso

I | CONQUEST AND CONSOLIDATION

IN THE LATE sixteenth century the Ming dynasty seemed at the height of its glory. Its achievements in culture and the arts were remarkable, urban and commercial life were spreading new levels of prosperity, while Chinese skills in printing and the manufacture of porcelain and silk exceeded anything that could be found in Europe at the time. But even though it is commonplace to see this period as marking the birth of "modern Europe," it is less easy to see it as the obvious starting point of a modern China. For while the West was at this time the hub of global explorations that brought it extensive knowledge of the world as a whole, the Ming rulers not only had drawn back from overseas ventures and the knowledge that might have come from them, but had begun a pattern of self-defeating behavior that within fifty years brought their dynasty to a violent end.

The loosely woven fabric of late Ming China's state and economy began to unravel at many points. Falling tax revenues led to failures to pay the army promptly. Troop desertions encouraged border penetration by hostile tribes. A flow of silver from the West brought unexpected stresses in the Chinese economy. Poor state granary supervision and harsh weather conditions led to undernourishment and a susceptibility to pestilence among rural populations. Random gangs of the disaffected coalesced into armies whose only ideology was survival. By 1644 all of these elements combined in such a virulent fashion that the last Ming emperor committed suicide.

Those who brought order out of this chaos were neither peasant rebels nor estranged scholar-officials, but Jürchen tribesmen from across China's northern frontiers who called themselves Manchus. Their victory was based on their success in forming a system of military and administrative units and the nucleus of a bureaucracy long before they were ready to conquer China. With these institutions in place, and with large numbers of surrendered or captured Chinese serving these tribes-

men as political advisers, soldiers, craftsmen, and farmers, the Manchus were ready to seize the opportunity to invade China when it came in 1644.

The movement of these hundreds of thousands of troops across China can serve to introduce us, as it introduced the Manchus, to the broad features of China's geography. China's indigenous peasant rebels and the various Ming survivors chose different areas of the country as the bases for their attempted resistance to the Manchu sweep. The patterns of Manchu advance from north to south and from east to west followed the logic of the terrain and the need to incorporate areas of critical political and economic importance firmly into the structures of the new state. (Both the timing and direction of the Manchu advance were startlingly echoed by the Communists when they united China in 1949, after the country's long period of fragmentation in the twentieth century.)

The conquest of as vast a country as China could be achieved only by incorporating millions of Chinese supporters into the Manchu ranks, and by relying on Chinese administrators to rule in the Manchus' name. While some descendants of the Ming ruling house fought on with tenacity, most Chinese accepted the new rulers because the Manchus promised—with only a few exceptions—to uphold China's traditional beliefs and social structures. If the Manchu conquest had ever opened the possibility for social upheaval, it was soon over, and the Manchus' newly founded Qing dynasty, firmly entrenched, was destined to rule China until 1912.

Consolidation of the Chinese state required—for the Qing as for their predecessors and successors—that attention be devoted to a wide range of strategic, economic, and political necessities. The main architect of the Qing consolidation was Emperor Kangxi, who reigned from 1661 to 1722. Moving in measured sequence to fortify China's southern, eastern, northern, and northwestern borders, he also strengthened the institutions of rule that his Manchu forebears had tentatively designed before the conquest. Kangxi concentrated especially on restoring an effective national examination system, improving the flow of state information through reliable and secret communications channels, attracting the support of potentially dissident scholars through state-sponsored projects, and easing the latent tensions between Manchus and ethnic Chinese in both government posts and society at large. In the economic realm he was less successful. Although commerce and agriculture both flourished during his reign, they were not adequately taxed, a failure that became a permanent flaw of the dynasty.

Kangxi's son struggled intelligently with aspects of this legacy, and paid particular attention to reform of the tax system, the organization of cultural life, the elimination of certain social inequalities, and the strengthening of the central bureaucracy. But as China's population rose dramatically in the later eighteenth century and new pressures on the land brought serious social disturbances, morale at the center began to crack. Inefficiency and corruption impaired the responses of the state, which evaded rather than confronted these domestic problems. In the realm of foreign policy as well, China's established institutions for handling foreigners began to suffer new challenges as aggressive Western merchants sailed their vessels to China's shores and tested the restrictions China imposed on them. Here too the Qing state's response was sluggish and largely ineffective; its inability to adapt creatively in this as in other areas laid the groundwork for the catastrophic events of the nineteenth century. Western writers and political philosophers of the eighteenth century, who for a time had been caught in a cycle of admiration for China, began to study China's weaknesses with a sharper eye, arguing that if the Chinese could not adapt to living in the world, there was a real chance that their country would be destroyed.

CHAPTER 1

The Late Ming

The Glory of the Ming

In the year A.D. 1600, the empire of China was the largest and most sophisticated of all the unified realms on earth. The extent of its territorial domains was unparalleled at a time when Russia was only just beginning to coalesce as a country, India was fragmented between Mughal and Hindu rulers, and a grim combination of infectious disease and Spanish conquerors had laid low the once great empires of Mexico and Peru. And China's population of some 120 million was far larger than that of all the European countries combined.

There was certainly pomp and stately ritual in capitals from Kyoto to Prague, from Delhi to Paris, but none of these cities could boast of a palace complex like that in Peking, where, nestled behind immense walls, the gleaming yellow roofs and spacious marble courts of the Forbidden City symbolized the majesty of the Chinese emperor. Laid out in a meticulous geometrical order, the grand stairways and mighty doors of each successive palace building and throne hall were precisely aligned with the arches leading out of Peking to the south, speaking to all comers of the connectedness of things personified in this man the Chinese termed the Son of Heaven.

Rulers in Europe, India, Japan, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire were all struggling to develop systematic bureaucracies that would expand their tax base and manage their swelling territories effectively, as well as draw to new royal power centers the resources of agriculture and trade. But China's massive bureaucracy was already firmly in place, harmonized by a millennium of tradition and bonded by an immense body of statutory laws and provisions that, in theory at least, could offer pertinent advice on any

problem that might arise in the daily life of China's people.

One segment of this bureaucracy lived in Peking, serving the emperor in an elaborate hierarchy that divided the country's business among six ministries dealing respectively with finance and personnel, rituals and laws, military affairs and public works. Also in Peking were the senior scholars and academicians who advised the emperor on ritual matters, wrote the official histories, and supervised the education of the imperial children. This concourse of official functionaries worked in uneasy proximity with the enormous palace staff who attended to the emperor's more personal needs: the court women and their eunuch watchmen, the imperial children and their nurses, the elite bodyguards, the banquet-hall and kitchen staffs, the grooms, the sweepers and the water carriers.

The other segment of the Chinese bureaucracy consisted of those assigned to posts in the fifteen major provinces into which China was divided during the Ming dynasty. These posts also were arranged in elaborate hierarchies, running from the provincial governor at the top, down through the prefects in major cities to the magistrates in the counties. Below the magistrates were the police, couriers, militiamen, and tax gatherers who extracted a regular flow of revenue from China's farmers. A group of officials known as censors kept watch over the integrity of the bureaucracy both in Peking and in the provinces.

The towns and cities of China did not, in most cases, display the imposing solidity in stone and brick of the larger urban centers in post-Renaissance Europe. Nor, with the exception of a few famous pagodas, were Chinese skylines pierced by towers as soaring as those of the greatest Christian cathedrals or the minarets of Muslim cities. But this low architectural profile did not signify an absence of wealth or religion. There were many prosperous Buddhist temples in China, just as there were Daoist temples dedicated to the natural forces of the cosmos, ancestral meeting halls, and shrines to Confucius, the founding father of China's ethical system who had lived in the fifth century B.C. A scattering of mosques dotted some eastern cities and the far western areas, where most of China's Muslims lived. There were also some synagogues, where descendants of early Jewish travelers still congregated, and dispersed small groups with hazy memories of the teachings of Nestorian Christianity, which had reached China a millennium earlier. The lesser grandeur of China's city architecture and religious centers represented not any absence of civic pride or disesteem of religion, but rather a political fact: the Chinese state was more effectively centralized than those elsewhere in the world; its religions were more effectively controlled; and the growth of powerful, independent cities was prevented by a watchful government that would not tolerate rival centers of authority.

With hindsight we can see that the Ming dynasty, whose emperors had ruled China since 1368, was past its political peak by the early seventeenth century; yet in the years around 1600, China's cultural life was in an ebullient condition that few, if any, other countries could match. If one points to the figures of exceptional brilliance or insight in late sixteenth-century European society, one will easily find their near equivalents in genius and imagination working away in China at just the same time. There was no Chinese dramatist with quite the range of Shakespeare, but in the 1590s Tang Xianzu was writing plays of thwarted, youthful love, of family drama and social dissonance, that were every bit as rich and complex as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or *Romeo and Juliet.* And if there was no precise equal to Miguel de Cervantes, whose *Don Quixote* was to become a central work of Western culture, it was in the 1590s that China's most beloved novel of religious quest and picaresque adventure, *The Journey to the West,* was published. This novel's central hero, a mischievous monkey with human traits who accompanies the monk-hero on his action-filled travels to India in search of Buddhist scriptures, has remained a central part of Chinese folk culture to this day. Without pushing further for near parallels, within this same period in China, essayists, philosophers, nature poets, landscape painters, religious theorists, historians, and medical scholars all produced a profusion of significant works, many of which are now regarded as classics of the civilization.

Perhaps in all this outpouring, it is the works of the short-story writers and the popular novelists that make the most important commentary about the vitality of Ming society, for they point to a new readership in the towns, to new levels of literacy, and to a new focus on the details of daily life. In a society that was largely male-dominated, they also indicate a growing audience of literate women. The larger implications of expanding female literacy in China were suggested in the writings of late Ming social theorists, who argued that educating women would enhance the general life of society by bringing improvements in morals, child rearing, and household management.

These many themes run together in another of China's greatest novels, *Golden Lotus,* which was published anonymously in the early 1600s. In this socially elaborate and sexually explicit tale, the central character (who draws his income both from commerce and from his official connections) is analyzed through his relationships with his five consorts, each of whom speaks for a different facet of human nature. In many senses, *Golden Lotus* can be

read as allegory, as a moral fable of the way greed and selfishness destroy those with the richest opportunities for happiness; yet it also has a deeply realistic side, and illuminates the tensions and cruelties within elite Chinese family life as few other works have ever done.

Novels, paintings, plays, along with the imperial compendia on court life and bureaucratic practice, all suggest the splendors—for the wealthy—of China in the late Ming. Living mainly in the larger commercial towns rather than out in the countryside, the wealthy were bonded together in elaborate clan or lineage organizations based on family descent through the male line. These lineages often held large amounts of land that provided income for support of their own schools, charity to those fallen on hard times, and the maintenance of ancestral halls in which family members offered sacrifices to the dead. The spacious compounds of the rich, protected by massive gates and high walls, were filled with the products of Chinese artisans, who were sometimes employed in state-directed manufactories but more often grouped in small, guild-controlled workshops. Embroidered silks that brought luster to the female form were always in demand by the rich, along with the exquisite blue and white porcelain that graced the elaborate dinner parties so beloved at the time. Glimmering lacquer, ornamental jade, feathery latticework, delicate ivory, cloisonné, and shining rosewood furniture made the homes of the rich places of beauty. And the elaborately carved brush holders of wood or stone, the luxurious paper, even the ink sticks and the stones on which they were rubbed and mixed with water to produce the best and blackest ink, all combined to make of every scholar's desk a ritual and an aesthetic world before he had even written a word.

Complementing the domestic decor, the food and drink of these wealthier Chinese would be a constant delight: pungent shrimp and bean curd, crisp duck and water chestnuts, sweetmeats, clear teas, smooth alcohol of grain or grape, fresh and preserved fruits and juices—all of these followed in stately sequence at parties during which literature, religion, and poetry were discussed over the courses. After the meal, as wine continued to flow, prize scroll paintings might be produced from the family collection, and new works of art, seeking to capture the essence of some old master, would be created by the skimming brushes of the inebriated guests.

At its upper social and economic levels, this was a highly educated society, held together intellectually by a common group of texts that reached back before the time of Confucius to the early days of the unification of a northern Chinese state in the second millennium B.C. While theorists debated its merits for women, education was rigorous and protracted for the boys of wealthy families, introducing them to the rhythms of classical Chinese

around the age of six. They then kept at their studies in school or with private tutors every day, memorizing, translating, drilling until, in their late twenties or early thirties, they might be ready to tackle the state examinations. Success in these examinations, which rose in a hierarchy of difficulty from those held locally to those conducted in the capital of Peking, allegedly under the supervision of the emperor himself, brought access to lucrative bureaucratic office and immense social prestige. Women were barred by law from taking the state examinations; but those of good family often learned to write classical poetry from their parents or brothers, and courtesans in the city pleasure quarters were frequently well trained in poetry and song, skills that heightened their charms in the eyes of their educated male patrons. Since book printing with wooden blocks had been developing in China since the tenth century, the maintenance of extensive private libraries was feasible, and the wide distribution of works of philosophy, poetry, history, and moral exhortation was taken for granted.

Though frowned on by some purists, the dissemination of popular works of entertainment was also accelerating in the late sixteenth century, making for a rich and elaborate cultural mix. City dwellers could call on new images of tamed nature to contrast with their own noise and bustle, and find a sense of order in works of art that interpreted the world for them. The possibilities for this sense of contentment were caught to perfection by the dramatist Tang Xianzu in his play *The Peony Pavilion* of 1598. Tang puts his words into the mouth of a scholar and provincial bureaucrat named Du Bao. One side of Du Bao's happiness comes from the fact that administrative business is running smoothly:

> The mountains are at their loveliest
> and court cases dwindle,
> "The birds I saw off at dawn,
> at dusk I watch return,"
> petals from the vase cover my seal box,
> the curtains hang undisturbed.

This sense of peace and order, in turn, prompts a more direct response to nature, when official duties can be put aside altogether, the literary overlays forgotten, and nature and the simple pleasures enjoyed on their own terms:

> Pink of almond fully open,
> iris blades unsheathed,
> fields of spring warming to season's life.
> Over thatched hut by bamboo fence juts a tavern flag,
> rain clears, and the smoke spirals from kitchen stoves.[1]

It was a fine vision, and for many these were indeed glorious days. As long as the country's borders remained quiet, as long as the bureaucracy worked smoothly, as long as the peasants who did the hard work in the fields and the artisans who made all the beautiful objects remained content with their lot—then perhaps the splendors of the Ming would endure.

Town and Farm

The towns and cities of Ming China, especially in the more heavily populated eastern part of the country, had a bustling and thriving air. Some were busy bureaucratic centers, where the local provincial officials had their offices and carried out their tax gathering and administrative tasks. Others were purely commercial centers, where trade and local markets dictated the patterns of daily life. Most were walled, closed their gates at night, and imposed some form of curfew.

As with towns and cities elsewhere in the world, those in China could be distinguished by their services and their levels of specialization. Local market towns, for instance, were the bases for coffinmakers, ironworkers, tailors, and noodle makers. Their retail shops offered for sale such semispecial goods as tools, wine, headgear, and religious supplies, including incense, candles, and special paper money to burn at sacrifices. Such market towns also offered winehouses for customers to relax in. Larger market towns, which drew on a flow of traders and wealthy purchasers from a wider region, could support cloth-dyeing establishments, shoemakers, iron foundries, firecracker makers, and sellers of bamboo, fine cloth, and teas. Travelers here found bathhouses and inns, and could buy the services of local prostitutes. Rising up the hierarchy to the local cities that coordinated the trade of several regional market towns, there were shops selling expensive stationery, leather goods, ornamental lanterns, altar carvings, flour, and the services of tinsmiths, seal cutters, and lacquer-ware sellers. Here, too, visitors could find pawnshops and local "banks" to handle money exchanges, rent a sedan chair, and visit a comfortably appointed brothel.[2] As the cities grew larger and their clientele richer, one found ever more specialized luxury goods and services, along with the kinds of ambience in which wealth edged—sometimes dramatically, sometimes unobtrusively—into the realms of decadence, snobbery, and exploitation.

At the base of the urban hierarchy, below the market towns, there were the small local townships where the population was too poor and scattered to support many shops and artisans, and where most goods were sold only by traveling peddlers at periodic markets. Such townships housed neither

the wealthy nor any government officials; as a result, the simplest of teahouses, or perhaps a roadside stall, or an occasional temple fair would be the sole focus for relaxation. Nevertheless, such smaller townships performed a vast array of important functions, for they served as the bases for news and gossip, matchmaking, simple schooling, local religious festivals, traveling theater groups, tax collection, and the distribution of famine relief in times of emergency.

Just as the towns and cities of Ming China represented a whole spectrum of goods and services, architecture, levels of sophistication, and administrative staffing, making any simple generalization about them risky, so, too, was the countryside apparently endless in its variety. Indeed the distinction between town and country was blurred in China, for suburban areas of intensive farming lay just outside and sometimes even within the city walls, and artisans might work on farms in peak periods, or farmers work temporarily in towns during times of dearth.

It was south of the Huai River, which cuts across China between the Yellow River and the Yangzi, that the country was most prosperous, for here climate and soil combined to make intensive rice cultivation possible. The region was crisscrossed by myriad rivers, canals, and irrigation streams that fed lush market gardens and paddies in which the young rice shoots grew, or flowed into lakes and ponds where fish and ducks were raised. Here the seasonal flooding of the paddy fields returned needed nutrients to the soil. In the regions just south of the Yangzi River, farmers cultivated mulberry trees for the leaves on which silk worms fed, as well as tea bushes and a host of other products that created extra resources and allowed for a richly diversified rural economy. Farther to the south, sugarcane and citrus were added to the basic crops; and in the mountainous southwest, forests of bamboo and valuable hardwood lumber brought in extra revenue. Water transport was fast, easy, and cheap in south China. Its villages boasted strong lineage organizations that helped to bond communities together.

Although there were many prosperous farming villages north of the Huai River, life there was harsher. The cold in winter was extreme, as icy winds blew in from Mongolia, eroding the land, filling the rivers with silt, and swirling fine dust into the eyes and noses of those who could not afford to shelter behind closed doors. The main crops were wheat and millet, grown with much toil on overworked land, which the scattered farming communities painstakingly fertilized with every scrap of human and animal waste they could recycle. Fruit trees such as apple and pear grew well, as did soybeans and cotton; but by the end of the sixteenth century, much of the land was deforested, and the Yellow River was an unpredictable force as its silt-laden waters meandered across the wide plains to the sea. Unhindered

by the dikes, paddies, and canals of the South, bandit armies could move men and equipment easily across the northern countryside, while cavalry forces could race ahead and to the flanks, returning to warn the slower foot soldiers of any danger from opposing forces or sorties from garrison towns. Lineage organizations were weaker here, villages more isolated, social life often more fragmented, and the tough-minded owner-cultivator, living not far above subsistence level, more common than either the prosperous landlord or the tenant farmer.

China's rural diversity meant that "landlords" could not be entirely distinguished from "peasants." For every wealthy absentee landlord living in one of the larger towns, for example, there might be scores of smaller-scale local landlords living in the countryside, perhaps renting out some of their land or hiring part-time labor to till it. Similarly, there were millions of peasant proprietors who owned a little more land than they needed for subsistence, and they might farm their own land with the help of some seasonal laborers. Others, owning a little *less* land than they needed for subsistence, might rent an extra fraction of an acre or hire themselves out as casual labor in the busy seasons. And in most peasant homes, there was some form of handicraft industry that connected the rural family to a commercial network.

The social structure was further complicated by the bewildering variety of land-sale agreements and rental contracts used in China. While the state sought extra revenue by levying a tax on each land deal, in return for which it granted an official contract with a red seal, many farmers—not surprisingly—tried to avoid these surcharges by drawing up their own unofficial contracts. The definition of a land sale, furthermore, was profoundly ambiguous. Most land sales were conducted on the general understanding that the seller might at some later date reclaim the land from the buyer at the original purchase price, or that the seller retained "subsurface" rights to the soil while the purchaser could till the land for a specified period. If land rose in price, went out of cultivation, became waterlogged, or was built upon, a maze of legal and financial problems resulted, leading often to family feuds and even to murder.

For centuries, whether in the north or the south, the peasantry of China had shown their ability to work hard and to survive even when sudden natural calamities brought extreme deprivation. In times of drought or flood, there were various forms of mutual aid, loans, or relief grain supplies that could help to tide them and their families over. Perhaps some sort of part-time labor could be secured, as a porter, an irrigation worker, or barge puller. Children could be indentured, on short- or long-term contracts, for domestic service with the rich. Female children could be sold in the cities;

and even if they ended up in brothels, at least they were alive and the family freed of an extra mouth to feed. But if, on top of all the other hardships, the whole fabric of law and order within the society began to unravel, then the situation became hopeless indeed. If the market towns closed their gates, if bands of desperate men began to roam the countryside, seizing the few stores that the rural families had laid in against the coming winter's cold, or stealing the last seed grain carefully hoarded for the next spring's planting, then the poor farmers had no choice but to abandon their fields—whether the land was rented or privately owned—and to swell the armies of the homeless marchers.

In the early 1600s, despite the apparent prosperity of the wealthier elite, there were signs that this dangerous unraveling might be at hand. Without state-sponsored work or relief for their own needy inhabitants, then the very towns that barred their gates to the rural poor might erupt from within. Driven to desperation by high taxes and uncertain labor prospects, thousands of silk weavers in the Yangzi-delta city of Suzhou went on strike in 1601, burnt down houses, and lynched hated local tyrants. That same year, southwest of Suzhou, in the Jiangxi province porcelain-manufacturing city of Jingdezhen, thousands of workers rioted over low wages and the Ming court's demand that they meet heightened production quotas of the exquisite "dragon bowls" made for palace use. One potter threw himself into a blazing kiln and perished to underline his fellows' plight. A score of other cities and towns saw some kind of social and economic protest in the same period.

Instability in the urban world was matched by that in the countryside. There were incidents of rural protest in the late Ming, as in earlier periods, that can be seen as having elements of class struggle inherent in them. These incidents, often accompanied by violence, were of two main kinds: protests by indentured laborers or "bondservants" against their masters in attempts to regain their free status as farmers, and strikes by tenants who refused to pay their landlords what they regarded as unjust rents.

Even if they were not common, there were enough such incidents to offer a serious warning to the wealthier Chinese. In that same play, *The Peony Pavilion,* in which he speaks glowingly of the joys of the official's life, Tang Xianzu gently mocks the rustic yokels of China, putting into deliberately inelegant verse the rough-and-ready labor of their days:

> Slippery mud,
> sloppery thud,
> short rake, long plough, clutch 'em as they slide.
> After rainy night sow rice and hemp,

when sky clears fetch out the muck,
then a stink like long-pickled fish
floats on the breeze.[3]

The verses sounded amusing. But Tang's audience had not yet begun to think through the implications of what might happen when those who labored under such conditions sought to overthrow their masters.

Corruption and Hardship

In the midst of the rich cultural and economic life of the late Ming, therefore, there were dangerous hints of weakness in the social structure. Part of the trouble sprang from the very center of the state. The emperor Wanli, who reigned across the long span from 1572 to 1620, had started out as a conscientious young ruler, guided by intelligent and experienced advisers. But from the 1580s onward, Emperor Wanli spent more and more time behind the innermost walls of the Forbidden City. He had grown aggravated by quarrels with bureaucrats about which of his sons should be named heir apparent to the throne, frustrated by overprotective courtiers from carrying out his desires to travel widely and command his troops in person, and disgusted by the constant bickering among his own senior advisers. For years on end he held no court audiences to discuss key political events, gave up his studies of the historical and philosophical texts that lay at the heart of Confucian learning, refused to read state papers, and even stopped filling the vacancies that occurred in the upper levels of officialdom.

The result was that considerable power accrued to the court eunuchs—the castrated male attendants whose official job was to supervise the management of day-to-day business in the palace. The practice of using eunuchs in Chinese courts had existed for more than two thousand years, but Ming rulers employed many more than their predecessors, and by Wanli's time there were over ten thousand in the capital. Since the emperor would not come out from the inner recesses of the Forbidden City—an area closed to all save the imperial family and their personal attendants—the eunuchs became crucial intermediaries between the outer bureaucratic world and the inner imperial one. Any senior official with business that demanded the emperor's attention had to persuade a eunuch to carry the message for him; the eunuchs, naturally enough, asked for fees in return for such service, and soon the more powerful ones were flattered and bribed by ambitious officials.

In the 1590s, the eunuchs, many of whom were identified with certain

court factions, began to play a central role in the political life of the country. Their influence grew as Emperor Wanli assigned them to collect revenues in the provinces. In many cases they acted in a high-handed way, tyrannizing wealthy provincial families, and using an elite group of military guards to enforce their will and to imprison—even torture or kill—their political enemies. The most spectacular example of these abuses occurred in the person of the eunuch Wei Zhongxian, who cleverly rose to power by obtaining a position as purveyor of food to the concubine of Emperor Wanli's son, and later, in the 1620s, dominated the court life of Wanli's grandson. At the peak of his influence, Wei was able to publish historical works belittling his bureaucratic enemies, and to order that temples in his honor be erected all across China.

Although it was always dangerous to criticize the emperor and his favorites, certain officials and prominent scholars were deeply disturbed by the situation. As scholars will, they sought a theoretical cause for the trouble: many of them concluded that the corruption sprang from a breakdown of the general ethical standards, from flaws in the educational system, and from the growth of an unbridled individualism. The villain, to many of these critics, was the earlier Ming philosopher Wang Yangming, who had argued in his writings that the keys to ethical understanding lay in our own moral nature and, hence, that any person had the power, through innate knowledge, to understand the meaning of existence. As Wang expressed this in a letter to a friend:

> Innate knowledge is identical with the Way. That it is present in the mind is true not only in the cases of the sages and worthies, but even in that of ordinary people. When one is free from the driving force and observations of material desires, and just follows innate knowledge and leaves it to continue to function and operate, everything will be in accord with the Way.[4]

"To learn," Wang added, "simply means to learn to follow innate knowledge." But Wang also advocated a creative blending of knowledge with action, and, in the teachings and practice of some of his more extreme followers, Wang's doctrine led to eccentric behavior, the rejection of normative forms of education, and the call for a new egalitarianism.

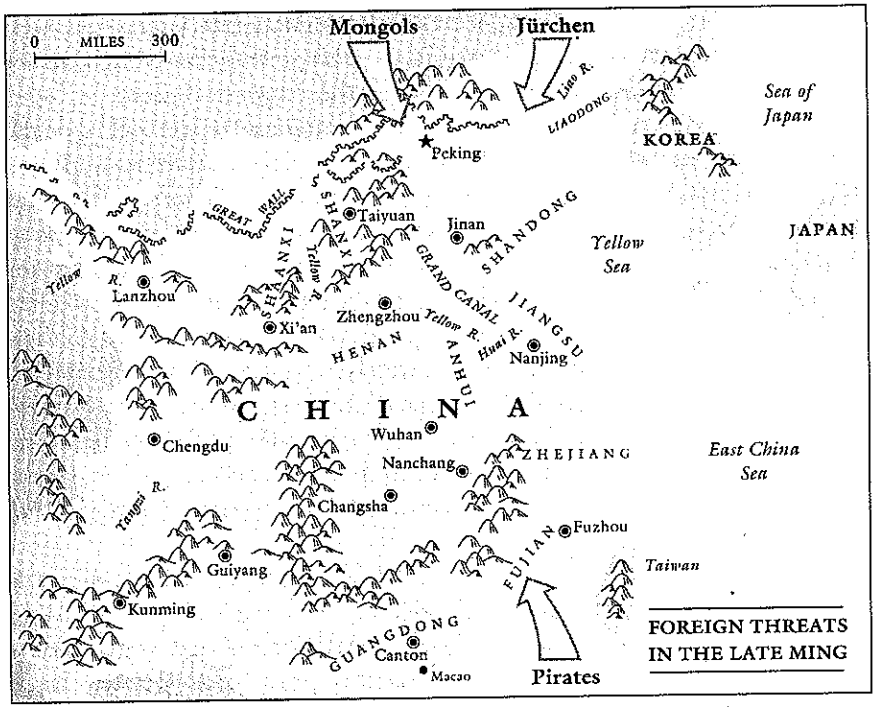
To combat these trends, certain late sixteenth-century scholars who held a rigorously moral view of the significance of Confucian thought began to gather in philosophical societies. Here they prepared for the state examinations and heard lectures on ethics; from ethics, their debates inevitably spread to politics; and political debate, in turn, began to generate a desire for political reform. By 1611, the most famous of these societies—founded

in 1604 and known as the "Donglin Society" for the building where it was based in the Jiangsu city of Wuxi—had become a major force in politics. Donglin partisans used all their influence to have corrupt officials removed from their Peking posts. Their status rose enormously after Emperor Wanli's death in 1620, when many of them were called to serve in the bureaucracy under Wanli's son and grandson. Their task was to put their moral premises into practice and to strengthen China's frontier defense and internal economy. But their constant moral exhortations wearied the new emperor: after a Donglin leader criticized the most notorious of the eunuchs, Wei Zhongxian, and Wei had a senior official at court beaten to death in retaliation, the emperor did not censure Wei.

Emboldened by the emperor's tacit acquiescence, between 1624 and 1627 Wei and a group of court officials led a concerted campaign of terror against the Donglin members, many of whom were killed or driven to suicide. Although Wei himself was eventually condemned, and took his own life in 1627, the damage to the state's prestige had been severe, and was perhaps irreparable. As one of the Donglin leaders—having heard that mounted guards from the eunuch's inner circle had come to arrest him, and knowing that this could only mean his death—wrote in a farewell letter to his friends: "I formerly was a great minister, and when a great minister accepts disgrace the state is also disgraced."[5]

All this intellectual and political ferment exacerbated an already dangerous situation in the fields of foreign policy and the economy. China had faced a number of threats during the sixteenth century, most prominently from the nomadic tribes of Mongols who raised their horses and flocks of sheep on the steppes to the north and northwest of Peking, and from pirates on the southeast coast. Mongol forces, which earlier in the dynasty had been controlled through trade and diplomacy, now raided China regularly. On one occasion they captured a Ming emperor campaigning against them, and on another they rode almost to the gates of Peking. By the late sixteenth century, despite imperial attempts to strengthen the Great Wall and its military garrisons, the Chinese managed to hold the Mongol raiders in check only by paying them regular subsidies. On the southeast coast, Chinese cities were ravaged by pirate groups, sometimes numbering in the hundreds and including a great many Japanese as well as Chinese fugitives, and even black slaves who had escaped from the Portuguese outpost at Macao. These pirate groups looted almost at will, seizing men and women for ransom.

Although the worst of these pirate attacks had been stopped by the 1570s, Japanese military power grew stronger, and in the 1590s a major Japanese army invaded Korea. Fighting was heavy; and since the Ming regarded Korea as a loyal and dependent ally to be protected at all costs, Chinese



troops were sent in force to help the hard-pressed Koreans. The war might have continued, at terrible cost to all three countries, had not domestic turmoil in Japan, coupled with effective disruption of Japanese supply lines by the Korean navy, led to the recall of Japanese troops from Korea in 1598. As it was, the strains of the war fed a growing crisis in Manchuria, where groups of Jürchen tribesmen were beginning to coalesce in armed bands under the leadership of a talented chieftain named Nurhaci, and to challenge Ming authority in the region of Liaodong. Although it was not clear at the time, Nurhaci's troops were beginning a process that was ultimately to bring down the Ming dynasty itself.

Macao also represented a new kind of problem for China. This town, on the tip of a peninsula to the southwest of Canton, had been occupied by the Portuguese with China's tacit consent in the 1550s. By the 1600s, following the emperor's ban of direct trade by Chinese merchants with belligerent Japan, the Portuguese had moved into the resulting commercial vacuum as middlemen. They made fortunes by buying up Chinese silk in local markets and shipping it to Japan, where they traded it for silver from Japanese mines. With this silver, which was valued more highly in China than in Japan, the Portuguese returned and bought larger stocks of Chinese silk.

The steady flow of silver brought by the Portuguese into China was itself just one element in the larger pattern of silver shipments that brought major economic effects to all parts of the world in the sixteenth century.

At the heart of this global network lay the fantastic silver riches of the mines in Mexico and Peru, which were being exploited under royal license by the Spanish conquerors of those territories. Silver from the Americas began to reach China in the 1570s, when Spain established a new base at Manila in the Philippines. Swift to sense the demand in the Americas for their textiles, thousands of Chinese traders began to congregate in Manila, selling cloth and silk in bulk and speeding the flow of specie back to their homeland. As silver circulated more widely, commercial activity spread, and the silver-bullion deposits available to Emperor Wanli grew impressively. At the same time, however, the massive influx of silver to China brought a range of problems that included inflation, speculation in business, and an erratic economic growth in certain cities that disrupted traditional economic patterns.

Thus, before Wanli's reign ended with his death in 1620, China was beginning a complicated economic slide. The thriving world of the Ming merchants, which had led to the efficient distribution of luxury goods on a countrywide basis and had spawned an effective proto-banking system based on notes of exchange, suffered from the military troubles of the times. And China's trade—while never effectively taxed by the state, which concentrated mainly on the agricultural sector—was extremely vulnerable to extortion and confiscation by corrupt eunuch commissioners in the provinces, or by their agents. Government inefficiencies in flood control and famine relief led to further local crises, which, in turn, reduced the amount of prosperous land that could be taxed effectively.

During the last years of Emperor Wanli's reign and under his successors, the situation for China's peasants grew critical. International trade patterns changed as raiders from the Protestant Dutch and British nations sought to expand their own trading empires by wrecking those of the Catholic Spaniards and Portuguese. This led to a massive drop in silver imports into China, which encouraged hoarding and forced the ratio of copper to silver into a decline. A string of one thousand small copper coins that had been worth around an ounce of silver in the 1630s had become worth half an ounce by 1640, and perhaps one-third of an ounce by 1643. The effect on peasants was disastrous, since they had to pay their taxes *in silver,* even though they conducted local trade and sold their own harvests for copper.[6]

As if these new "hidden" costs were not enough, the expenses of the widening war in Manchuria against Nurhaci and his followers prompted the court to raise the taxes payable on each acre of land no less than seven

times between 1618 and 1639. Famines became common, especially in north China, worsened by unusually cold and dry weather that shortened the growing season for crops by as much as two weeks. (Sometimes termed the "little ice age" of the seventeenth century, similar effects were felt in farming areas around the world during this period.) When these natural disasters and tax increases are set alongside the constant strains of military recruitment and desertions, a declining relief system for the indigent, and the abandonment of virtually all major irrigation and flood-control projects, the pressures on the country and the tensions they began to engender can be well imagined. And as rapidly became apparent, neither the court nor the bureaucracy in Peking or the countryside seemed to have the ability, the resources, or the will to do very much about it.

The Ming Collapse

In the early decades of the seventeenth century, the Ming court slowly lost control of its rural bureaucracy and, as a result, of its tax structure. Pressed at the same time for more money to pay and supply the troops needed to counter the attacks of the Jürchen leader Nurhaci in Manchuria, the court both increased extra levies on those populated areas that it still controlled and laid off many employees in the northwest, where the danger to the state seemed less pressing. One of those laid off in this economy move was a post-station attendant from a rural family named Li Zicheng.

Li had worked previously in a wine shop and as an ironworker's apprentice, and was typical of a number of rootless, violent men who lived in Shaanxi province at the time. Shaanxi, a barren province of northwest China, covered the area within the great bend of the Yellow River and ran through bleak mountain countryside up to the Great Wall. About as far from Peking as Chicago is from Washington, D.C., but ringed by mountains and difficult of access, Shaanxi province had in the past proved a natural bastion where groups of rebels had built up their forces prior to breaking out and attacking the richer and more populated lands to the east and the south.

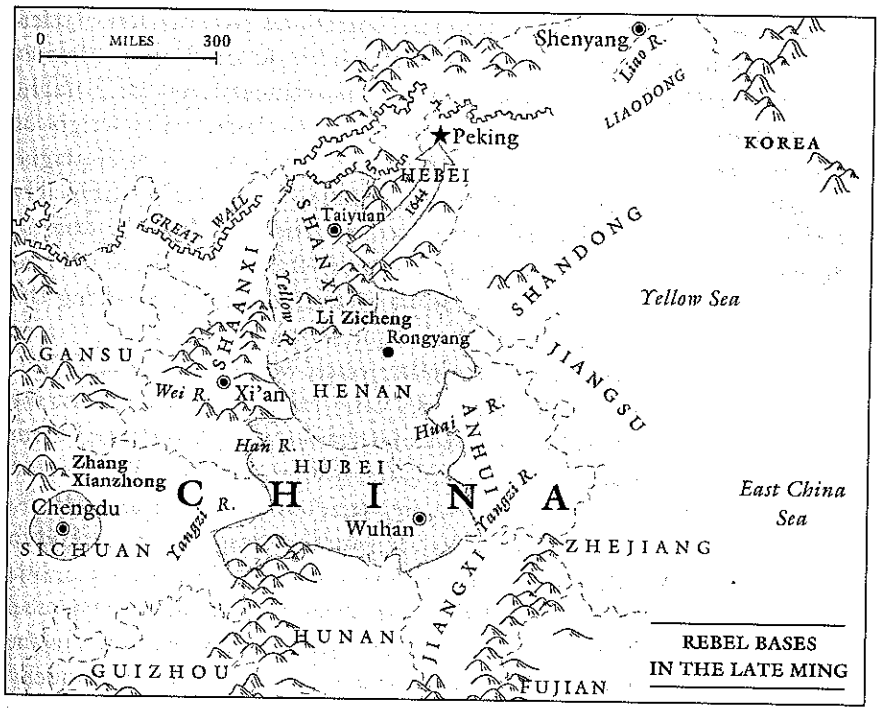
In 1630 Li Zicheng enrolled in a military unit in western Shaanxi, but once again the government let him down. Deprived of promised supplies, Li and other soldiers mutinied, and over the next few years Li slowly emerged as a natural leader among a group of uprooted men that numbered in the thousands, proving himself an intuitively skillful tactician. In 1634 Li was captured near the southern Shaanxi border by a capable Ming general, who bottled up the rebel forces in a mountain gorge. Li was released after promising that he would take his troops back into the barren northern part of

the province, but the agreement fell apart after a local magistrate executed thirty-six of the surrendered rebels. Li and his men retaliated by killing the local officials and taking once more to the hills. By 1635 he was stronger than ever, and was a leading representative at an extraordinary conclave of rebel leaders that took place at the town of Rongyang in central Henan province, just south of the Yellow River.

At this conclave, some of the most powerful rebel leaders assigned different regions of north China to their armies and tried to coordinate an attack on the Ming capital of Peking. But coordinated military activity proved difficult with such motley and undisciplined forces. By the end of the year the alliance was breaking apart, though not before the rebels had captured and looted some of the imperial Ming burial grounds outside the capital and imprisoned the attendants who worked there. The emperor now on the throne, Wanli's grandson Chongzhen, responded by donning mourning, apologizing to his ancestors in special temple ceremonies, arresting several of his commanding officers, and executing the eunuch guardian of the royal tombs. For his part, in a bitter quarrel that showed how swiftly violence flared and how easily the rebel alliance could fragment, Li Zicheng demanded of his fellow rebels that he be given the captured eunuch musicians whose job had been to play ritual music at the tombs. The rebel leader who held the musicians, Zhang Xianzhong, reluctantly complied, but smashed all their instruments first. Li then killed the unfortunate musicians.

Over the next few years, the armies of these two leaders, Li and Zhang, roamed over much of northern and central China, shifting from base to base, occasionally cooperating with each other but more often feuding as they competed with both the Ming and other rebel bands for terrain and followers. By the early 1640s, each had seized a base area for himself: Zhang Xianzhong, who like Li had once served in the Ming forces in Shaanxi before deserting, was in the city of Chengdu in the prosperous heartland of Sichuan province, deep inland along the Yangzi River; Li was established in Hubei, but his jurisdiction included most of Shaanxi and Henan provinces as well. Perhaps without unconscious irony, but rather looking ahead to a final conquest of all China, Li called his new kingdom Dashun (大順), "the Region of Grand Obedience." Zhang, in Sichuan province, responded later by naming himself the "Greatly Obedient Ruler" of a new "Great Western Kingdom."

The ravages caused by the armies of Li and Zhang were augmented by epidemics that struck China at this same time. Some estimates, noted by Chinese observers, suggest that these epidemics caused many communities to suffer losses of half or more of their inhabitants. One scholar wrote of Zhejiang province in 1642 that "the symptoms of pestilence arose again on



a large scale, affecting eight or nine out of every ten households. It even reached the point where in a household of ten or twenty people a single uninfected person could not be found, or where in such a household there was not one saved. Therefore at first the bodies were buried in coffins, and next in grasses, but finally they were left on the beds." An observer in Henan province noted that in one big city there in the summer of 1643 "there were few signs of human life in the streets and all that was heard was the buzzing of flies."[7]

So serious was the loss of life that it prompted a rethinking of traditional Chinese theories of medicine, and although no solutions were found, medical books of the time began to develop a new theory of epidemics. One doctor, living near the Yangzi delta area, wrote in 1642 that China was obviously being affected not just by variants in weather or temperature but by a change in the balance of Heaven and Earth caused by "deviant *Qi*," *Qi* being the normally neutral forces within nature. Such deviant *Qi*, he wrote, "appear mainly in years of war and famine." Unseen and unheard, they struck apparently at will; any response by the people was in vain. "If the people clash against them, they produce the various diseases, each according

to its nature. As for the diseases produced, sometimes everyone has swollen neck glands and sometimes everyone's face and head swell up. . . . Sometimes everyone suffers from diarrhoea and intermittent fever. Or it might be cramps, or pustules, or a rash, or itching scabs, or boils."[8] The weight of description and analysis suggests that China suffered some form of plague during the 1640s, although its exact nature cannot be determined. Possibly the Manchus in their earlier raids introduced microbes for which the Chinese had no natural antibodies, leading to a catastrophic loss of life similar to that caused by the Europeans' spread of measles or smallpox among the indigenous Indian populations of Mexico and North America.

The Ming dynasty, during these closing years, was not completely without resources. There were loyal generals who led their troops against the rebels and occasionally inflicted defeats on them—or at least forced them to retreat or into temporary surrender. There were also semi-independent naval and military leaders, with bases in Shandong or on offshore islands, who launched damaging raids on the Manchu forces in Liaodong. And in many areas the wealthy local elites recruited and armed their own militia forces so that they could defend their estates and hometowns from rebel assaults. Emperor Chongzhen himself did try to bring some order to the Peking government; he sought to repress the worst excesses of the eunuchs, and unlike his grandfather Wanli, he met regularly with his ministers. But much of his attention was focused on Manchuria, where Nurhaci and his son were steadily widening their power base, seizing Shenyang (Mukden) in 1625, taking much of Inner Mongolia in 1632, and subduing Korea in 1638. During this period China produced some remarkable generals who fought bravely in Manchuria, especially in the mid-1620s, inflicting heavy losses on Manchu forces and recapturing several cities. But factional fighting in Peking and a constant shortage of funds hampered the Ming cause.

Foremost among the Ming generals was Yuan Chonghuan, whose career may be seen as exemplifying some of these late Ming tensions. A classically educated scholar from south China, Yuan entered the Peking bureaucracy as a young man. In 1622 he went on an inspection tour of southern Manchuria and grew convinced that he could defend the crucial passes that led to Peking. As a staff member in the ministry of war, with a good knowledge of European firearms apparently garnered from his cook, who knew some Westerners, Yuan was able to hold the Liao River against Nurhaci. In 1628 he was named field marshal of all northeastern forces, but for reasons of jealousy he executed one of his most talented subordinates the following year. When, in 1630, Manchu raiding parties appeared near Peking, Yuan was falsely accused of colluding with them and was tried on a trumped-up charge of treason. With hostile courtiers, friends of the man he had killed, and groups of eunuchs all arrayed against him, Yuan had no chance of clearing himself. Instead he was condemned to death by way of the most publicly humiliating and painful punishment that the Chinese penal code allowed for: being cut to pieces in the marketplace of Peking. Later scholars mourned him as one of China's greatest generals. No one of his talents came forward to succeed him; on the contrary, though some northern generals remained loyal to the Ming cause after his death, many others began to surrender to the Manchus, taking their troops over to the enemy with them. The charges falsely leveled at Yuan now began to come true in earnest.

Finally it was not the Manchus, but the rebel Li Zicheng who brought down the Ming dynasty. In 1644 Li mounted a huge attack on Peking, moving across north China with hundreds of thousands of troops, sacking the towns that resisted him, and incorporating into his own army the forces of those that surrendered. He waged a skillful propaganda war, pointing to the excesses and cruelties of the Ming regime and promising a new era of peace and prosperity to the exhausted Chinese people. In April 1644 his armies entered Peking without a fight, the city gates having been treacherously opened at his coming. It is recorded that Emperor Chongzhen, after hearing that the rebels had entered the city, rang a bell to summon his ministers in order to get their advice or assistance. When none of them appeared, the emperor walked to the imperial garden just outside the walls of the Forbidden City. In this garden was a hill, from the crest of which the emperor and his consorts had been wont to look out over the panorama of Peking. This time the emperor did not mount the hill, but attached a cord to a tree at its foot, and there hanged himself. So died the last ruler of the dynasty that, for better or worse, had ruled China since 1368.

CHAPTER 2

The Manchu Conquest

The Rise of the Qing

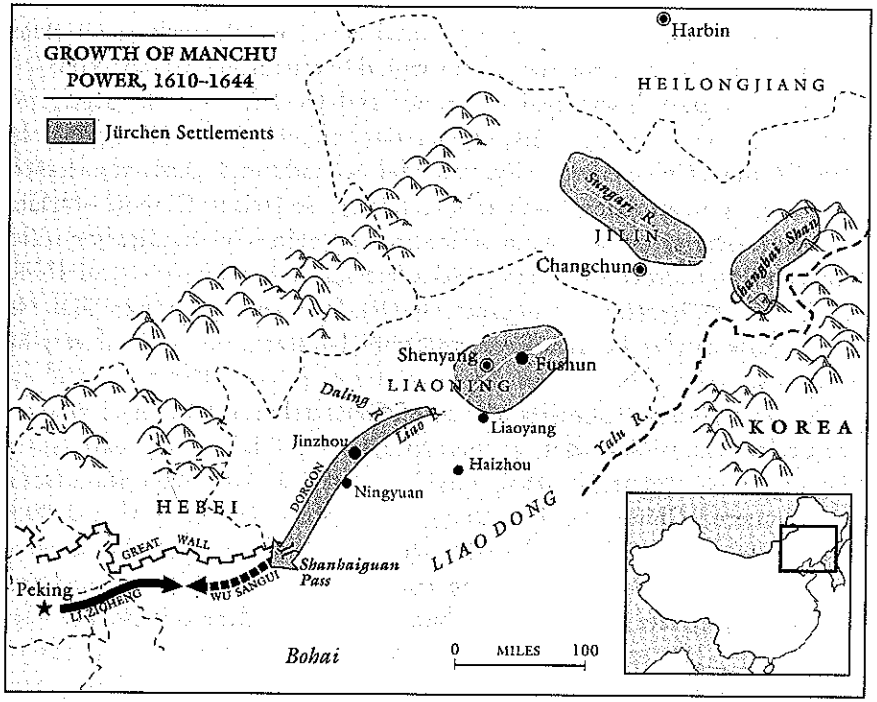
While the Ming dynasty was sliding into a final decline, its eventual successor was rising in the northeast. The people known now as the Manchus were originally tribes of Jürchen stock who lived in the areas currently designated as Heilongjiang and Jilin provinces. In the distant past, between A.D. 1122 and 1234, the Jürchen had conquered northern China and combined it with their own territory under the name of Jin—or "golden"—dynasty. After their defeat in 1234, they had retreated northward to the Sungari River region, but by the late Ming they were once more pressing on the borders of China and Korea. The policy of the Ming was to control the Jürchen by formally defining their territory as a part of China's frontier defensive system, by offering them honorific titles, and by granting them trading privileges.

By the late sixteenth century the Jürchen had followed various paths. Some of them had stayed in the Sungari region and lived mainly by fishing and hunting. Others had established a firm base along the northern edge of the Korean border in the region of the Changbai Shan (Long White Mountain), where they developed a mixed agricultural and hunting economy. Yet others had moved to more fertile, open land east of the Liao River, where they mingled with Chinese emigrants and practiced a settled, arable agriculture, or thrived as traders in furs, horses, and luxury goods. Those in this third group had essentially become detribalized: they largely adopted Chinese ways, even though the towns in which they prospered, such as Fushun and Shenyang, had been in the very heartland of the old Jin Empire.

Nurhaci, who was to lay the groundwork for the Manchu conquest of

Ming China, was born in 1559 to a noble family of the Long White Mountain group of Jürchens. As a young man he traveled to Peking to pay ritual homage to the Ming rulers and to trade, and received honorific Ming titles in return for his offer to help them against the Japanese in Korea. But around 1610, he broke his relations with the Ming on the grounds that they had attacked or humiliated members of his family and had tried to wreck his own economic base.

Over the next decade Nurhaci steadily increased his power at the expense of neighboring Jürchen and Mongol tribes, either dominating them by warfare or allying with them through marriage contracts. He organized his troops and their families into eight different groups of "banners," which were distinguished according to color (yellow, red, blue, and white, four plain and four bordered). The banners served as identification devices in battle, and membership in a given banner was used as the basis for population registration in daily life. He also assembled large numbers of craftsmen to manufacture weapons and armor, and, in his strongly defended headquarters, developed a written script for transcribing the Jürchen language. In 1616 he took the important symbolic step of declaring himself the "khan," or ruler, of a second "Jin" dynasty, thus evoking the past glory of



the Jürchen people and issuing a provocative challenge to the Ming state. Two years later he launched a series of shattering military blows at mixed Chinese and "detribalized" Jürchen settlements east of the Liao River, in the region known as Liaodong.*

The Ming rulers had regarded Liaodong as essentially Chinese territory and maintained strong garrisons there under their own generals. But Nurhaci used a mixture of threats and blandishments to induce the garrison commanders to surrender, sending them elaborate messages written out for him by Chinese advisers in his employ. As he wrote to the Chinese officer commanding Fushun, for instance: "Even if you fight, you certainly will not win . . . if you do not fight, but surrender, I shall let you keep your former office and shall care benevolently for you. But if you fight, how can our arrows know who you are?"[1] Nurhaci also tried to undermine Ming influence in Liaodong by posing as a reformist ruler who had come to bring a better life to the Chinese, and he urged those who lived west of the Liao River to join him in his new kingdom. "Do not think that the land and houses will not be yours, that they will belong to a master," he wrote in another message that was distributed out in the countryside. "All will equally be the Khan's subjects and will live and work the fields on an equal basis."[2] On other occasions, Nurhaci claimed he would take over the charitable functions of the ideal ruler that had so obviously been neglected by Wanli in his waning years, saying that he would never let "the rich accumulate their grain and have it rot away," but would "nourish the begging poor."

Nurhaci rigidly disciplined his troops and tried to stop all looting or harming of the Liaodong civilian population, publicly punishing guilty soldiers. To those Chinese with education who surrendered, he offered a chance of serving in the growing Jürchen bureaucracy, and senior Chinese officials who came over to his side were offered marriage into his family, honorific titles, and high office. Shenyang and Liaoyang fell to his troops in 1621, and in 1625 he made Shenyang (the modern Mukden) his capital. Soon all the territory east of the Liao River and some land west of the river were in his hands.

Despite his orders that males who surrendered to him must imitate Jürchen practice and shave the fronts of their foreheads and braid their hair into a long pigtail or "queue," Nurhaci initially faced little overt opposition from the conquered Chinese settlers, though receptions were often mixed. For instance, while the officers of the Haizhou garrison welcomed the Jürchen with flutes and drums, some of the Haizhou town dwellers poisoned the wells in a desperate attempt to kill Nurhaci's troops. Nor is there any easy

*_Dong_ is Chinese for "east."

way to categorize the fates of those Chinese or detribalized Jürchen who were now in Nurhaci's power. Some were rewarded as promised, others were moved from their city homes to work for the Jürchen on the land. Some were enslaved or forced to work under contract, others—most notably those with some knowledge of artillery—were placed in new military units and incorporated as a "Chinese martial" banner unit. Although still in an embryonic state, these artillery units were later to play a critical role in the Manchu victories.

As early as 1622, Nurhaci had expressed his intention of attacking China by sending an army down through the strategic pass of Shanhaiguan, where the Great Wall ends at the North China Sea. He might well have done so the following year had not a serious rebellion against his rule broken out among the Chinese in Liaodong. What prompted the uprising is not known, but there were many possible causes. With the arrival of large numbers of Jürchen troops in Liaodong, there was intense pressure on the available farmland. Shortages of grain and salt grew to crisis proportions, and famine was reported in some areas. Compulsory grain rationing was introduced, and Chinese under Jürchen control had to spend a portion of their time giving free labor to their masters, working in squads of three on specially designated five-acre parcels of land. In many areas of Liaodong, partly as a control measure and partly because there was a housing shortage, the Jürchen moved into Chinese homes to live and eat as co-occupants. The Chinese responded by setting fires, poisoning wells once again, killing Jürchen women and children, hiding their grain from the Jürchen, and fleeing into the mountains. Some Chinese killed border guards and tried to escape to the south; those caught were killed in turn by the Jürchen.

The Ming court did not try to take advantage of the uprising, however, and it was soon suppressed by Nurhaci's troops. The Jürchen were warned to "be on their guard day and night and not associate with the Chinese of the villages."[3] They were now lodged in separate quarters in the towns, and even forbidden to walk down Chinese streets or visit Chinese homes. The Jürchen were ordered to carry arms at all times, while possession of any weapons by the Chinese was made illegal. In criminal cases Nurhaci urged leniency for all Jürchen, while full rigor was to be used against convicted Chinese, including death sentences for them and their families in cases of theft.

A second revolt of the Chinese took place in 1625, and was even more savagely repressed. There were widespread executions of the educated Chinese in the area, whom Nurhaci believed were fomenting the resistance. In an attempt to control the common people, Nurhaci marshaled them into registered groups, each containing thirteen households under a Chinese head-

man, with their work supervised by officials of the eight Jürchen banners. On paper, at least, each grouping was allowed seven oxen and one hundred acres of land, and had to return 20 percent of the yield to the Jin state, although it is not known how often these demands were fulfilled.

The Ming generals had failed to respond to either of these uprisings, but late in 1625 these generals began a series of vigorous counterattacks and, under Yuan Chonghuan's leadership, won their first serious victories over Nurhaci in 1626. Later that same year, Nurhaci died. In accordance with Jürchen custom—a custom derived from the Mongols of central Asia—he had not left his dominions and the title of khan to any one man, but instead had ordered them divided among his most able sons and nephews.

Not surprisingly, there followed a protracted struggle for power. The victor was Nurhaci's eighth son, Hong Taiji, who had been the general commanding the plain yellow and bordered yellow banners. This son was helped to power by Chinese advisers, and he responded by taking a more favorable view of the Chinese and their traditional institutions than his father had done. Six ministries, in exact imitation of those at the Ming court, were established, and Chinese were employed throughout this new bureaucracy. Nominally, the senior ministers were all Jürchen notables, but they were often absent on military or other business, leaving the practical running of affairs to their Chinese subordinates.

On the grounds that it was punitive to the Chinese, Hong Taiji abolished the thirteen-household registration system instituted by Nurhaci; he also held competitive examinations for the civil service in Liaodong, again following the traditional Chinese model; and he ordered reforms in the Jürchen written language to make it more serviceable in a new era of record keeping, census taking, and tax gathering. A swelling number of Chinese defectors from the Ming cause, many of them officers who had brought their own troops along with them, sought service with the new khan, who responded generously—too generously, thought some of his advisers, who protested that Chinese "boors without character" were filling the court.

Boors or not, the defection to the Jürchen of the senior Chinese generals assigned by the Ming to defend the area near the mouth of the Yalu River, and the northern areas of Shandong province, brought new power to Hong Taiji. In 1637 he established two full Chinese "banners" on the lines of Nurhaci's earlier system, increasing the number to four in 1639 and to eight in 1642. There was already a parallel structure of eight Mongol banners, formed in 1635, from Mongols who had turned against the Ming and pledged themselves to Hong Taiji's service. So by the early 1640s, the Jürchen leader had constructed a complete military and administrative structure, which was used to provide soldiers for active combat on a rotating system, to

register and protect their wives and children, and to supervise work on the land.

Even before this, in 1636, Hong Taiji had taken a symbolic step that went beyond that taken by Nurhaci in establishing the Jin dynasty in 1616: Hong Taiji decided to abolish his fledgling state's connection with the tribal past that was associated with the Jürchen name, and the memories it evoked of servitude to the Ming (明) dynasty. He declared the formation of a new dynasty called the Qing (清), which henceforth would rule over the Manchu and neighboring peoples, claiming greater power and a wider mandate than the Jin had done. *Qing* (pronounced "Ching") literally means "pure" or "clear" and, from 1636 until the final abdication of the Manchus in 1912, was used as the dynastic term for the successive Manchu rulers and for the China over which they ruled. Instead of Jürchen, Hong Taiji's people were now to be called Manchus. *Manchu* was a new term; though its exact meaning is not known, it was probably taken from a Buddhist term for "great good fortune," and implied a new measure of universality for the Qing state.

Hong Taiji now seemed poised for wider conquests. He had conquered Korea in 1638, forcing the king to renounce his loyalty to the Ming and to give his sons to the Manchus as hostages. Inside China, the Ming failures were everywhere evident, with the rebels Li Zicheng and Zhang Xianzhong in control of much of the western and northern parts of the country. Manchu raiding parties had crossed the Great Wall north of Peking and looted the area near the capital, along with wide swathes of land in Shandong province. They seized women and children, draft animals, silk, and silver, and left burnt-out, devastated cities in their wake.

Yet at the same time, there was disturbing evidence that the Manchus, despite their newly coined name with its grand pretensions, were themselves turning soft. Some of them were growing weary of war and used to the pleasures of Liaodong city life. Luxuries they had never known surrounded them, while agriculture faltered because the men-at-arms, although not fighting as well as before, still did not deign to work in the fields. The young men did not even like to go hunting anymore, sighed Hong Taiji, but "hang around the marketplaces and simply amuse themselves." If summoned to battle, "the soldiers stay in camp and just let the flunkies go."[4]

When the strategic Ming city of Jinzhou, south of the Daling River, fell to the Manchus in 1642, it was only after a sporadic ten-year siege in which the Manchus had been repulsed again and again by the Ming garrison troops. The victory came none too soon to boost Manchu morale. Two of the last few talented Ming generals surrendered after the battle and were suitably rewarded. But the mainland route to Peking through the pass at Shanhai-

guan was still guarded by the redoubtable Ming general Wu Sangui, and in 1643 Hong Taiji suddenly died, leaving his younger brother Dorgon as a regent for the compromise choice as heir, Hong Taiji's ninth son, a five-year-old boy.

The chance for further Manchu expansion looked frail indeed, but in the spring of 1644 Li Zicheng led his rebel army out of the Peking he had just seized and advanced across the plains east of the city to attack General Wu Sangui, whom Li saw as the last major defender of the Ming cause. General Wu turned from the Shanhaiguan pass and marched westward to confront Li. Seizing the incredible opportunity, the regent Dorgon rallied the troops of the boy Manchu emperor and led the armies of the Manchu, Mongol, and Chinese banners swiftly down the coast, crossing the border into China unopposed. Nurhaci's dream had suddenly become a reality.

Conquering the Ming

With the Manchu armies to his east and Li Zicheng's forces to his west, General Wu Sangui was in a desperate situation. His only hope to survive was by allying with one of his opponents. Among arguments for joining Li were the fact that he was Chinese, that he seemed to have the support of the local people, that he promised to end the abuses that had marked the late Ming state, and that he held Wu's father as a hostage. Otherwise, Li was an unknown quantity, violent and uneducated; moreover, the behavior of his army in Peking after he had seized the city in April 1644 was not encouraging to a wealthy and cultured official like General Wu. Li's troops had looted and ravaged the city, attacking and pillaging the homes of senior officials, seizing their relatives for ransom, or demanding enormous payoffs in "protection money." Even though Li had declared the formal founding of a new dynasty, he was unable to control his own generals in Peking, and Wu might well have wondered how effective Li would be in unifying China.

As for allying with the Manchus, there was the disadvantage that they were ethnically non-Chinese, and their Jürchen background included them in a history of semicivilized frontier people whom the Chinese had traditionally despised; furthermore, they had terrorized parts of north China in their earlier raids and had virtually wiped out some of the cities they had occupied. Yet in their favor was the early development of their embryonic regime, the Qing, which offered a promise of order: the six ministries, the examination system, the formation of the Chinese banners, the large numbers of Chinese advisers in senior positions—all were encouraging signs to

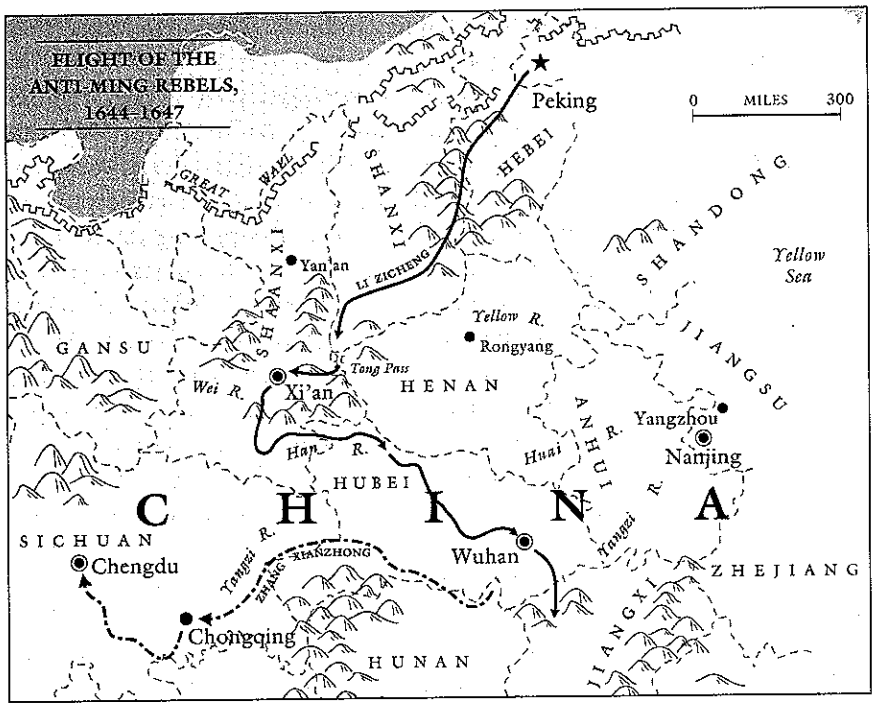
Wu. And their treatment of senior Chinese officials who surrendered had been good.

For a combination of these reasons and, according to popular tales, because Li had seized one of Wu's favorite concubines and had made her his own, General Wu Sangui threw in his lot with the Manchus, fought off the army that Li sent against him, and invited Dorgon to join him in recapturing Peking. Li retaliated by executing Wu's father and displaying the head on the walls of Peking. But the morale of Li's troops was fading fast, and not even his formal assumption of imperial rank on June 3, 1644, could shore him up. The next day he and his troops, weighed down by booty, fled to the west. On the sixth of June, the Manchus and Wu entered the capital, and the boy emperor was enthroned in the Forbidden City with the reign title of Shunzhi. The character for *Shun* (順) was the same term of "obedience" that Li had used for his brief dynasty; the addition of *-zhi* (治), "to rule," showed that the Manchus now formally claimed the mandate of heaven to rule China.

Although the reigning Ming emperor had hanged himself in April, and the Manchu Shunzhi now sat on the throne, this did not mean the Ming cause was dead. Many members of the imperial family had fled the capital at Li's coming, and hundreds of princes of various collateral branches of the family were living on their vast estates throughout China. The sanctity of their dynastic name, which had endured since 1368, was not to be lightly dismissed. Wu Sangui, in desperation, might have allied himself with the Manchus; but for hundreds of thousands of Chinese scholars and officials, the Ming name remained worth fighting and dying for.

It was to take the Manchus seventeen years to hunt down the last Ming pretenders, but since they also claimed to have entered Peking as the righteous avengers of the martyred Ming emperor, they also had to hunt down and destroy the leading anti-Ming rebels. Li Zicheng was their first target, as he fled southwest with his army to the Shaanxi city of Xi'an, where his career as a military rebel had commenced some twenty years earlier. After consolidating their hold on Shanxi* province, the Qing forces, in the spring of 1645, closed in on Li with a skillfully executed pincer movement. Forced out of Xi'an, Li fled with a dwindling number of followers southeast along the Han River to the city of Wuchang, crossed the Yangzi, and was finally cornered by the pursuing Manchus in the mountains on the northern border of Jiangxi province. In the summer of 1645, he died there—either by

*Note the similarity of *Shanxi* and *Shaanxi*—highly confusing in English. The Chinese characters for the first syllable are quite different, though in both names *-xi* stands for "west."



suicide, according to one source, or beaten to death by peasants from whom he was trying to steal food, according to another.

While this campaign was under way, the second major rebel leader, Zhang Xianzhong, had moved away from his base in central China and traveled westward up the Yangzi River, through its steep gorges, and into Sichuan province. After briefly seizing the river town of Chongqing, he made his capital in the wealthy and well-protected city of Chengdu. It was there, in December 1644, that he declared the formation of a new "Great Western Kingdom" and bestowed on himself the reign title of "Greatly Obedient" ruler, using the same "Shun" ideograph that Li Zicheng and the Manchus had adopted. But Zhang was not destined to rule much longer than Li had done, although he did establish a civilian bureaucracy staffed by scholars (many of whom were coerced into service), held examinations, and minted coinage. Zhang also set up a complex system of 120 armed military camps for the protection of his kingdom, which initially was threatened more by the armies of fleeing Ming princes than by the Manchus.

But in the ensuing years, Zhang seems to have gradually drifted into some bizarre private world of megalomania and cruelty. He laid long-range

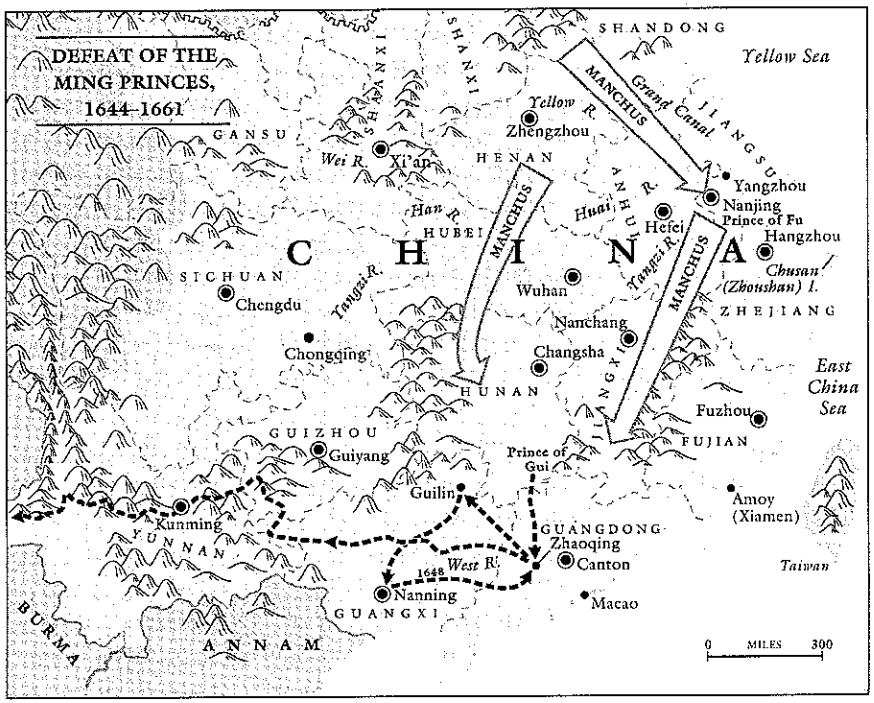
"plans" for his armies to conquer not only southern and eastern China, but also Mongolia, Korea, the Philippines, and Annam (the present Vietnam). He inflicted terrible punishments on those he believed were trying to betray him in Sichuan, beheading or maiming thousands of local scholars and their families, and even decimating whole regiments of his own armies. He finally abandoned the city of Chengdu in late 1646, burning much of it to the ground, and conducted a scorched-earth campaign of appalling thoroughness as he marched eastward. In January 1647, he was killed by Manchu troops.

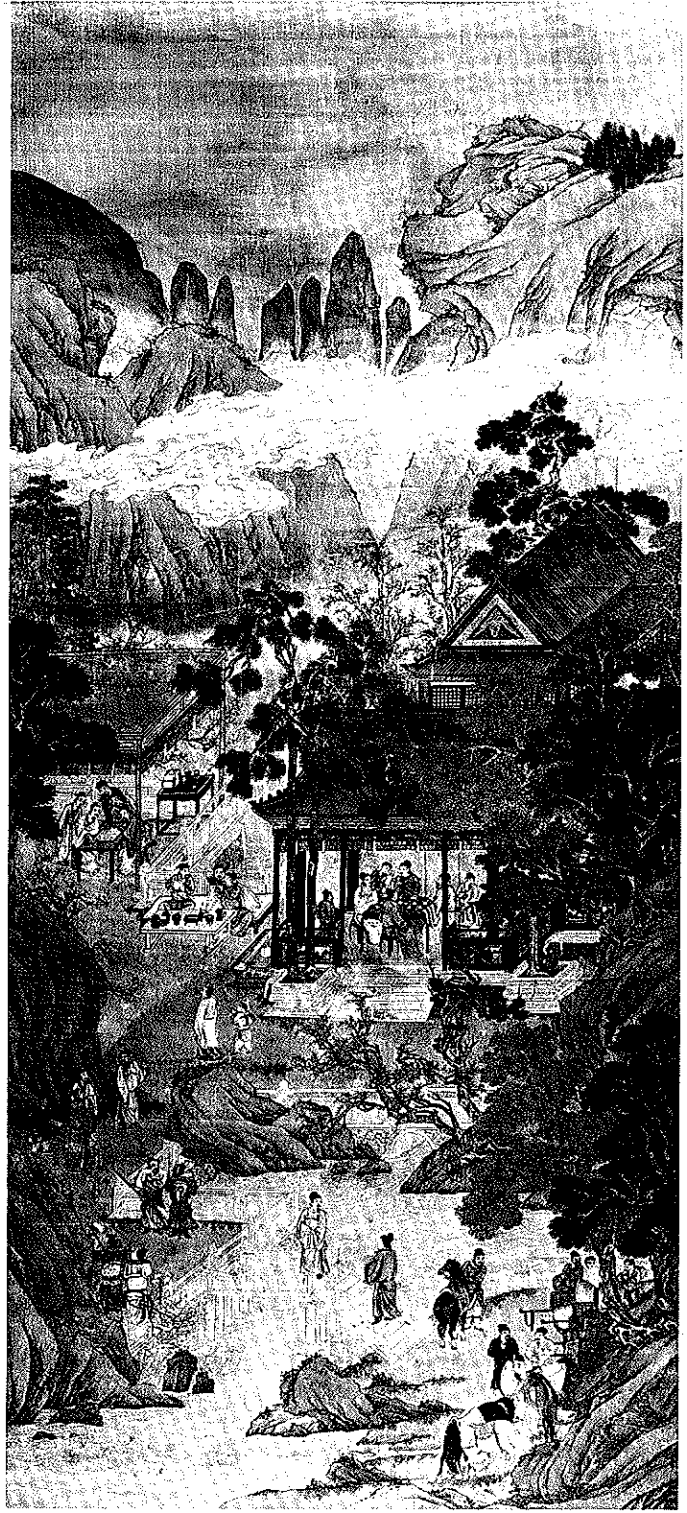
The elimination of Li and Zhang was essential to the long-range success of Manchu conquest plans, but most of the energies of the Manchus had to be spent on suppressing those members of the Ming ruling house who might be able to rally a viable national resistance to the conquest. Considering the strong sense of loyalty that Chinese scholars were taught to feel toward their ruling dynasty, and their natural inclination to protect their ancestral homes and estates from foreign aggressors, a skillful survivor of the Ming ruling house should have been able to assemble millions of supporters. The first man who tried to rally the Ming armies against the Manchus was one of Emperor Wanli's grandsons, the prince of Fu. As a young man, this prince had been raised on his family's great estates in Henan province, but his palaces had been burnt and his father killed by Li Zicheng in the early 1640s. Once the news of Emperor Chongzhen's suicide in Peking was confirmed, a group of senior Ming officials named the prince of Fu as his successor, and he was enthroned as "emperor" in the Yangzi River city of Nanjing. This was symbolically an important choice, since long before, in the fourteenth century, Nanjing had been the Ming capital, and it had remained the secondary capital throughout the whole dynasty. The prince of Fu tried to make a deal with the regent Dorgon, offering the Manchus enormous presents and an annual subsidy if they would return beyond the Great Wall to Liaodong. Dorgon responded by saying he would allow the prince to maintain a small independent kingdom if he abandoned his imperial claims. The prince rejected this offer on the advice of his most patriotic generals.

Over the next few months, when the prince of Fu should have been preparing Nanjing's defenses, his court was torn by the bitter quarrels, recriminations, and inefficiencies that had so plagued Emperor Wanli, including internecine struggles for power between pro- and anti-eunuch factions that echoed the battles between the Donglin partisans and Wei Zhongxian. While the Ming generals and senior officials bickered, a Manchu army advanced south down the line of China's great man-made inland waterway, the Grand Canal, and besieged the wealthy commercial city of

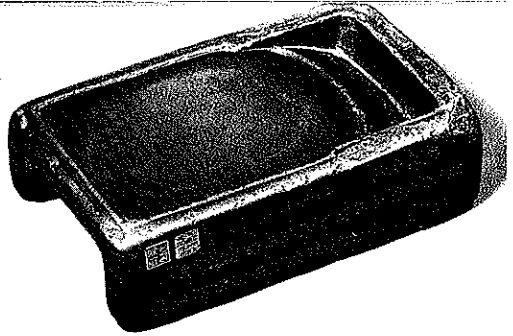
Yangzhou in May 1645. The Ming troops, who had carefully prepared batteries of cannon to defend the city walls, held out there for one week. But they were finally defeated by the superior cannon power and the remarkable courage of the Manchus, and the city was sacked for ten terrible days as a warning to the rest of China. The defenders of Nanjing, by contrast, put up almost no resistance, and the city surrendered to the Manchus in early June. The prince of Fu was captured and sent to Peking, where he died the following year.

With the prince of Fu's death, the situation grew more complicated as new claimants to the throne appeared. Two brothers, who were descendants of the founding Ming emperor, attempted successively to lead resistance against the Manchus on the eastern coast, first in Fuzhou (across from the island of Taiwan) and then in the rich southern trading entrepôt of Canton. The Fuzhou ruler was caught and executed in late 1646; his younger brother was executed in 1647, when Canton fell to the Manchus. Another descendant of the Ming founder led a series of unsuccessful attempts to rally resistance against the Manchus up and down the east coast, basing his court for a time at Amoy (Xiamen), as well as on Chusan (Zhoushan) Island,

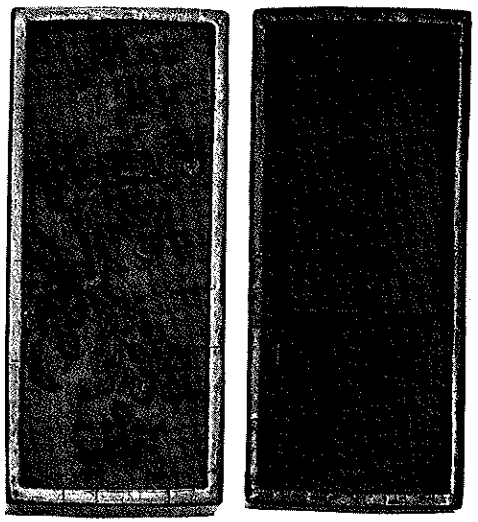




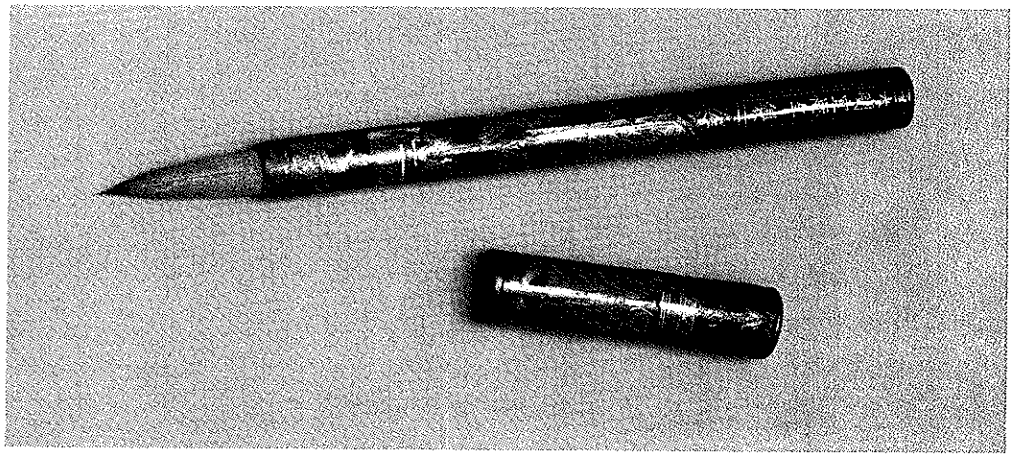
"Eighteen Scholars Ascend to the Ying Zhou Isle of Immortality" This Ming dynasty painting by Qiu Ying depicts a grand gathering of



Inkstone, late Ming dynasty The inscription on its side reads: "I give myself to you / To be treated like jade. / To place me among gold and / grain would be to insult me."



Inkstick, late Ming dynasty Composed of molded pine soot and animal glue, this inkstick shows a plum blossom on one side and on the other the title of a poem, "Falling Are the Plums."



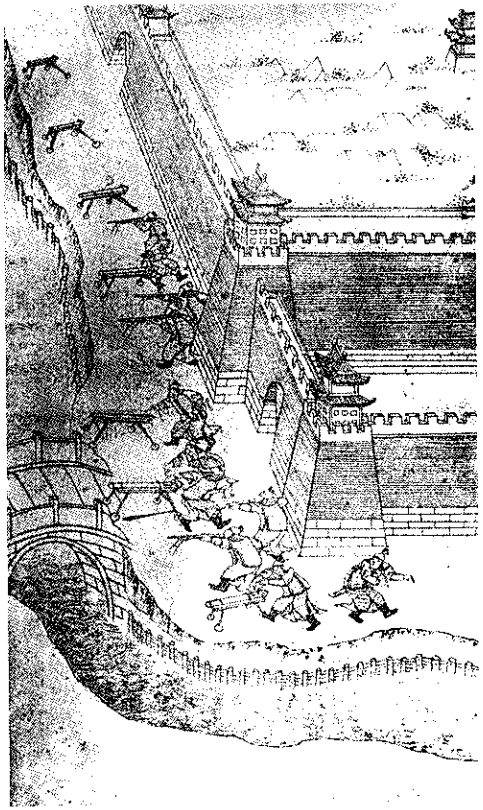
Brush and cover of lacquered wood, late Ming dynasty

Woodblock prints of porcelain production at Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province, late Ming dynasty
Although the distinctive blue-and-white porcelains they fashioned became valuable export commodities, low wages drove porcelain workers in Jingdezhen to riot in 1601. Top; workers decorating porcelain with painted cobalt designs; bottom: two men dipping the painted porcelain into a bowl of glaze before firing.

Woodblock illustration of farmers celebrating a good harvest, late Ming dynasty The inscription reads in

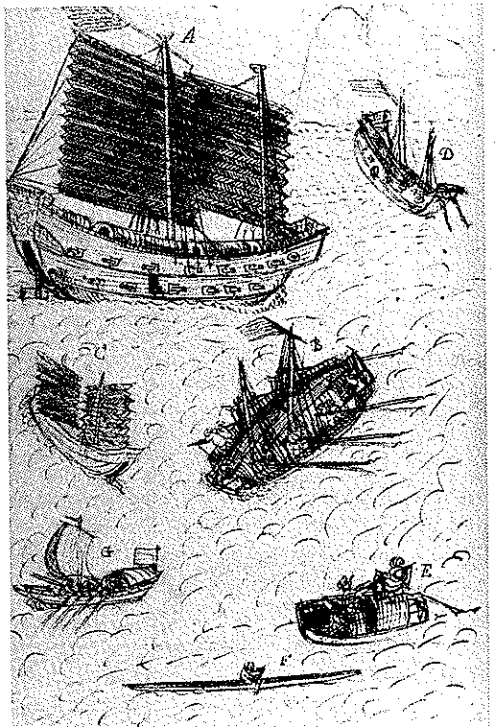
The emperor Wanli seated on a royal barge Wanli's inactivity allowed power to devolve to the court eunuchs.

A Jürchen tribesman, depicted in a woodblock print of the late Ming dynasty During the late Ming the Jürchen expanded their power in the Liaodong region under the leadership of Nurhaci and his son, Hong Taiji.



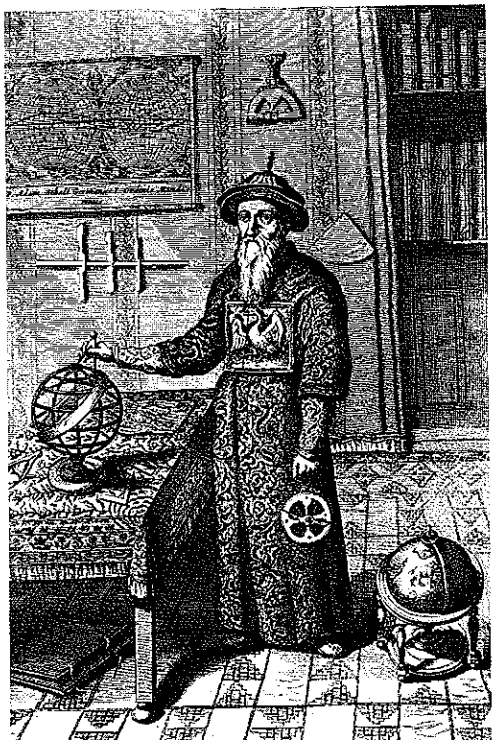
The Ming defenders of Liaoyang abandon their guns in flight from the attacking Manchus

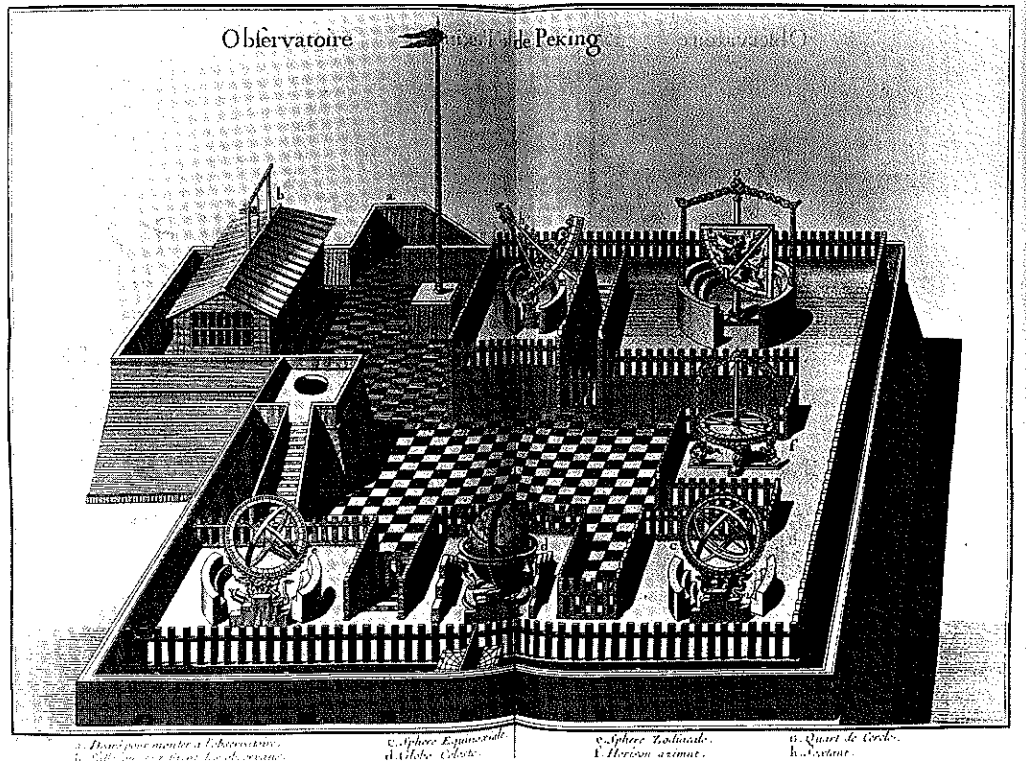
The emperor Shunzhi in court dress



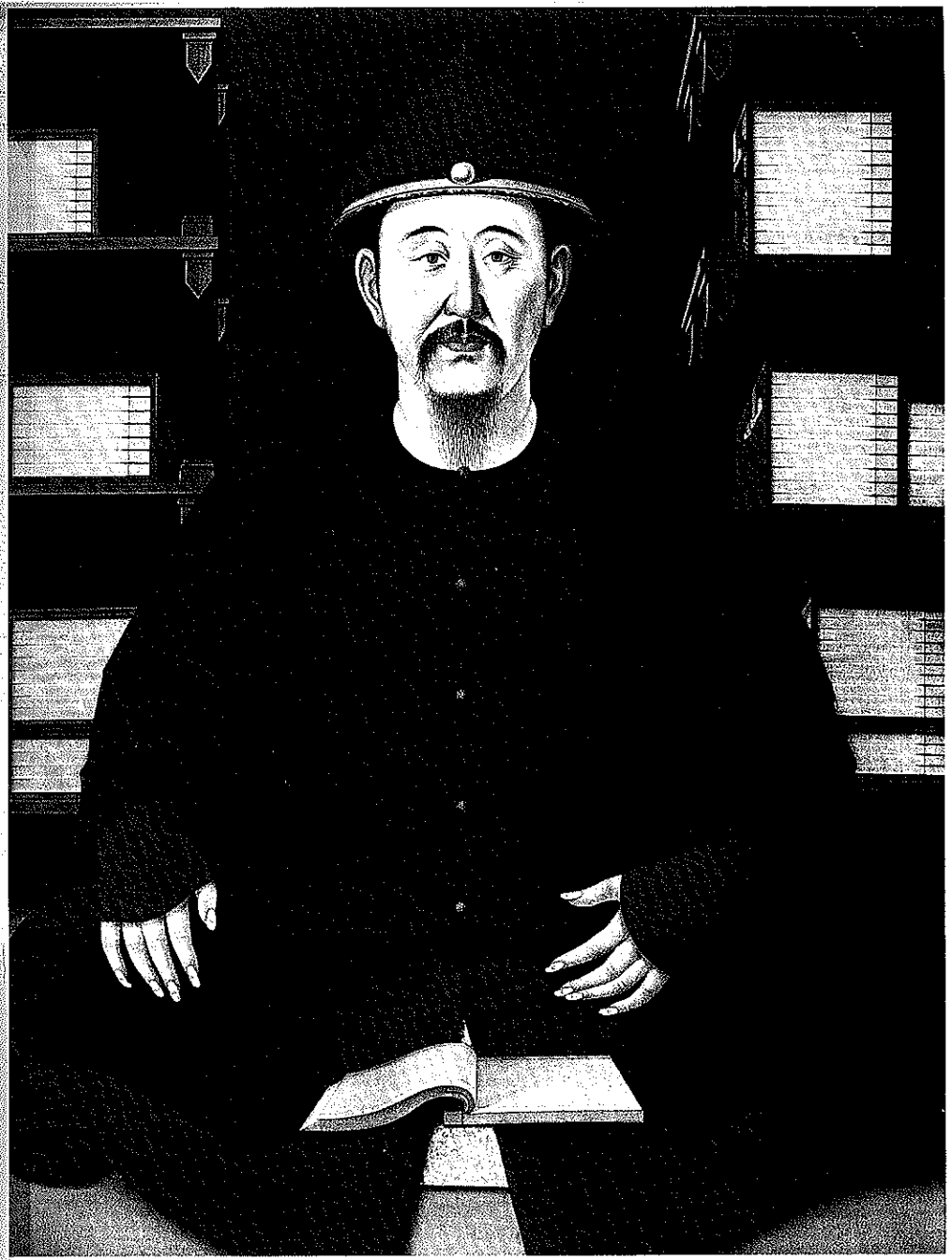
An armed Chinese junk, observed near Canton in 1637

Father Johann Adam Schall von Bell Shunzhi grew close to the Jesuit missionary Adam Schall, whom the young emperor called "Grandpa" and appointed court astronomer.



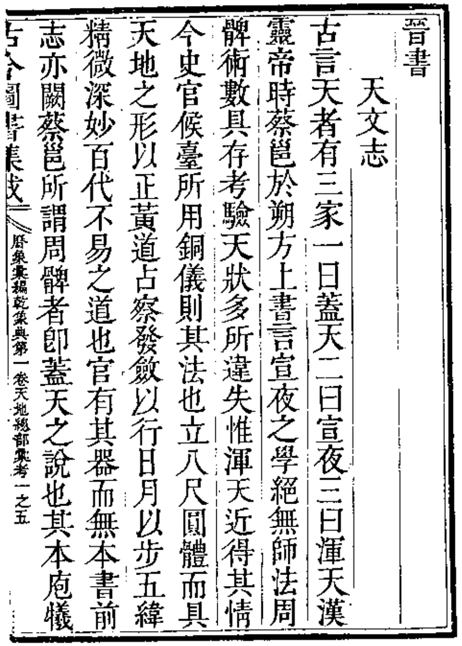


The Peking Observatory Schall's Jesuit colleague Ferdinand Verbiest refitted the observatory on Peking's eastern wall with a sextant, quadrant, and other astronomical instruments.



A portrait of the emperor Kangxi at his studies Through his study of the Confucian classics, Kangxi took on the aura of a "sage ruler."

Illustrated example of filial piety, 1688 In this woodblock print a filial son melts the ice on a frozen river with his own body in order to provide his parents with fresh fish in the winter.



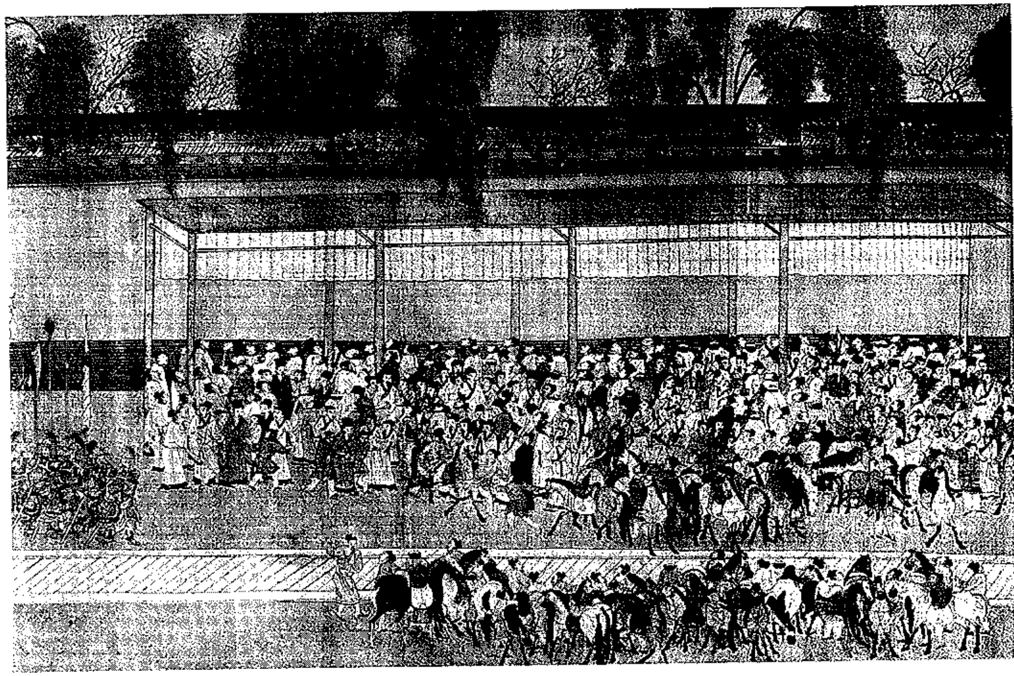
晉書

天文志

古言天者有三家一曰蓋天二曰宣夜三曰渾天漢靈帝時蔡邕於朔方上書言宣夜之學絕無師法周髀術數具存考驗天狀多所違失惟渾天近得其情今史官候臺所用銅儀則其法也立八尺圓體而具天地之形以正黃道占察發斂以行日月以步五緯精微深妙百代不易之道也官有其器而無本書前志亦闕蔡邕所謂周髀者卽蓋天之說也其本庖犧

古今圖書集成 曆象彙編乾象典第一卷天地總部彙考一之五

A page from the "Gujin tushu jicheng," printed in 1726 This immense encyclopedia, set with movable copper type, was compiled by scholars during Kangxi's reign.

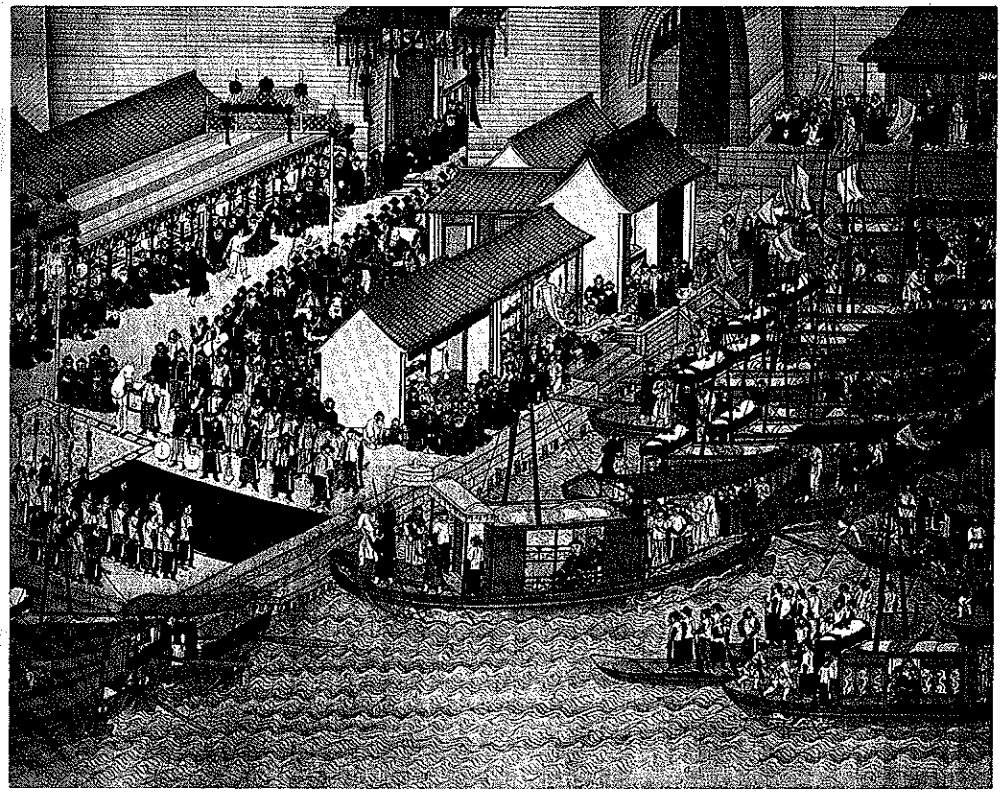


Candidates for scholarly degrees anxiously await their examination results, Ming dynasty It was critical for Kangxi to inspire scholars to confer on the Qing dynasty the loyalty they had given the Ming.

Bada Shanren's "Birds and Rock," 1692 Bada Shanren and other painters of this period expressed their defiance of the Qing obliquely through their art.

"The stains on the fan are still very bright. I'll paint a few leaves and twigs around them" Kong Shangren's *The Peach Blossom Fan,* a drama set in the Ming court of the prince of Fu, became a palace favorite under Kangxi.

"Emperor Kangxi's Tour of the South" (detail) *Inspection of Water Dikes on the Yangzi*



"Kangxi Southern Inspection Tour" (detail), by Wang Hui and assistants, c. 1695 A scroll showing Kangxi about to disembark at Suzhou.

Silk reeling This detail of a woodblock print from an imperial picture album of the Kangxi period depicts women reeling silk thread after plunging the cocoons into boiling water.

Chinese beggars Yongzheng sought to emancipate beggar groups, such as those depicted in this early handscroll, from institutionalized discrimination.

Another leaf of the same album shows peasants giving thanks to the god of grain after a bountiful harvest.

The emperor Yongzheng reading Yongzheng's great initiatives were in fiscal, administrative, and moral reform.

and even for a short period on a boat. He abandoned his title in 1653, and thereafter resistance to the Qing on the east coast passed into the hands of supporters of the last Ming claimant, the prince of Gui.

After the failure of the Yangzi valley and coastal regimes, this prince of Gui became the final hope of the Ming imperial cause. The last known surviving grandson of Wanli, the prince was a pampered twenty-one year old when Peking fell, and had no experience in governmental or military affairs. Forced to flee from his ancestral estates in Hunan* when the rebel Zhang Xianzhong attacked the area, he moved southwest to Zhaoqing, west of Canton. Over the objections of his mother, who warned that he was too young and delicate for the role, a group of fugitive officials named him emperor there in late 1646. Forced out of Guangdong province by Qing forces, the prince of Gui and his court spent the next year and a half roaming across Guangxi province, based most often in either Guilin or Nanning (near the border of Annam), as a number of Qing armies pursued him.

Despite the amazing feats of the Qing armies, which had campaigned successfully over the fifteen hundred miles separating Peking from Canton, their conquest of this huge area was inevitably partial, and patriotic Chinese who bitterly resented the Manchu invasion and the Ming humiliation had time to collect their forces. In 1648 a number of former Ming officials who had been collaborating with the Manchus threw off their allegiance to the Qing and declared themselves dedicated to the cause of Ming restoration. The prince of Gui, whose southern court had been described by a contemporary as being filled with "all manner of betel-nut chewers, brine-well workers, and aborigine whorehouse owners,"[5] suddenly found himself welcomed back to Zhaoqing by numerous and enthusiastic supporters, while the Manchu troops in Canton were massacred. As had earlier fugitive regimes, this "emperor" sought to reassemble a working bureaucracy organized on hierarchical lines, to hold examinations, to set up a viable military command, and to construct some kind of provincial administration that could control the countryside and collect taxes. But his court, like all the others, was torn by factional strife among rival groupings of ministers, generals, and eunuchs, and failed to lead a concerted opposition to the Manchus.

By early 1650 the Qing forces had rallied and suppressed the key central China areas of declared support for the prince of Gui's regime, and had launched a two-pronged counterattack on his southern base. These thrusts were coordinated by several of the powerful Ming generals who had defected to Hong Taiji back in 1633. In December 1650, the Ming court of the prince of Gui fled from Guangdong province, traveling down the West River into

*Note also in English the closeness of *Henan* and *Hunan*. In Chinese, *He* means "river," *Hu* means "lake." In both names, the syllable *nan* means "south."

Guangxi. For the next decade, no longer a court in any institutional sense but simply a band of fugitives held together by a shared wish to resist the domination of China by a foreign power, they retreated steadily westward—from Guangxi into Guizhou province, from Guizhou to mountainous Yunnan, and finally across the Chinese border into Burma.

The king of Burma, who initially offered sanctuary to the Ming but changed his mind, massacred most of the prince of Gui's followers, and thereafter held the "emperor" and his family virtual prisoners. It was General Wu Sangui, once the Ming guardian of the Shanhaiguan passes, who in 1661 spearheaded a final attack by the Qing armies into Burma. The Burmese handed over the sad remnants of the Ming court to Wu, who had them transported back into Chinese territory. There, in Yunnan province early in 1662, the last "emperor" of the Ming and his only son were executed by strangulation. The Qing state needed to fear no more "legitimate" rivals to its rule.

Adapting to China

The Manchus had seized Peking in 1644 with startling ease, and by 1662 had killed the last Ming claimants, but the succession of military victories did not mean that they had solved the problem of how to rule China. Dorgon, as regent for the child emperor Shunzhi, inherited a hybrid system of government, developed in Liaodong, in which a tentative version of China's six ministries was combined with the military and administrative eight-banner organization of the Manchus. He now had to adapt these institutions to the task of controlling a continent-sized country.

On one issue at least—that of Manchu dress and hairstyle—Dorgon was determined to make the Chinese adapt, rather than the reverse. Only a day after entering Peking, he issued a decree stating that, henceforth, all Chinese men should shave their foreheads and have their hair braided in back in the Manchu-style queue, just as Nurhaci had ordered in Liaodong. A storm of protest led Dorgon to cancel the decree, but the following June another order was issued that Chinese *military* men must adopt the queue; this was to make it easier for the Manchus to identify their enemies in battle, and assure them that those who had surrendered would remain loyal to them in the future. But senior advisers of Dorgon's felt that this did not go far enough; in July 1645, Dorgon reissued the order that every Chinese man must shave his forehead and begin to grow the queue within ten days or face execution. The Chinese faced a stark choice: "Keep your hair and lose your head," as this order was summarized in popular parlance, "or lose your hair and keep your head."[6]

Ming Chinese men had prized long and elaborately dressed hair as a sign of masculinity and elegance, and they bitterly resented Dorgon's decree. In many areas the order led them to take up arms against the Manchus even when they had already formally surrendered, but this time Dorgon stayed firm. Further decrees ordered the Chinese to adopt the Manchu style of dress—high collar and tight jacket fastened at the right shoulder—rather than wear the loosely hanging robes of the Ming. In another departure from Chinese custom, Manchu women were forbidden to bind their feet to make them smaller, as Chinese girls and women had been doing for centuries. Despite the pain caused by this practice, the custom had spread from the elite to the peasantry, and tiny feet had become the measure of feminine beauty to the Chinese. Millions of women suffered as a result. In refusing to go along with the custom, the Manchus both asserted their cultural independence and created an effective barrier to the intermarriage of Manchus and Chinese, since Chinese men professed to find the Manchu women's normal-sized feet sexually unattractive.

At the Peking court, the Manchus cut back on the thousands of eunuchs who had filled the Ming palaces and whose intrigues had been so harmful to the regime. Though eunuchs remained as supervisers in the imperial women's quarters, other court duties and special financial tasks were assigned to Chinese bondservants who had been captured and enslaved in Liaodong in the 1620s and 1630s. The eunuchs were also deprived of the quasi-military status they had had as palace guards under the Ming; instead, an elite corps of bannermen, many of them descendants of warriors who had helped found the original Jürchen state under Nurhaci, were appointed to special guards divisions to patrol the palaces.

Each of the eight banners was settled in a territorial zone outside the Peking palace walls, so that the emperor and his family lived literally surrounded by their most loyal troops. The Chinese inhabitants of Peking were forcibly relocated to the southern part of the city; although this initially caused much suffering, the southern area swiftly became a thriving commercial and residential quarter. In addition, the Manchus confiscated hundreds of thousands of acres of good farmland in northern China to provide food and rewards for the garrison armies. Much of this land had belonged to members of the Ming imperial family, although estates of wealthy former Ming officials were also confiscated. In all, some forty thousand Manchu bannermen received approximately six acres each, with much larger estates being granted to senior Manchu officers.

In a further attempt to segregate the Chinese from the Manchus, Dorgon ordered the removal of many Chinese farmers in this north China area. Shrewd Chinese landlords, realizing the possibilities of exploiting this period of dynastic transition, seized unclaimed or abandoned land for themselves. The result was widespread chaos and devastation. Thousands of former farmers became vagabonds or bandits, or fled the area altogether. Many Manchus, however, were incapable of farming the land themselves, and they soon made their plots over to Chinese tenants on various types of contracts. Some of these contracts reduced the Chinese to an almost serflike dependency on their masters, and when draft animals were not available, the tenant farmers were forced to drag the plows themselves. Within twenty-five years of the Manchu invasion, about 5 million acres of land in a huge swathe some 150 miles in radius around Peking had been taken over by the Manchus. Still, neither a full-fledged feudal system nor any form of slave labor ever grew ensconced, and traditional Chinese patterns of agricultural work, tenancy, and even independent ownership slowly revived.

In most areas of governmental and intellectual organization, the Manchus were content to follow Chinese precedents. The six ministries, which were in charge respectively of civil affairs, finance, rituals, war, justice, and public works, were retained intact, although the leadership of each ministry was placed in the hands of two presidents, one a Manchu and one a Chinese bannerman or a civilian Chinese. A similar multiethnic dyarchy of four men (two Manchus and two Chinese) held the title of vice-president in each ministry. As liaison between the ministries and the emperor's immediate circle, the senior positions known as "grand secretaries" were also perpetuated. There were seven grand secretaries serving together in the early years of Shunzhi's reign: two were Manchu, two were Chinese bannermen, and three were former senior Ming officials who had recently surrendered.

Accomplished Chinese scholars who offered their loyalty to the Manchus were given staff positions in the various ministries and in the Grand Secretariat. To bring new men into the bureaucracy, the national examinations on the classical literary tradition were reinstituted in 1646, when 373 degrees were awarded, mainly to candidates in the Peking area or the bordering provinces of Shanxi and Shandong. To broaden the geographical spread another 298 degrees were given in 1647, mainly to candidates from the reconquered provinces of Jiangsu and Anhui. The choice of senior examiners showed Dorgon's awareness of Chinese sensibilities: although two were Chinese bannermen and one a scholarly Manchu, the fourth was a classical Chinese scholar and official who had surrendered only in 1644.

The Manchus could consolidate their administration in the provinces only after their armies had destroyed the Ming opposition, but slowly they

installed their own officials on a system similar to that of the Ming. They initially subdivided the fifteen main provinces that had existed under the Ming into twenty-two units, but eventually they cut back that number and simply divided in two each of the three largest Ming provinces, so as to make them easier to administer. Each of these eighteen provinces was under a governor, and in the early Qing most of these governors were Chinese bannermen. Dorgon clearly believed these men had proven their loyalty to his regime, and the fact that they were ethnically Chinese and spoke the Chinese language would make them more acceptable to their compatriots across the country. Under each governor were two officials who supervised respectively the economy and the practice of justice in his province, and a number of supervisory censors and intendants. Then came the prefects, based in the larger cities, who supervised, in their turn, the local county officials—known to Westerners as "magistrates"—who were in charge of day-to-day administration and tax gathering in the towns and countryside.

Manchu power was spread very thinly over China's vast territory, and though the Qing established military garrisons in most of the key provincial cities, the new dynasty survived basically by maintaining a tenuous balance of power among three components of its state. First were the Manchus themselves, the former Jürchen, who had their own language and their own aristocratic rankings based on earlier Jürchen connections or on descent from Nurhaci. The Manchus tried to maintain their martial superiority through such practices as hunting and mounted archery; and they emphasized their natural cultural distinctness by using the Manchu spoken and written language. Though for practical reasons they had to let Chinese officials use Chinese for administrative documents, all important documents were translated into Manchu. The Manchus also kept to their own private religious practices, which were conducted by shamanic priests and priestesses in temple compounds to which the Chinese were denied access.

Second came the other bannermen, both Mongol and Chinese, most of whom were from families that had surrendered well before the conquest of 1644. With the Mongol bannermen posted mainly on the north and northwestern border regions, it was the Chinese bannermen who played the greater part in ruling China. They had their own elaborate hierarchies, based partly on noble titles granted by Nurhaci or Hong Taiji and partly by the date on which they had surrendered—those who had surrendered earliest often had the highest status. Many of these bannermen spoke both Manchu and Chinese, and had absorbed the martial culture of the former while retaining the social mores of the latter. Their support was invaluable to the Manchus; without these bannermen, there would probably have been no conquest and certainly no consolidation.

Third came the ethnic Chinese—usually known as the "Han" Chinese—raised in China proper. These Chinese essentially had four choices: they could be either active or passive collaborators, or they could choose to be resisters, again either actively or passively. Some of them, like Wu Sangui, were active collaborators with the Manchus (though never enrolled as bannermen); some defied the Manchus as active resisters and died fighting them; some, as we will see, chose passive resistance. But most, seeing the way the wind was blowing, passively collaborated with the new order.

Those from wealthy backgrounds tried to make sure that they could hold onto their ancestral lands and, if successful, proceeded to enroll their sons in the state examinations and to apply for lucrative bureaucratic office under the new regime. But the Manchus had reason to be cautious about the loyalty of this group, as they had learned in 1648 when thousands of surrendered Chinese had risen to defend the Ming cause against the Manchus in the Canton area. Millions more in the rich farmland south of the Yangzi sought to cast off their allegiance when the famous warrior general Zheng Chenggong (often called Koxinga by Westerners using a romanized form of his honorific name) launched an attack on the crucial city of Nanjing in the late 1650s. Though their resistance was rapidly suppressed by Qing troops, it had been a dangerous moment. In the south, the Manchus initially made no attempt to establish a strong presence. Instead, once the Ming claimants were dead, they let Wu Sangui and two other Chinese generals who had long before gone over to the Manchus administer the huge territories as virtually independent fiefdoms.

The Manchus were conscious that the Ming dynasty had fallen in part because of factional battles and court intrigues, but they were not immune to the same weaknesses. For instance, both of the nobly born generals who had been pivotal in the suppression of the rebel regimes of Zhang Xianzhong and Li Zicheng were later arrested on trumped-up charges of inefficiency and treachery, and died mysteriously in Manchu prisons in Peking. The regent Dorgon himself behaved extravagantly and outrageously, arrogating to himself nearly imperial powers, seizing control of several banners and ousting their generals, marrying the widow of one of his dead rivals, demanding concubines from Korea, and planning to build a palace fortress in Rehe (Jehol), north of Peking. When Dorgon died in 1650 on a hunting trip, the Manchu nobles fell to fighting over his inheritance, and the Qing regime was in danger of fragmenting.

By clever maneuvering, however, the young emperor Shunzhi, now aged thirteen, was able to consolidate his hold on the throne. Though raised as a Manchu in a Manchu court, Shunzhi seems to have been far more adaptable to Chinese ways than most of the senior Manchus around him. Astute enough

to avoid being dominated by the magnates who succeeded Dorgon, and militarily shrewd enough to push the attacks on the last Ming supporters through to a successful conclusion, he also studied the Chinese language carefully, became a lover of Chinese novels and plays, and was deeply influenced by a number of devout Chinese Buddhist monks with whom he studied at court. For the last year of his life, Shunzhi grew passionately enamoured of one of his junior consorts and completely neglected the reigning empress. At the same time he returned considerable power to the palace eunuchs and revived several eunuch bureaus that had been disbanded at the time of the Qing conquest. The reasons for this are not clear, but possibly Shunzhi wanted to make the inner court more privately his own, without Manchu bodyguards and bondservants to report his movements back to the nobles of his entourage.

In another unusual development, Shunzhi became close friends with a Catholic Jesuit missionary, Father Johann Adam Schall von Bell. Jesuits from Europe had been actively preaching and seeking converts in China since the late Ming. Some Jesuits had been captured by Zhang Xianzhong and marched with his armies in Sichuan; others had accompanied the fleeing troops of the southern Ming pretenders. Schall von Bell was one of a small group that had been in Peking in 1644 and had decided to risk staying there. Because he had a high level of scientific skill, Dorgon appointed him to direct the Imperial Bureau of Astronomy. Since the imperial court was expected to determine the calendar for the entire country, it would greatly reinforce Shunzhi's claim to be Son of Heaven if the calculations were as precise as possible. Schall von Bell's favored status may also have been another way for Emperor Shunzhi to express his independence, or even to rediscover the father that he had lost so young. For Shunzhi called the sixty-year-old Schall von Bell "Grandpa" *(mafa),* summoned him regularly for conferences on religion and politics, and even allowed him to build a church in Peking.

Shunzhi died suddenly in 1661, probably from smallpox, not long after his beloved consort. But far from mourning his passing, the four senior Manchus who took over as regents for Shunzhi's young son almost immediately vilified his memory. Claiming that they had Shunzhi's last will and testament in their possession, they publicized this document to the country at large. According to the regents, Shunzhi blamed himself for betraying the military norms of his Manchu ancestors, for favoring the eunuchs, and for valuing Chinese advisers more than Manchus. "One reason that the Ming lost the empire," said the document, "was that they made the error of relying on eunuchs. I was clearly aware of their corruption, but I was unable to heed this warning. . . . I have caused the Manchu statesmen to

have no desire to serve and their zeal has been dissipated."[7]

The four regents—among whom Oboi, a veteran general, rapidly became the most powerful—moved decisively to change the policies of Shunzhi. They executed the leading eunuch and abolished the eunuch offices, establishing in their place an effective imperial-household system supervised by Manchus. They insisted on much tougher tax-collection policies throughout the Chinese countryside. In one famous case in Jiangsu, they ordered the investigation of over 13,000 wealthy Chinese declared delinquent in their tax payments; at least 18 were publicly executed and thousands more deprived of their scholarly degrees.

In other developments, Schall von Bell was arrested and thrown into prison, Manchus were promoted to high positions, and senior Chinese scholars were humiliated. In an attempt to starve out the last anti-Manchu rebels on the island of Taiwan by depriving them of all support from allies living along China's eastern coast, the regents rammed through a savage policy of moving the Chinese coastal population twenty miles inland, despite all the suffering such an order caused. In Fujian province, for example, 8,500 farmers and fishermen were reported to have died between 1661 and 1663 as a direct result of this order. By the end of the 1660s, it looked as though the policy of peaceful adaptation to China that in various ways had been developed by Nurhaci, Hong Taiji, Dorgon, and Shunzhi was about to be abandoned in the name of a new Manchu nativism.

Class and Resistance

During these early years of Qing dynasty consolidation, there were numerous occasions when different economic and social groups seem to have been pitted against each other. We noted briefly how Li Zicheng spoke of a new era of peace and prosperity for the Chinese, and how both he and Zhang Xianzhong, hating the scholars and officials, had many of them killed. In other parts of China, the news of the Ming emperor's suicide in 1644 had been enough to trigger actions that point to deep and underlying levels of hostility: peasants killed their landlords, for example, and sacked or burned the homes of the wealthy; townsmen turned on the officials within their walls or fought openly with peasant armies in the countryside. The indentured servants in some great households rioted in groups, killing their masters, looting their property, terrorizing the local communities. Poor soldiers mutinied. Fishermen joined pirate groups and raided up and down the coast. Scattered squads of peasant irregulars fought on long after leaders like Li Zicheng had been killed, continuing to cause panic and trouble throughout Shunzhi's reign. Women emerged as military leaders and won brief moments of fame. Junior officials turned on their seniors, and insisted on policies of resistance that led to the sack of the towns they defended.

But the idea of class warfare presumes a level of economic cohesion and self-consciousness concerning one's role in society that seems to have been lacking in China at the time. For each occasion on which one can find social tension, one can point to others in which the lines were crossed. Li Zicheng had several successful scholars from wealthy backgrounds on the staff of his Shun regime. Rich landowners fighting off peasant rebels might be protected by peasant militias. Scholars escaping to the hills used local villagers to develop defensive networks against the advancing Manchus. Fleeing Ming princes were aided by the dispossessed and the poor in the mountainous coastal terrain of the east. Townsmen defended their magistrates. On some of the Ming estates they seized, the Manchus gave the land to the poor tenants who had worked it, offering them hope for economic advancement that they had never dreamed of before.

As we have seen, class lines in seventeenth-century China are difficult to unravel. They blurred and crossed in ways that are confusing to those of us whose historical sense of "class" may come largely from the study of the transition from feudalism to capitalism by means of an urban bourgeoisie who gradually won power—through force and representative institutions—from a reluctant nobility.

In Ming and Qing China, there was almost no aristocracy as such. The descendants of the ruling families of even the greatest dynasties did not retain their titles and prestige once their dynasties had fallen. Thus during the life of the dynasty the descendants of the Ming founder, as well as all other male children of the successive Ming emperors, had enjoyed honorific titles and lives of leisure on great estates—the prince of Fu and the prince of Gui were two such men—but they had not coexisted with aristocratic survivors of the previous Yuan dynasty (1271–1368). Similarly, after 1644, the former Ming aristocracy was not preserved. The Manchus had their own aristocracy of a kind, formed from the descendants of Nurhaci and other famous warriors, and from the powerful Chinese generals who had submitted early to the rising Qing state. But the Manchus' ingenious policy held that, within a system of nine aristocratic ranks, a given family dropped one rung on the ladder with each noble incumbent's death: thus, a title of the third rank would be inherited as a fourth-rank title and then drop to the fifth. Ultimately—unless the emperor repromoted a member for conspicuous merit—the once-noble family would re-enter the ranks of the commoners.

Yet there was certainly an "upper class" in China—even if this class

cannot be defined in terms of aristocratic connections, nor in terms of precise economic status—and the Manchus chose to perpetuate the system that they encountered when they conquered the country. Upper-class status came from an amalgam of four factors: wealth, lineage, education, and bureaucratic position. The type of wealth most valued continued to be agricultural land, but the Qing upper class might also possess large amounts of silver ingots (which served as China's official means of exchange), large libraries of classical works, collections of paintings, jade, porcelain, bolts of silk, large homes, holdings in urban real estate, or interests in commercial ventures ranging from pawnshops to pharmacies.

Lineage systems—sometimes called clans or common-descent groups—bound extended families together in a network of mutual support. A certain amount of wealth might be pooled and transmitted to later generations in the form of lineage land, the income from which would pay for the upkeep of ancestral temples and graveyards, and for teachers who served as instructors in lineage schools. Marriages between the children of powerful lineages were carefully negotiated by the parents, and the survival of large numbers of meticulous genealogies shows how seriously the whole system was perpetuated and supervised.

The dominant role of education in Qing China was the result of the power and prestige attached to holding office in the bureaucracy, entrance into which was governed almost entirely through competitive examinations run by the state. In normal times few people rose to high office via a military career, and fewer still just because their families had money or imperial connections. Qing rulers perpetuated the Ming curriculum for the examinations. It was a difficult one, based on memorization and analysis of a group of prescribed texts attributed to the sage Confucius, or to some of his early followers, and a small number of approved commentaries on those texts. The texts were written in classical Chinese, which was different grammatically and structurally from the everyday spoken language. Hence if a family had the money to send their sons to a good teacher who had himself passed the higher examinations with distinction, or if they ran a lineage school and hired their own private teachers of similar status, then obviously their children had a better chance of passing the examinations and entering high office. Even if they did not get official posts, passing the examinations brought them exemption from corvée labor dues and from corporal punishment in the courts.

Finally, even though it might be risky to hold bureaucratic office in a faction-torn court, or in a countryside threatened by bandits or civil war, it was still possible in a few years of officeholding to make enough money from salary, perquisites, special fees, and perhaps outright graft to repay all

the costs one had incurred in obtaining the position, and retain a hefty surplus to invest in more land and in educating one's own children. Furthermore, the mere fact of prior membership in the bureaucracy was enough to bring a measure of protection from other local officials whom one could meet as social equals after retiring and returning home to enjoy the fruits of one's labors.

Since this upper class drew much of its wealth from land, there was always a chance for friction with tenants on that land. As Ming officials had discovered, if rents grew too high, tenants might practice rent strikes or even take up arms against their landlords. If evicted, they might turn to banditry or other forms of social violence. But there was no simple landlord-tenant warfare in seventeenth-century China, since there were so many different strata of people working the land. Thus whenever the "peasants" took up arms against the "gentry" in the 1640s, the reasons have to be sought in precise gradations of local economic and personal relationships. The rage of Li Zicheng and Zhang Xianzhong and their followers against the privileged came from a diffuse sense of frustration and a desire to share in the good life, rather than from a landless / landlord antagonism.

And yet there were some broad shifts in social and economic relationships during these transitional years. The Oboi regents might employ intimidation or force to coerce the local gentry of Jiangsu into paying their taxes on time, but the Manchus conspicuously failed in their attempt to have an efficient, up-to-date survey made of the landholdings of the wealthy Chinese, a survey that alone might have enabled the Manchus to institute an equitable land-tax system. The task was a vast one, and the paradox was that it depended on local Chinese, knowledgeable about local conditions, to carry it out. By means of endless delaying tactics, evasions, and complaints of the cost involved, the landlords prevented an adequate survey from being made. The failure to reform the land-tax system left those families who had been able to accumulate large landholdings during the era of turbulence in the position of acquiring yet larger holdings in the years that followed.

Some modern Chinese historians have argued that there was essentially an alliance between the Manchu conquerors and the Chinese upper class that led to the perpetuation of a set of "feudal relationships" in the countryside, and that quashed latent "sprouts of capitalism" that had been developing in the cities. This is hard to prove. Although Manchu policies did allow some families to grow far richer, many Chinese gentry reformers—often intellectually linked to those earlier Donglin reformers of the late Ming—protested these policies and sought to gain fairer tax systems in the areas where they held office, even at the expense of their own class. The initial failure of these gentry reformers can be traced to the fact that the

post-1644 Peking bureaucracy was no longer staffed by their friends, many of whom had died in 1645. But later, in the eighteenth century, some of their recommendations were implemented, even if the reformers were not given the credit.

Especially in the area of Jiangsu, the lower Yangzi River province which was China's richest and where educated scholar-officials were concentrated in great numbers, opposition to the Manchus was mainly ideological. In this region, the leaders of that opposition were sometimes able to rally the local peasantry and townspeople behind them. With charismatic upper-class leadership, in other words, class divisions could be bridged in the name of ethnic solidarity. The Manchu haircutting order was a catalyst, in many cases, but beyond that there was a pervasive sense among some scholars that loyalty was due the Ming whatever the cost: an ethos of service and duty to the dynastic ideal had developed that transcended the shortcomings of any dynastic incumbent and united, even if fleetingly, the rich and the poor. It was this type of alliance that the Manchus had to banish forever if they were to feel completely secure in their conquest; yet it was precisely this type of alliance that the Manchus seemed once again to encourage by their tough anti-Chinese policies of the 1660s.

CHAPTER 3 Kangxi's Consolidation

The War of the Three Feudatories, 1673–1681

Qing emperors had to grow up fast if they were to grow up at all. Shunzhi had been thirteen when, taking advantage of Dorgon's sudden death, he put himself in power. Shunzhi's son, Kangxi, was also thirteen when he first moved to oust the regent Oboi; and he was fifteen when, with the help of his grandmother and a group of Manchu guard officers, he managed to arrange for Oboi's arrest in 1669 on charges of arrogance and dishonesty. Oboi soon died in prison, and Kangxi began a reign that was to last until 1722 and to make him one of the most admired rulers in China's history.

The most important of the many problems facing the young ruler was that of unifying China under Manchu control. Although in 1662 Wu Sangui had eliminated the last Ming pretender in the southwest, the region had not been fully integrated into Peking's administrative structure. The enormous distances, the mountainous semitropical country that made cavalry campaigning difficult, the presence of hundreds of non-Chinese border tribes who fought tenaciously for their own terrain, the shortage of administrators of proven loyalty—all these made both Shunzhi and Oboi unwilling to commit further Manchu forces to the area. Instead, the whole of south and southwest China was left under the control of the three Chinese generals who had directed most of the fighting there in the late 1650s.

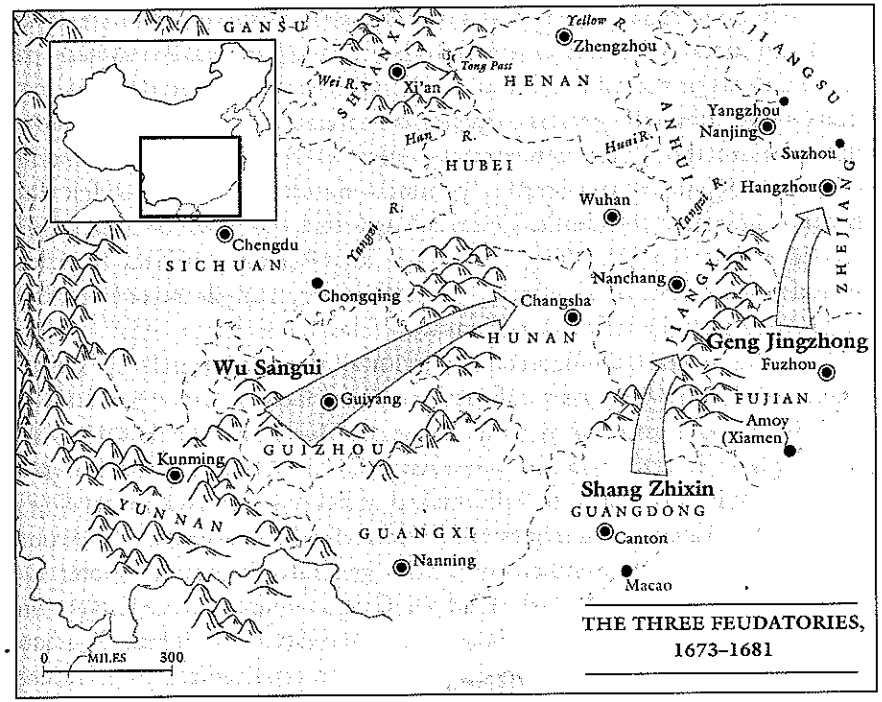
Two of these men, Shang Kexi and Geng Jimao, were Chinese bannermen of distinction who had surrendered to the Manchus in 1633 and thereafter been essential allies in the conquest; both had repeatedly proven their

loyalty to the Qing, especially in 1650 when they had recaptured Canton from the Ming supporters and massacred the city's defenders. The third was Wu Sangui himself. These three were named as princes by the Manchu court and honored by having their sons married to the daughters of Manchu nobles; each of the three was granted what amounted to an almost independent domain, and in Western histories Shang, Geng, and Wu are named the "Three Feudatories." Wu controlled the provinces of Yunnan and Guizhou as well as sections of Hunan and Sichuan; Shang ruled Guangdong and parts of Guangxi from his base in Canton; and Geng controlled Fujian from the coastal city of Fuzhou.

Together they were virtual masters over a region equivalent in size to France and Spain combined, or to America's southern states from the Georgia coast to Texas. Within these areas, despite the nominal presence of Qing bureaucrats, the Three Feudatories supervised all aspects of military and civil government, the examination systems, relations with the indigenous peoples, and the collection of taxes. Not only did they keep the local revenues for themselves and control lucrative trade monopolies, they also constantly demanded lavish subsidies from the Qing court as the price of their continued loyalty. By the 1660s, they were receiving more than 10 million ounces of silver every year.

It soon became apparent that they also considered their feudatories hereditary. When Shang Kexi fell ill in 1671, he passed the supervision of military affairs in Guangdong over to his son, Shang Zhixin. That same year Geng Jimao died, and his son, Geng Jingzhong, took over Fujian province. Although the records are fragmentary, it is clear that Emperor Kangxi began discussing what to do about the Three Feudatories early in his reign and that his advisers, both Chinese and Manchu, were torn about how to proceed. Unlike many of his more cautious advisers, Kangxi was bold enough to recommend confrontation if it became necessary for the long-run strength of the country. Thus when Shang Kexi, who was indeed old and ill, inquired in 1673 if he might be allowed to retire back to Manchuria, Kangxi leaped at the chance and graciously gave his permission. He responded with equal enthusiasm when Wu Sangui and Geng Jingzhong made similar requests as feelers. These requests were intended to test Kangxi's general feelings about the continued existence of the feudatories; after his answer, it was obvious that an open break was coming.

Despite an attempt by some of Kangxi's most trusted confidants to persuade Wu Sangui to leave his base peacefully, Wu threw off his allegiance to the Qing in December 1673, declaring the formation of a new dynasty, the Zhou, and driving his armies deep into Hunan. Geng Jingzhong rebelled in 1674, and his armies consolidated their hold in Fujian and moved into



Zhejiang province. Shang Zhixin imprisoned his father (who stayed steadfast in his loyalty to the Qing) and joined the rebellion in 1676, consolidating Guangdong and sending troops northward to Jiangxi.

This War of the Three Feudatories confronted the Chinese in the south and southwest with an agonizing test of loyalties. Those who had survived the years of fighting in the 1640s and 1650s and had made their peace with the Qing now had to decide whether to remain true to that allegiance, or to pin their hopes on Wu's Zhou dynasty. Wu played on their sense of Chinese loyalty by ordering the restoration of Ming customs and the cutting of queues. He also left open the question of who the first emperor of the Zhou should be, implying that if a survivor of the Ming ruling house could be found, that man would be enthroned. Furthermore, the name "Zhou" itself evoked one of China's most revered earlier dynasties, which had ruled over northern China in the first millennium B.C. and was celebrated in several of the basic Confucian texts. Wu offered Emperor Kangxi an amnesty if he would only leave Chinese soil altogether and found a new kingdom in Manchuria and Korea. Predictably, Kangxi refused, and to underscore his anger he executed Wu's son, who was being held hostage in Peking.

With their huge standing armies and sound administrative and economic

base, Wu and his supporters had a better chance of success than the Ming loyalist princes of Fu and Gui before them. Furthermore, throughout the south and west, the Chinese loyal to the Qing were surrounded and outnumbered; although there is evidence that many tried to resist service to the rulers of the Three Feudatories—some by fleeing to the mountains, others by feigning illness or even by mutilating themselves—most felt they had no choice but to submit. The result was that the rebellion almost succeeded in destroying the Qing. At the very least, it looked as if the Manchus would lose control of all of China south of the Yangzi River, and that permanent partition of the kingdom would be the result.

China remained a unified country (with all the significance that has for later world history) as the result of five crucial factors. One was Wu Sangui's indecisiveness in not driving across the Hunan border and up to the north when he first held the initiative in 1674. A second was Kangxi's ability, despite his youth, to rally his court behind him and to develop a long-range strategy for conquest and retrenchment. A third was the courage and tenacity of a number of Manchu generals—some also young and untried in battle—who spearheaded the Qing counterattacks. (Kangxi did not campaign in person.) A fourth was the inability of the Three Feudatories to coordinate their endeavors and to mount a sustained campaign against the Qing on any one front. A fifth was their inability to appeal to the most loyal of the Ming supporters, who were fully aware that the Three Feudatories had previously been active collaborators with the Manchus.

Nor were the Three Feudatories well suited for their new roles as restorationists. Wu Sangui grew ever more absorbed by luxurious living and the trappings of grandeur, while Shang Zhixin exhibited much of the crazed cruelty of the earlier rebel Zhang Xianzhong, going so far as to have his personal enemies torn apart by hunting dogs. Geng Jingzhong seems to have been incompetent and ineffective, and it was he who ruined any chance of concerted action when he surrendered independently to the Qing in 1676. Shang Zhixin did the same the following year, apparently because Wu Sangui insisted on making appointments of officials to posts in Guangdong province, which Shang considered his own preserve.

Wu finally declared himself emperor of the new Zhou dynasty in 1678, but the gesture came too late to be meaningful. Wu died of dysentery later that same year, ending a stormy sixty-six years of life. His grandson fought on in his name for three more years, but committed suicide in the Yunnan capital of Kunming when a number of Manchu generals trapped him there. Wu's followers were executed, as were Geng and Shang, despite the fact that Emperor Kangxi had accepted their surrenders and restored their princely titles to them. The emperor could not afford to leave such men around.

At the war's end, in 1681, the advisers who had urged the "hard" line against the Three Feudatories became Kangxi's close advisers: although he and they had nearly lost the kingdom, their final victory meant that China would henceforth be stronger. Kangxi was ruthless to those in senior positions who had supported the rebels, but ordered more compassionate treatment to those who had been caught up in the fighting through no fault of their own. As he put it, they had just shown "a natural desire to hang on to life and avoid being killed. If my armies arrive and execute them all, this contradicts my desire to save the people, and denies them any chance to reform." The emperor showed similar sympathy for women and children trapped in the fighting with the "bandits" (as he usually called the rebels): "The women in the bandits' camps were often initially taken there by force—so after the bandits themselves have been destroyed, let the other local people have a chance to identify and reclaim the refugees and their children—don't just arrest everyone indiscriminately."[1]

With the leaders dead, all traces of the feudatories were abolished. New governors-general and governors—mostly Chinese bannermen—were appointed to the rebellious provinces to integrate them firmly into Kangxi's realm. Revenues once again began to flow from these areas to Peking, and with the revenues came a resumption of the examination system in the south and southwest, and the beginning of a trickle of successful candidates. But life had been too seriously disrupted to be speedily repaired. Hunan, Guangxi, Yunnan, and Guizhou all remained peripheral to the main life of China for the rest of Kangxi's reign, and distrust still ran deep. Few men from those provinces were given higher degrees, and even fewer were appointed to high office. Kangxi himself, although a great traveler, never ventured more than a few miles south of the Yangzi. It was the now-prosperous Yangzi delta towns of Nanjing and Suzhou that he referred to as "the South," with the implication that the more truly southern and western provinces remained somehow beyond his range. Throughout his life he reminisced about how shaken the war had left him, and how bitterly he regretted the loss of life that had followed his decision to let the heads of the Three Feudatories "retire." But he never regretted the decision itself.

Taiwan and Maritime China

The integration of Taiwan into China's history dates from the early seventeenth century. In the later years of the Ming dynasty, Taiwan was still largely unknown: dangerous seas, typhoons, and sand shoals protected its coasts; flat, malarial plains along the west, backed by inhospitable mountain

ranges, sealed its isolation. Taiwan's unfriendly aboriginal populations further discouraged exploration or settlement by outsiders. But a few Chinese traders from the harbors of Guangdong and Fujian braved the dangers and made a decent profit from Taiwanese deer hides and crushed deerhorns (believed to be a potent aphrodisiac), and established small settlements in the southwest of the island. Chinese and Japanese pirates also found havens along the same coast.

In the 1620s Taiwan began to feature in global politics. At one time, shipwrecked sailors and missionaries had been the island's only European visitors. The Portuguese then explored the island and gave it the name of "Beautiful Isle" ("Ilha Formosa"); but they withdrew, deciding to keep Macao as their own main base of operations in east Asia. Not so the Spaniards, who established a small base in the north at Keelung, nor the Protestant Dutch, who in 1624 established a fort they named Zeelandia in the little town of Anping (present-day Tainan) in the south. By the 1640s the Dutch had driven out both the Spaniards and the last Japanese pirates, and a profitable trade developed among the island, the Dutch Empire in the East Indies (now Indonesia), and the merchants and administrators in China's east coast. Drawn by the island's possibilities, clusters of Chinese settlers congregated around first the Spanish and then the Dutch enclaves, while others came to drain and farm the land on Taiwan's western plains.

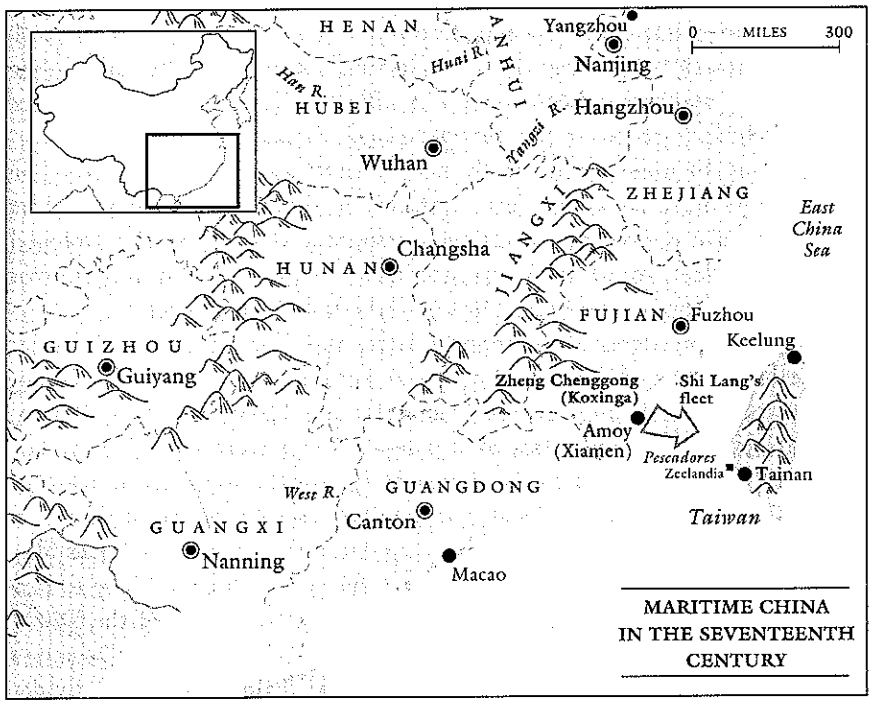
The Dutch stayed largely aloof from the fighting by the Ming loyalists in the 1640s and 1650s, but the development of the coastal war and its interconnections with Ming loyalism eventually made Dutch isolation impossible. The fighting escalated when the leader of the powerful and wealthy Zheng family, a pirate and trader who plied the waters between Fujian, Taiwan, and southern Japan, was finally made an official by the desperate Ming. Although he went over to the Qing court in 1646, his impetuous son, Zheng Chenggong, refused to do so. Instead he made his troops and ships available to the fleeing Ming, and continued to support them in name and deed even after they had been driven inland.

This remarkable naval warrior, known to history as Koxinga,* had been born in 1624 to a Japanese mother, and his upbringing suitably reflected the polyglot world of international trade and cultural relations. His father's trade networks extended from Nagasaki to Macao, and in their fortified home near Amoy (Xiamen) could be found a chapel with both Christian and Buddhist images, as well as a bodyguard of black slaves, fugitives from the Portuguese in Macao. Access to the inner living quarters of the compound was made directly by boat.

*The Ming gave him their imperial surname, a title pronounced in Fujian dialect as "Kok-seng-ia," transformed by Westerners into the word *Koxinga*.

Koxinga's fleets fought the Manchus along China's east coast all through the 1650s, and under his control Amoy became an international entrepôt. Koxinga even organized ten trading companies that dealt in silks and other luxury goods, as well as sugar, in exchange for the naval supplies and gunpowder he needed to keep his fleet in fighting shape. It was not until he tried a decisive frontal assault on Nanjing in 1659 that he was seriously defeated. As the Qing armies closed in on his main Amoy base, Koxinga made the bold decision to attack the Dutch fortress of Zeelandia. Probably aided by a former Chinese interpreter who had worked for the Dutch and knew the details of Zeelandia's defensive system, Koxinga pressed the siege; but although he conquered the surrounding countryside easily enough, killing the Dutchmen there and enslaving their women, the Dutch defenders of the fort held out for an astonishing nine months. Only in February 1662 did they surrender, under an agreement that allowed them to retire to Batavia in the Dutch East Indies, leaving Koxinga trade goods and cash estimated to be worth over 1 million ounces of silver.

Koxinga did not enjoy his success for long. The news that his father and brothers had been executed in Peking because of his intransigence (his Jap-



MARITIME CHINA IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

anese mother had been killed long before by Qing troops) perhaps exacerbated his already unstable mental condition. He began to follow a destructive pattern of abusing his subordinates and directing passionate rages against his own children, and died later in 1662.

Despite the savage efficiency of their policy of removing the Chinese coastal population, initiated in 1661, the Oboi regents failed to bring Taiwan into submission. They did form a brief alliance with the Dutch to smoke out the last Zheng-family holdouts on the Fujian coast, but two expeditions against Taiwan planned in 1664 and 1665 both fizzled out. The Manchus, after all, were inexperienced at naval warfare and, after 1673, were largely preoccupied with the civil war of the Three Feudatories. This allowed the Zhengs in Taiwan to continue developing a prosperous trade and commercial empire: first Koxinga's sons and then his grandson supervised a Chinese population that swelled through emigration and flight from the mainland to over 100,000, produced large quantities of rice and sugarcane, and conducted considerable business in salt, refined sugar, and shipbuilding.

Even after the war of the Three Feudatories was over, Kangxi still found it hard to assemble the necessary forces to capture the island from the Zheng family. The emperor's final strategy was to appoint one of Koxinga's father's former admirals, Shi Lang—who had surrendered long before, in the 1650s—to be the senior admiral of an expeditionary force. The choice was an excellent one, for not only was Shi Lang a fine commander, but his father, brother, and son had all been vengefully killed by Koxinga when Shi joined the Manchus; he could be counted on to push the battle to its limits.

Shi Lang planned methodically for his campaign, and the scale of his fleet—three hundred war vessels—reminds us of how strong a potential sea power China was, even though its naval resources were not usually exploited. Leading his fleet from Fujian province in early July 1683, Admiral Shi won a crushing victory in the Pescadores over the last Zheng forces.

Taiwan surrendered three months later, and Kangxi, perhaps wearied by the bloodbaths of the earlier civil-war period, treated the fallen Zheng family and their leading officers graciously, ennobling some and allowing them to settle in Peking. Most of Koxinga's troops were moved from Taiwan and used to strengthen the garrisons against the Russians in northern China. There were heated debates at the Qing court about what should be done with the island. Some courtiers suggested that it be abandoned altogether, whereas Admiral Shi urged that it be made a fortified base to protect China from the "strong, huge and invincible" warships of the Dutch. Kangxi decided to incorporate Taiwan firmly into his empire. It became a prefecture of Fujian province, with a capital at Tainan, and was divided

into three counties, each under a civilian magistrate. At the same time, Kangxi ordered that a strong Qing garrison of 8,000 troops be left permanently on the island, and that the tribal lands and hunting grounds of the aboriginal inhabitants be respected. Further Chinese emigration to Taiwan was to be carefully limited.

By these rather conflicting responses, Kangxi was reflecting the ambivalence that the Qing state (like the Ming before it) felt about overseas trade and colonization. There was a basic distrust of trade among China's leaders, who saw it as conducive to unrest and disorder. They feared it would lead to the dissemination of secret information about China's defenses to foreign powers, cause a drain of precious silver from the country, and encourage piracy and other forms of crime. Accordingly, even though the coastal-evacuation policy was abandoned after the fall of the Zheng family, Qing officials continued to control contact with Taiwan through licensing rules and limits on ship size, enforced by government agents in Amoy and other coastal cities.

But this policy was unrealistic in the vigorous entrepreneurial world of east-coast China. Its main result was to allow huge profits to flow into the hands of the senior east-coast bureaucrats who were in a position to control the maritime and coastal trade. A Chinese bondservant, Wu Xingzuo, who had risen through the bureaucratic ranks in Fujian because of his father's contacts, in the early 1680s allegedly paid bribes well in excess of 10,000 ounces of silver in order to win the post of governor-general of Guangdong and Guangxi, which would allow him to supervise most of the trade out of Canton city. In a massive relocation of the population back to the coastal regions, Wu Xingzuo, with the aid of special commissioners appointed to the task, reassigned almost half a million acres of land to more than 30,000 people. His colleagues in Fujian reapportioned more than half a million acres to over 40,000 former locals. Governor-General Wu also supervised the seizure of holdings from the defeated feudatory Shang Zhixin's client-merchant in Canton: the fortune accumulated by this one merchant was apparently in excess of 400,000 ounces of silver.

The potential returns of careful state-run taxation of legitimate foreign trade were clearly vast and had been effectively exploited by some rulers in earlier dynasties. But beyond setting up four maritime customs offices (one each in Guangdong, Fujian, Zhejiang, and Jiangsu) and trying to enforce an across-the-board tariff of 20 percent on foreign imports, the Qing state failed to develop the necessary mechanisms, preferring instead to work through systems of kickbacks or purchased monopolies. With the arrival of more powerful Western traders in the eighteenth century, this decision was to be a fateful one.

Similarly, by forbidding emigration to Taiwan but failing to enforce the order adequately, the Qing ensured Taiwan's development as an unruly dependency, a kind of rough-and-tumble frontier society, only peripherally bound to the administrative structure of the Qing state. Records from the Kangxi reign give a few glimpses of the men who developed the island: a group of immigrant brothers from Fujian who rented land cheap from local aborigines and improved it spectacularly by applying Chinese irrigation procedures; a relative of Admiral Shi who settled in north Taiwan and spent his own money to open up virgin land there, using the labor of vagrants from the more crowded south; and a young Chinese from Guangdong who married an aborigine chieftain's daughter and became his father-in-law's interpreter, profiting thereafter from renting tribal lands to other Chinese immigrants. These were not exactly exemplars of conventional Chinese behavior, but they helped make an important addition to China's traditional empire.

Wooing the Intellectuals

The protracted resistance of the Ming claimants, the support given to Koxinga and his descendants, the swift spread and near success of the Three Feudatories: all these pointed to a lack of support for the Qing among the Chinese. From the beginning of his reign, Emperor Kangxi addressed himself to this problem by trying to strike a balance in which he reassured the Manchu nobles as to his martial vigor and political firmness on the one hand, and tried to convince the Chinese of his respect for their traditional culture on the other.

Appealing to the Manchus turned out to be comparatively simple. Kangxi was a strong young man whose survival of a childhood bout of smallpox was a factor that led to his being chosen as Shunzhi's heir. He early developed a passion for hunting and for archery, and his skill at riding meant he could go on long excursions into the ancestral homelands of Manchuria. The elite guards-officers and Manchu nobles who accompanied him on these journeys were bonded in loyalty to their ruler; and though there were serious differences of opinion over national policy, they stood behind him in all his early crises. His grandmother, Hong Taiji's widow, who doted on him, was also a powerful political figure through her family connections, and the family of Kangxi's successive empresses and consorts (he had first been married, at eleven, to the granddaughter of one of the regents opposed to Oboi) gave him valuable contacts. He was meticulous, too, in carrying out ceremonies at the Manchu shamanic temples in Peking, in promoting

Manchus to high office along with the Chinese, and in holding back eunuch power by placing the imperial-household organization in the hands of Manchu nobles and by using Chinese bondservants rather than eunuchs for many menial palace functions.

Appealing to the Chinese was more complex. The Manchus claimed that they had entered China in 1644 to avenge the Ming emperor Chongzhen, but numerous Chinese did not accept this. Even if they did, the ties of loyalty to one's ruler were so strong that many Chinese committed suicide when they heard of Chongzhen's death; many took up arms, though certain that resistance would ultimately prove fatal; and many more simply removed their talents from the Qing state, refusing to serve the government in any form.

This refusal to serve was rationalized on grounds of Confucian principle, and it was on these grounds that Kangxi chose to meet the opposition. The teachings of Confucius had an undisputed place in Chinese society, although by the mid-seventeenth century there was considerable difference of opinion about what those teachings were. In essence, during the fifth century B.C. Confucius had been the spokesman in China for the values of morality and dignity in private life and in government. He had argued for the importance of righteousness and loyalty, reinforced by correct rituals that would place a given individual in proper relationship with the cosmos and with his contemporaries. He had stated that worthy men should not serve unworthy rulers and must be ready to sacrifice their lives, if necessary, in the defense of principle. He argued further that humans should concentrate on the problems of this world and, while paying proper respect to the memory of their own deceased ancestors, should not seek to understand the forces of heaven and the realm of the spirits.

A collection of dialogues that Confucius held with statesmen and students, known as the *Analects,* portrayed him as a shrewd and vigorous man, constantly testing himself and those around him for flaws of character while never losing faith in the possibilities of virtuous action. His belief in the powers of moral example and in the central importance of education was absolute. Confucius held that humans did gain in wisdom as they grew older, and charted the steps for this development of self-knowledge. Some centuries after Confucius's death, five of the works he was believed to have edited were bunched together as the "Five Classics" of the Confucian canon. One of these works was on rituals, two were on history, one on poetry, and one—the *Book of Changes* or *Yijing (I-ching)*—on cosmology and divination. Subsequently, in the twelfth century A.D., the *Analects,* along with the sayings of Confucius's later follower Mencius and two selections from the ritual classic that dealt with human nature and moral development, were

similarly grouped together as the "Four Books." Cumulatively, these nine works were believed to contain the basic precepts needed for leading a moral life, and to offer a valid record of an earlier utopian period of Chinese history that had reached its apogee of enlightened government and popular contentment during the early Zhou dynasty, some fifteen hundred years in the past.

Over the ensuing centuries this body of material was swollen by floods of commentaries, glosses, and reinterpretations, and modified in subtle ways by elements drawn from the Buddhist faith—which flourished in China after the fifth century A.D.—and from other traditions within Chinese philosophy. At the same time, this diversity of "Confucian" material was turned into "doctrine," and the Four Books and Five Classics became the basis for the state examinations that led to government service. Confucianism was now construed in a hierarchical way and used to support the absolute rights of parents over their children, of husbands over their wives, and of rulers over their subjects. (The domination of the examination system by Confucianism and the restriction of the bureaucracy to males meant that women still generally received little or no education.) The prevailing school of Confucianism in the Qing was one that emphasized the force of principle or reason *(li)* in the world but placed it outside and above life energy *(qi)*, leading to a dualistic interpretation of human nature and of the whole metaphysical structure of the Chinese world.

From the moment he imprisoned the regent Oboi, Kangxi showed the utmost respect for this complex legacy. In 1670 he issued to the nation a series of sixteen maxims that were designed to be a summation of Confucian moral values. Known as the "Sacred Edict," these maxims emphasized hierarchical submission in social relations, generosity, obedience, thrift, and hard work. Kangxi subsequently named a team of Manchu and Chinese tutors, with whom he read meticulously through the Four Books and then the Five Classics. In the official court diaries, one can chart his progress from chapter to chapter and watch him debate knotty points with his teachers. Judiciously "leaked" to the court, the news of these studies, along with Kangxi's intensive work on Chinese calligraphy, gave the young monarch the aura of a "sage ruler." At the same time, popular versions of the Sacred Edict, prepared in a homely, colloquial style by Manchu and Chinese scholars, ensured the wide dissemination of Kangxi's ethical views to the people as a whole.

One of the great powers of the Chinese state lay in its control of the examination system. Shunzhi had revived this system, and Kangxi continued to hold the exams every three years—even during the civil-war period. But he was vexed at the number of accomplished scholars who refused even

to sit for the examinations on the grounds that to do so would be to betray the memory of the Ming dynasty under which they had grown up. As an ingenious solution to this predicament, Kangxi, in 1679, ordered that nominations be sent from the provinces for a special examination—separate from the triennial national exams—to be held for men of outstanding talent. Although some austere scholars still refused to come to Peking for this exam, and others would not permit themselves to be nominated, the venture was a success. Fifty special degrees were awarded, mostly to scholars from the Yangzi delta provinces; and, in a tactful gesture to their past loyalties, these scholars were put to work helping compile the official history of the defunct Ming dynasty.

Despite these gestures, many Chinese retained an ambivalent attitude toward the new dynasty. Some scholars privately accumulated materials on the Ming so they could write their own histories away from government supervision. The heroic, though futile, resistance to the Manchus of cities such as Yangzhou and Jiangyin were written up and preserved for posterity. Some philosophers who had taken part in the defense of their native regions retreated from political life and wrote careful accounts of the moralistic and reformist scholars who had been members of the Donglin and similar societies in the late Ming.

Three scholars stand out both for their actions and their writings in this period. One was the Hunanese Wang Fuzhi, who spent years with the fugitive court of the prince of Gui in the southwest before returning home in 1650. He devoted much effort thereafter to attacking the individualistic philosophy of the followers of the mid-Ming scholar Wang Yangming, claiming that their insistence on finding the source of morality within the individual conscience had wrecked the moral fiber of the time. Wang Fuzhi also wrote a history of the prince of Gui's court as well as critical appraisals of former "barbarian" regimes, which would have led to his execution had the Manchus discovered them.

The second scholar, Huang Zongxi, a Zhejiang native whose father had been killed in 1626 on the orders of the eunuch Wei Zhongxian, was a passionate partisan of the Donglin and other reformers. Huang Zongxi fought for years alongside the Ming claimants on the east coast and built barricades in the mountains to slow the advance of Manchu troops. Finally, after 1649, he retired to a life of scholarship. Not only did he write careful historical biographies of major Ming figures, he also tried to analyze the structure of government itself. Huang suggested that an alternative to the overcentralization of the present lay in an earlier ideal Chinese society that had been governed by the moral force of scholars working as administrators in their own communities. Whereas most other Chinese political thinkers

tended to ponder ways of reforming the behavior of the eunuchs and officials who stood between the emperor and the people, Huang believed that the emperors themselves should have less power.

Most famous of the three scholars was Gu Yanwu, born in 1613 in Jiangsu and raised by his widowed foster mother, a remarkable woman of great moral rectitude who was determined that Gu follow correct Confucian ethical precepts. In the late Ming, Gu Yanwu passed the lower-level examinations and responded to what he saw as the political and moral collapse of his times by a program of intensive study of traditional Chinese economics, government, and military defense. In 1644 he served briefly with the prince of Fu against the Manchus, and was deeply moved by the example of his foster mother, who starved herself to death rather than submit to the new conquerors. In her dying words to Gu, she declared: "Although only a woman, I have received favor from the [Ming] dynasty. To perish with the dynasty is no more than my duty. Do not serve another dynasty."[2]

Though Gu declined to emulate her action, he took her words to heart and spent the rest of his life (he died in 1682) in travel, reflection, and scholarship. He even abandoned the lush Yangzi plains of his native Jiangsu for the harsh northwest terrain of Shaanxi province. Gu sought to develop a body of writings that would counter what he—like his contemporary Wang Fuzhi—saw as the moral hollowness of the dominant schools of Confucianism, with their emphases on metaphysical dualisms and intuition. Gu traveled over much of north China on horseback, examining farming practices, mining technology, and the banking systems of local merchants. In a series of essays drawn from his observations, he tried to lay the basis for a new kind of rigorous and pragmatic scholarship.

In his voluminous writings, Gu focused on such themes as government, ethics, economics, geography, and social relations, and paid special attention to philology, which he saw as a fundamental tool for evaluating the exact meaning of China's earlier scholarly legacy. He especially praised the scholars of the Han dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 220) for their absence of literary adornment, their intellectual rigor, and their lack of metaphysical pretensions. Despite Gu's growing fame, he refused all invitations to take the Qing examinations—including the honorific one of 1679—or to work on the Ming history sponsored by Kangxi. After his death, Gu was revered by many scholars who saw him as a model of scholarly precision and integrity; and in the eighteenth century, his works came to have a profound influence on Chinese thought.

It was not only soldiers and scholars who resisted the Manchus. Many early Qing painters used their art to show their agitation and lack of faith in the regime. Through boldly innovative and eccentric brushwork, and

the use of empty space in their compositions, they portrayed a world that was bleak or out of balance. Lone and twisted pine trees, desolate, angular mountain ranges, images of tangled foliage laid on paper in thick, wet strokes, isolated birds or fish—such were the subjects these artists often chose. Some of the most brilliant of these painters, like Shitao or Bada Shanren, were related to members of the fallen Ming ruling house and retired to isolated monasteries in the conquest period. Bada Shanren (his self-selected name, meaning "one who dwells in the eight great mountains") made silence his gesture of defiance to the Qing. After writing the Chinese character for "dumb" upon his door, he refused to speak anymore, though he would still laugh or weep extravagantly when drunk or caught in creative fever. But Shitao slowly edged back into society, began to mingle with other scholars and artists even if they had served with the Qing, accepted occasional commissions designing landscape gardens for wealthy urbanites, and ended up on the outer edges of court circles.

One could, indeed, write a history of the period by tracing the coopting of the intellectuals by the Qing court. Those who would not serve in administrative office and would not take the examinations could still be lured by the promise of good company and hard cash. Literary compilations especially proved a fine focus for their energies. Kangxi assembled several groups of scholars and hired them to write dictionaries, encyclopedias, records of imperial tours, and collections of classical prose and poetry. Other senior ministers sponsored massive geographical studies and local histories, which enabled restless scholars to travel the country in search of material and then to return to a comfortable home base to write it down. Yet other officials gave promising writers jobs as private secretaries with light duties, which allowed them ample time for pursuing their own creative paths, whether as novelists, short-story writers, poets, or dramatists. The result was a flowering of Chinese culture in the later seventeenth century, despite the recent bloody imposition of alien rule.

Finally, the very act of Ming resistance and loyalty became an accepted topic at Kangxi's court through the artistry of Kong Shangren. A descendant of Confucius in the sixty-fourth generation, Kong was born in 1648, after the Qing conquest. His father had been a prominent Ming scholar, and Kong Shangren became fascinated with the Ming dynasty's fall and the people who had been caught up in it. During his forties, he composed a popular drama, *The Peach Blossom Fan,* about an upright scholar, the woman he loves, and their travails in the Ming court of the prince of Fu. The heroine resists the advances of a wicked Ming minister, attacking him with her fan, which gets spattered with blood. A painter transforms the blood drops into part of a design of peach blossoms, giving the play its title

and providing a brilliant metaphor for the mixture of violence and beauty that Kong saw as lying at the heart of late Ming moral and intellectual life. At the play's end, with the Ming resistance in ruins, the lovers agree to take monastic vows, while the surviving virtuous officials retreat deep into the mountains to escape a summons from the Qing that they take up office. In one of the last scenes, the lovers and a friend join in a grand aria:

> This tale of the southern court will resound forever,
> And tears of blood will swell the streams with woe,
> We raise to Heaven our "summons to the soul"
> As mists obscure the mighty river's flow.[3]

By the 1690s, this aria was being sung at Kangxi's court, and Kong Shangren's play had become a palace favorite. In an essay written at this time, Kong caught the emotion of the audience:

> Famous aristocrats, high officials, and talented literati gathered in such a crowd that it was impossible to find space for one's legs. The furnishings formed an embroidered universe, and the banquet a landscape of jewelled delicacies. . . . Yet in the midst of this dazzling theater, there were a few who sat quietly weeping behind their sleeves—former officials and 'survivors'. When the lanterns had flickered out and the drinking was over, they uttered sighs and went their ways.[4]

Such men might still be nostalgic, but they had made their peace.

Defining the Borders

Foreign pressure, and at least some elements of foreign technology, were becoming commonplace in early Qing China. Even those Chinese with no knowledge or interest in foreign lands could have their lives abruptly changed. Kong Shangren, for instance, had been slowly losing his eyesight for some years before he wrote *The Peach Blossom Fan;* he recorded his resumption of scholarly activity in an ecstatic poem:

> White glass from across the Western Seas
> Is imported through Macao:
> Fashioned into lenses big as coins,
> They encompass the eyes in a double frame.
> I put them on—it suddenly becomes clear;
> I can see the very tips of things!

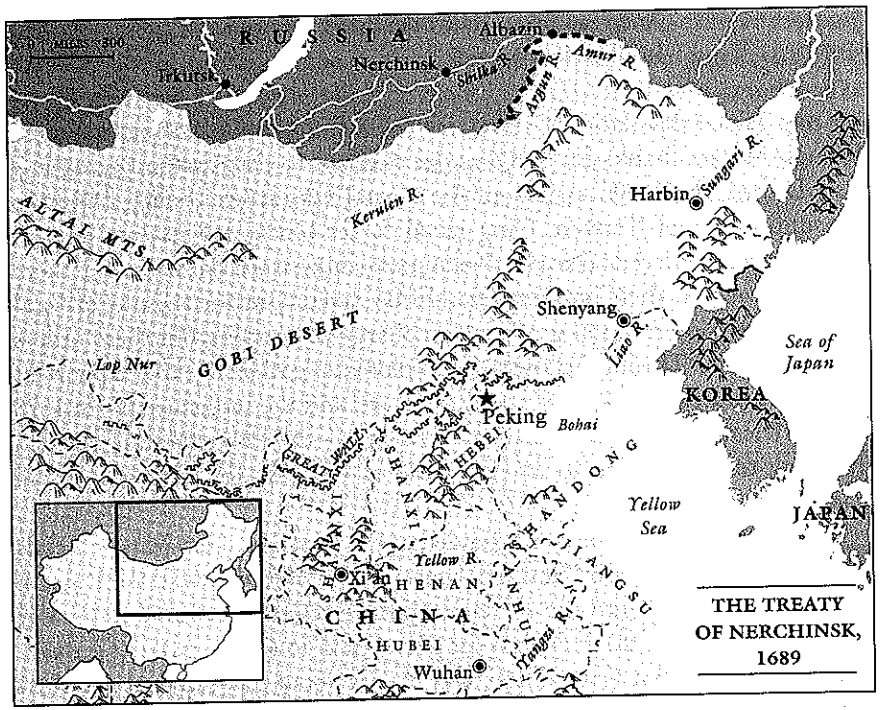
> And read fine print by the dim-lit window
> Just like in my youth.[5]

Kong gained this clarity of vision, fruit of a European technology exported through Macao, thanks to the Qing decision not to destroy the Portuguese base. During the 1660s, as part of the coastal-withdrawal policy linked to the suppression of Taiwan, Qing naval forces blockaded Macao, and all Chinese were ordered to leave. Portuguese ships were banned, and there was a threat that their buildings would be razed. But for reasons of local economic self-interest, Qing officials in charge of carrying out these orders failed to do so. Through subsequent diplomatic embassies, the support of the Jesuits in Peking (now returned to favor), and the judicious gift in 1678 of an African lion—which fascinated Kangxi—the Portuguese persuaded the Qing to allow them to retain Macao as the base for their east Asian trade.

The same tolerance was not extended to the Russians. Late Ming officials and advisers to Emperor Shunzhi were aware of the spread of Russian hunters and settlers into the northeast border region. A Russian embassy had negotiated with the Manchus for permission to send regular trade caravans into China, but Kangxi, too, was uneasy about the influence the Russians were having on the allegiance of the border tribes. An attempt to withdraw several border tribes south of the Russian line of advance, and to establish a kind of no man's land to isolate the Russians from China—perhaps in deliberate imitation of the coastal policy to destroy the Zhengs—was abandoned as being too costly and impractical.

Kangxi had in fact been preparing for some years to launch an attack on the Russian outpost of Albazin, on the Amur River. When Taiwan was finally captured by the Qing in 1683, as we saw above, some of the surviving Zheng family troops were sent to the north to participate in the border campaign against the Russians. The maritime skills of the Zheng troops were valuable to Kangxi, who needed naval forces to navigate the northern rivers. With the southern wars safely over, Kangxi ordered a concerted assault on Albazin, which, after stiff fighting, was seized by Manchu forces in 1685. Abandoning the town—really more a large, fortified stockade in those days—and pulling back as the emperor had instructed, the Qing commander inexplicably disobeyed the order that he destroy the abundant crops planted by the Russian settlers in the area. Accordingly the garrison commander of Nerchinsk, the second Russian trading base located to the west down the river Shilka, sent men to gather in the crops before the winter and to reoccupy the city.

Furious, Kangxi ordered a second attack on Albazin in 1686, which met



stiffer Russian opposition. The Russian rulers were worried, however, over their ability to hold the huge territory in the face of determined Manchu opposition, and had already decided to sue for peace. The two sides, with the Jesuits using their knowledge of Latin and Manchu to act as interpreters, met at Nerchinsk in 1689 and hammered out a treaty that, in its long-term effects, was one of the most important in China's history, fixing the northern border in substantially the same place it is today. In the most disputed area, the basic north-south demarcation line between the countries was fixed at the Gorbitsa and the Argun rivers. Albazin was to be abandoned by the Russians and destroyed, and the whole watershed area of the Amur River was to be Chinese. Fugitives from each side were to be extradited, and trade was to be permitted, though only to those merchants who had been issued valid documents by the Qing.

So whereas Taiwan had been reduced to Chinese territory by conquest, and the Portuguese in Macao were allowed their semi-independent status by an act of generosity unsubstantiated by treaty, in the Russian case the Chinese signed a treaty between equal sovereign states. Though this was a major departure from traditional Chinese practices, it is worth noting that

from the foundation of the Qing dynasty dealings with the Russians had been conducted not through the Ministry of Rituals, which handled the so-called tributary relations with such countries as Holland, Spain, and Portugal, but through a special bureau, the Lifan Yuan. This bureau had been an invention of Hong Taiji and dealt originally with problems of diplomacy and commerce with the Mongols. By putting Russian affairs under this bureau, the Manchus tacitly admitted that their northern neighbors were a special case and that matters on the long northern land frontier required different handling from those in the southeast.

Much of the impetus for the Qing to sign a Russian treaty had come from the danger posed by the Zunghar tribes in western China: the Qing feared that the Russians might ally themselves with these dangerous nomadic warriors. Under a brilliant leader, Galdan, and drawing added unity from their deep devotion to the Dalai Lama in Tibet (whom they regarded as their spiritual leader), the Zunghars had been roaming at will over the largely unsettled lands known now as Outer Mongolia and Qinghai. In the late 1670s, by seizing Kashgar, Hami, and Turfan in turn, Galdan imposed his rule over the largely Muslim inhabitants of those cities and over their prosperous caravan routes linking China and the Mediterranean. The tribes hostile to Galdan and defeated by him in battle fled eastward, pressing into the western Qing province of Gansu. This massive migration of warriors deeply worried the emperor, who feared the possibility of a Russian-Zunghar alliance.

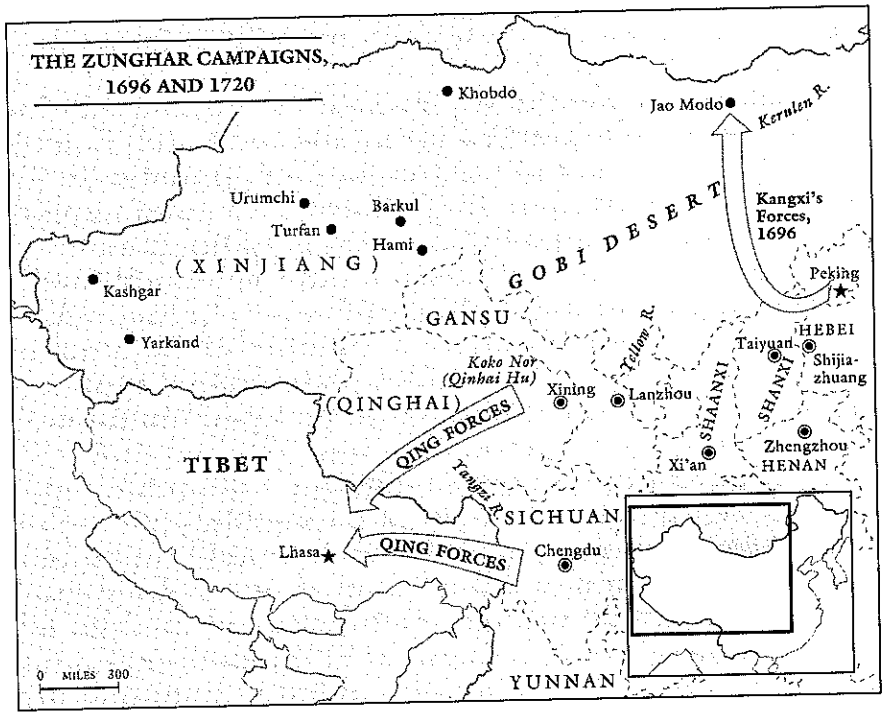
But such an alliance was not made, and after the Treaty of Nerchinsk was safely signed Kangxi sent an army (under his own brother) to attack Galdan. After several more years of inconclusive fighting between Galdan and certain rival tribes to his east, Kangxi decided to lead a major campaign in person, apparently prompted to such daring by his feeling that it was he—not his generals—who had correctly conceived the successful Russian war. In a logistical triumph for the Qing armies, some 80,000 men advanced westward on three fronts; Kangxi's army crossed the Gobi and pushed the Zunghars north of the Kerulen River, where Galdan was cornered and defeated at the great battle of Jao Modo in 1696. He died the following year, abandoned by most of his followers.

This successful campaign marked the pinnacle of Kangxi's career as emperor. Now forty-two years old, he took an active delight in the excitement and danger of the war; after it was over he wrote back to his court favorites in Peking that the sparkling weather, the new foods, the unexpected scenery—all filled him with joy. "Now Galdan is dead, and his followers have come back to our allegiance," the emperor wrote in a letter in the spring of 1697. "My great task is done. . . . Heaven, earth, and ances-

tors have protected me and brought me this achievement. As for my own life, one can say it is happy. One can say it's fulfilled. One can say I've got what I wanted. In a few days, in the palace, I'll tell you all about it myself. It's hard to tell it with brush and ink."[6]

But in foreign policy, each solution leads to a fresh problem. The power politics of the region were not resolved by Galdan's death, and Kangxi found himself drawn into complex struggles with other Zunghar leaders when the Dalai Lama was murdered and an improperly chosen successor named in his place. This gave Kangxi the opportunity to invade Tibet in the name of righteous retribution (just as the Manchus had entered China in 1644); he dispatched two armies, one of which entered Tibet through Koko Nor, the other through Sichuan province. In the autumn of 1720, the two armies joined forces in the Tibetan capital of Lhasa, and a new Dalai Lama, loyal to the Qing, was installed. Thus began the Chinese military intervention in the politics of Tibet.

At about the same time, the unsettled nature of life in Taiwan and serious misgovernment there by the Qing prompted a Fujian native named Zhu Yigui, who had traveled to the island as an official's servant, to raise a



flag of revolt along with some fifty blood brothers. Aided by the turbulent conditions of the time and by the fact that he had the same surname—Zhu—as the former Ming imperial family, Zhu Yigui attracted hundreds of followers and seized the prefectural capital, declaring himself king of Taiwan. His reign lasted only two months, until he was captured by an expeditionary force led by one of the sons of the same Admiral Shi who had first captured the island thirty-eight years before.

The Qing had shown that they could respond with alacrity and efficiency to two crises on distant fronts, even if they had not solved some of the basic problems that made trouble endemic. When Kangxi died, in 1722, the Tibetan and Taiwan campaigns effectively marked the limits of Qing power to the southwest and east. With the Treaty of Nerchinsk holding firm and Manchuria securely engrafted as their ancestral homeland, the Qing had reached a depth and extent of power matched by only a few rulers in times of China's earlier greatness.

A MIXED LEGACY

Kangxi owed much of his fame to the firmness with which he pursued national unity and to the vigor of his foreign policy. Priding himself on his decisiveness, he often overrode his senior advisers, both Manchu and Chinese; and when he was successful, he claimed the credit. In several important ways, however, the results were less happy, and he left a tangled legacy to his successors. This was especially true in three areas: the dispute surrounding Yinreng, the heir apparent to the throne; relations with the Catholic missionaries; and rural administration.

From early in his reign, Kangxi clearly wanted to avoid a repetition of the regency interlude that had led to the domination of the court by Dorgon in the 1640s and by Oboi in the 1660s. Accordingly, when his first empress bore him a son, Yinreng, in 1674, Kangxi moved rapidly to have the boy named heir apparent. Since Yinreng's mother died in childbirth, his birth had an aura of fate around it and set Yinreng even further apart from his half brothers, whom Kangxi was to father with other consorts or concubines.

The upbringing of Yinreng was designed to be a model in which all the precepts of moralistic Confucian education would be followed, and the Manchu virtues instilled. Venerable tutors were chosen, and the heir's progress was watched with close attention, as were his deportment and literary skills. He was introduced slowly to the problems of governance, and was left as acting ruler in Peking while Kangxi was away on the long campaigns

against Galdan in 1696–1697. Kangxi even announced his intention of abdicating early so that Yinreng could take over the kingdom as emperor.

But on his return from the west, Kangxi began to hear disquieting rumors about his son's behavior: Yinreng showed signs of being erratic, violent, and cruel. When the emperor took his various sons with him on the imperial tours he loved to make—to the west, to Manchuria, or to the once again prosperous towns on the Grand Canal and on the Yangzi River—Yinreng again began to disturb others with his willful behavior.

One difficulty Kangxi faced was getting accurate information about the situation. Not surprisingly, factions began to develop at court around either Yinreng or one of the seven other imperial sons who were old enough and shrewd enough to be possible rival candidates for the throne. In these conditions, few courtiers and officials, Manchu or Chinese, were willing to speak frankly. As a result Kangxi began to use a new communications system so that he could cut through the haze of rumor.

Information for the emperor from his capital and provincial officials came, most commonly, in the form of "memorials." These were carefully written documents that were carried to the court by government couriers and processed in the Grand Secretariat, where they were copied and evaluated before being passed on to the emperor with suggestions as to the responses he might suitably make. But this was a relatively public system, and Kangxi, in the 1690s, had begun to develop a truly secret system of "palace memorials," which would be delivered to the palace by the writers' own household couriers, brought unopened to the emperor by his most trusted eunuchs, and read, annotated, and sealed by him in private. The route was then reversed, the writers' couriers carrying the memorial, which now bore the emperor's secret rescript on it in vermilion ink, back to the original writer.

Kangxi had first used this system in an informal way, telling certain trusted bondservants stationed in the provinces to send him lists of current grain prices, so that he could check the accuracy of his senior officials' reports and follow up on possible causes of future unrest. Early in the eighteenth century Kangxi began to expand the system; by 1707, a handful of trusted advisers were using palace memorials to tell the emperor secretly the details of Yinreng's conduct. They reported how Yinreng preened himself on his future role as emperor, how he tyrannized his subordinates and household, and how he ordered his agents to buy both boys and girls in the south and to bring them to his palace for his private sexual delectation. Though it took Kangxi a long time to act, by 1708 so much negative evidence had piled up that he could delay no longer. Hysterical with anger, Kangxi ordered Yinreng disbarred forever from his heir-apparent status and placed under house arrest, to be guarded by Kangxi's fourth son, Yinzhen; several of Yinreng's close friends, as well as senior courtiers involved in his misdeeds, were arrested and executed.

What followed was an anguished circle of indecision, guilt, and recrimination on the emperor's part. Believing that Yinreng could not be guilty as charged and instead had been bewitched, Kangxi released him in 1709. But in 1712 fresh evidence—including the spread of the news that Yinreng had been planning to assassinate the emperor, who obviously would not abdicate in his favor—led Kangxi to order his son's rearrest. Thereafter, for the remaining ten years of his reign, Kangxi refused to name any other heir and ruthlessly punished any officials who urged him to do so. The court was awash with rumors, factions grew around many of Kangxi's other sons, and the whole future of the Manchu dynasty was clouded with uncertainty.

The problems with the Catholic missionaries also involved questions of imperial power and prerogative. Ever since he overthrew the Oboi regency, Kangxi had favored the Jesuits in court: he placed them once again in charge of the astronomy bureau, used them as his advisers in matters of cartography and engineering, and allowed them opportunities to practice their religion in Peking and the provinces. Especially for a decade after 1692, when the emperor issued an edict granting toleration to the Christian religion, the Jesuits began to hope that they had a real chance for mass conversion. Kangxi insisted, however, that the Jesuits agree to abide by his stipulation that the Chinese rites of ancestor worship and public homage to Confucius were civil rather than religious ceremonies and, thus, could continue to be practiced by Christian converts. Since Kangxi drew this definition from the position taken by the famous Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci in the late Ming dynasty, a majority of the Jesuits in China found nothing controversial in it.

However, many other Catholic churchmen as well as missionaries from different religious orders, both in east Asia and in Rome, disagreed profoundly. They believed that Kangxi was essentially claiming paramountcy in matters of church doctrine and that the Jesuits were fatally weakening the integrity of the Christian faith. To rectify this, Pope Clement XI dispatched a young but trusted emissary, Maillard de Tournon, to investigate. In a series of meetings between legate and emperor held in Peking during 1705 and 1706, it became clear how bitterly the two men disagreed. When de Tournon forbade Catholic missionaries to follow Kangxi's orders, under pain of excommunication, the emperor responded with an order of expulsion against all those who refused to sign a certificate accepting Kangxi's position. Though most of the China Jesuits signed, more than a dozen Franciscan, Dominican, and other missionaries refused to do so and were duly expelled from China. This mutual hard line wrecked the power base

of the missions in China and effectively prevented the spread of Western teaching and science. Had either side been more flexible, then later in the eighteenth century, when the Catholic church accepted the findings of Galileo and the missionaries started to introduce up-to-date Western astronomy to the Chinese, the new knowledge and techniques might have led to significant changes in Chinese attitudes about thought and nature.

In the crucial realm of taxation and rural administration, finally, Kangxi failed to make constructive changes. He seems to have accepted the position that no comprehensive new survey of landholdings was possible under existing social circumstances; he also perpetuated the late Ming system in which the taxes formerly paid in kind and through labor services were commuted to silver. Only a small amount of this money stayed in the counties to pay for the salaries of local magistrates and their staffs, and for the carrying out of local relief and construction measures. Local officials sought to supplement their resources with a wide range of extra surcharges, much of which they pocketed for themselves, gave to their superiors as gifts, or sent as presents to Peking to make sure that the relevant ministries did not investigate their conduct too closely.

As a consequence, despite Kangxi's dramatic successes in political unification and border consolidation, life in the rural areas remained a grim struggle for millions of Chinese. Small gangs of bandits could roam almost unopposed in many parts of China, since there was no paid and armed militia to oppose them. Corrupt junior staff from the magistrates' offices could bully farming families into paying a variety of taxes for which receipts were never issued. Legal battles over land contracts dragged on for decades, and there was little recourse for minors or widows when harassed by the adult males of their clans. Private feuds led often to violence and homicides that harried officials had neither the time nor the staff to investigate.

Perhaps because he recalled the strong support that Koxinga had received from the local Chinese in his 1659 campaign or because the area was regarded as the central heartland of Confucian culture, Kangxi was particularly lax about prosecuting tax delinquents in the rich provinces of Jiangsu and Zhejiang. To preserve an appearance of harmony, he was constantly urging leniency in tax-delinquency cases and regularly gave generous tax rebates to large areas that were not suffering serious hardship. Although he did continue to enforce the "law of avoidance," which stipulated that senior officials could never serve in their home provinces (so as to avoid their abusing their position while in office), he often ignored confidential reports that pointed to flagrant abuses by the family members of his favored officials, or by those who had retired home after years of service in the capital.

In the last decade of his reign, Kangxi seems to have genuinely believed

that the restoration of prosperity in rural China was now complete, and that the bureaucracy could handle its assignments with the resources at hand. The court itself appeared comfortably solvent, since along with the land-tax revenues it received considerable extra income from monopoly control over salt, ginseng, and jade, as well as from allegedly "voluntary" payments by wealthy merchants, and from transit dues on commerce. Since Kangxi also believed that China's prosperity was measured by the size of its population, and that the true size of that population was being hidden by local officials who feared that if they reported rising numbers the Ministry of Revenue would respond by raising their tax payments, he decided to take dramatic action. In 1712 he froze the assessments of able-bodied men registered as working a given area of agricultural land and decreed that however much the population increased in a particular area, the state would not thereby raise that area's taxes. Local officials could thus report population increases accurately, without fearing the burden of a raised assessment at a future date.

Since Kangxi—like Shunzhi before him—had given up on attempting a national survey of landholdings, China's land-tax system was now doubly frozen: land in the provinces remained registered according to the last reasonably full survey made in 1581 during Emperor Wanli's reign, and the numbers of per capita units subject to tax assessment were henceforth based on the 1712 figures. This was seriously to impede any attempt by Kangxi's successors to rationalize China's finances. Although higher population estimates did now begin to flow into Peking, gratifying the emperor with a sense of China's prosperity, none of the basic fiscal inefficiencies had been eliminated.

"Now that I am ill I am querulous and forgetful," Kangxi told his kneeling courtiers and officials in a self-revelatory edict of 1717, "and terrified of muddling right with wrong, and leaving my work in chaos. I exhaust my mind for the country's sake, and fragment my spirits for the world."[7] Kangxi lived on for another five years after these melancholy words, the longest rule in the history of China up to that time; but longevity brought him diminishing solace. He had still not publicly named an heir when he died in December 1722, of natural causes, in his Peking palace. It is hard, in retrospect, to gauge the level of despair that had led him to neglect such a fundamental obligation.

CHAPTER 4

Yongzheng's Authority

Qing Power and Taxation in the Countryside

The brief reign of Emperor Yongzheng, successor to Kangxi, was stormy, complicated, and important. It was clouded in controversy from the first, when Yongzheng himself announced that he was the dying emperor's choice as heir. Since his other brothers and half brothers were not present at the scene, and since Yongzheng's close friend was commander of the Peking guards division, there was no one to dispute his claim publicly; but throughout his reign (1723–1735), he was troubled by charges that he was a usurper.

There is little evidence that he had usurped the throne, however, and some evidence to show that Kangxi had trusted Yongzheng more than he had most of his other sons. Kangxi and Yongzheng (then known by his ordinary family name of Yinzhen) frequently discussed policy matters together and shared mutual entertainments. As we've seen, Yongzheng, for a time, was even made the jailer of his elder half brother, the deposed heir apparent—a delicate and dangerous task, considering the politics of the time.

Once installed as emperor, Yongzheng did expend considerable effort cementing his position by arresting those of his brothers whom he believed most resented his rule. (He had quieted their suspicions by promoting them first!) The former heir apparent, Yinreng, and two other brothers died in prison shortly after their arrests (whether they were killed or died from mistreatment is not known). Several others were put under house arrest or close surveillance. Yongzheng completely trusted only Kangxi's thirteenth son, Yinxiang, whom he promoted and retained in the highest offices.

Whether one interprets these actions as evidence of a guilty conscience or as practical steps taken to prevent later trouble, Yongzheng showed himself deeply committed to the craft of government. He had a passion for detail and a willingness to spend long hours every day at work, usually reading history texts from 4:00 A.M. until 7:00 A.M., when he breakfasted, meeting with his advisers into the early afternoon, then reading documents and commenting on them, often until midnight. He took neither lengthy hunting excursions to the north nor leisurely tours of the Yangzi delta cities, as his father had loved to do. His main recreation seems to have been the practice of Buddhism, of which he was a devoted and scholarly adherent, and relaxing in the scenic garden of his palace in northwest Peking. Whereas his father had often written in Manchu, and had written Chinese slowly and carefully, Yongzheng seems to have preferred Chinese. His Chinese calligraphy, clearly written with great speed, was accurate and idiomatic.

Emperor Yongzheng concentrated on a number of central problems in Chinese government that were crucial in his own day and have remained so to the present. These included the structure of Chinese bureaucracy and finance in the countryside, the development of an effective and confidential information system, and the strengthening of the central executive branch of the state. These three were (and are) tightly interconnected; success in managing them would go far to ensure more efficient control of China's enormous territory.

From the beginning of his reign, Yongzheng seems to have had a clear vision of how to proceed. He was not a child under the supervision of regents when he ascended the throne, as his father and grandfather had been, but an experienced man of forty-five who had watched his father's reign begin to fall apart. The system of secret palace memorials was made to measure for him, and he extended and coordinated the informal structure that Kangxi had initiated. Apart from routine matters, which were reported, as in the past, in open memorials to the ministries and to the Grand Secretariat, most senior provincial officials now reported confidentially to Yongzheng on the details of their administration and on each other. As the emperor began to realize the size of the tax deficits and the casualness with which the fiscal crisis had been treated in his father's reign, he urged his officials to suggest means of reforming the financial structure, and established a small executive office of financial review to stand separate from and above the Ministry of Revenue. In charge of this office he placed Kangxi's thirteenth son, Yinxiang.

The financial crisis was too complicated for even an absolute ruler to solve with an edict or two. The central budget of China in 1723 was about 35 million taels (ounces of silver), of which about 6 million came from

commercial taxes of various kinds and 29 million from the "land and head tax" *(diding)*. Anywhere from 15 to 30 percent of this 29 million was retained in each province for "local use," while the rest was sent to Peking; but nearly all that "local use" percentage was spent on projects that were really national ones, such as military supplies and imperial post stations. Less than one-sixth of the total was available to local officials for projects in their own areas. One might have thought it simple to increase income by raising the number of land-tax and head-tax units; but here the obligations of filiality to Emperor Kangxi were too strong, and Yongzheng did not attempt to change his father's 1712 ruling. Moreover the central premise of Chinese political theory, which the Manchus had also made their own, was that a low tax base was essential to the well-being of the country and the true proof of an emperor's benevolence. Another obstacle to reform was posed by the officials in the Ministry of Revenue, who had their own procedures and protocols, and drew large sums in "gifts" from the accepted practices, which they were understandably loath to change.

The current tax system was not only entrenched but full of abuses. Members of the upper class were often wealthy landowners, and, as in Kangxi's reign, many of them concealed their tax responsibilities in a maze of false names, misregistrations, transferred holdings, mortgages, and so on, which made it almost impossible to trace their exact holdings. Furthermore, much of the economic power in the countryside was in the hands of small landholders who tyrannized the local villagers. These landholders colluded with the clerks in the provincial magistrates' offices in order to evade paying their own taxes and to force the poorer peasants to assume a disproportionate amount of the tax burden for the whole community. In such situations, the peasants had little redress, and money that had in fact been embezzled was counted as being in "arrears"—that is, owed by delinquent farmers.

Between 1725 and 1729, Yongzheng reversed his father's casual approach and made a concerted effort to reform the land tax and to break the power of the local intermediate groups. He was determined to extend the power of the Qing state more effectively into the countryside. As he expressed himself in an edict of 1725: "When the flesh and blood of the common people is used to rectify the deficits of the officials, how can there not be hardship in the countryside? I am deeply concerned about these abuses."[1]

He began by slowly accumulating accurate information through palace memorials and by appointing new men—often Manchus or Chinese bannermen who would be less influenced by the local elites—to the key offices of provincial governor and financial commissioner. Yongzheng then moved to establish an official consensus that a fixed rate of surcharge should be levied on the basic land-tax *(di)* and head-tax *(ding)* quotas, that all of this

surcharge should be passed on to the provincial financial commissioners' offices, and that all other supplementary fees and gifts should be declared illegal. The tax money gathered by the financial commissioners' offices would then be reallocated within the province on an equitable basis. Part would be used to give far higher salaries to the local officials than they had ever received before (this was called "money to nourish honesty"), and part would go into county funds for the support of irrigation works, road and school building, and other worthy or necessary local needs that did not come under the purview of the central Ministry of Revenue budget. These included provision of draft animals for disaster victims, jail improvement or gazetteer printing, city sewers or charity graveyards, examination cubicles, and candles and incense for local temples.

In assessing the effects of these reforms, one can get a brief overview of China's regional variations at this time. The reforms were most successful in the northern provinces of Shanxi, Henan, and Hebei, where independent landholding peasant cultivators were common, land registration was comparatively easy, and magistrates could be closely supervised and forced to give up their traditional perquisites. Virtually everyone in this region benefited from the reforms except for the corrupt middlemen landlords and some of the ruthlessly greedy clerks and magistrates. The flat surcharge of 15 to 20 percent on the basic land tax proved much less burdensome to the peasants and even to the larger landholders than the endless rounds of overlapping fees that had prevailed. And the new salaries gave the officials a more regular and higher-level income than they had previously enjoyed: 600 to 1,000 taels a year in the case of county magistrates, as opposed to 45 taels before the reforms. Offices were now better-run, business was conducted faster, and there was real local autonomy and initiative for dealing with specific projects.

In the south and southwest, however, the reforms went much less smoothly. Here the basic tax-quota figures were far lower because there were many recently settled, sparsely populated areas; but since the number of officials was still high, the surcharges did not bring in enough money to pay the same high levels of salary as in the north. The system could be made to work only by granting the local officials some of the tax revenues from such commercial enterprises as mining, salt production, or transit dues at checkpoints on China's roads, canals, and rivers. Even so, because of the great distances and expense involved, many magistrates failed to forward all their surcharge money to the financial commissioners of their provinces, pleading instead to be allowed to withdraw their new salaries and the local expense money *before* they forwarded the rest. Predictably this led to renewed local graft, and precluded the commissioners' making a full and equitable distri-

bution of revenues based on true need.

It was in the central Yangzi provinces, however—especially Jiangsu and Anhui, but also Zhejiang and Jiangxi—that the system ran into the most trouble. Here lived countless retired but still powerful former officials and their relatives, whose lands had never been properly registered and who could intimidate the local magistrates through connections in the capital. Kangxi had been especially lenient to the wealthy elites in this area, and they were not about to submit meekly to tougher central control. Opposition to Yongzheng's reform was so obvious and so concentrated that the emperor finally appointed a special Manchu commissioner, backed by a staff of seventy experienced auditors from the Peking bureaucracy, to push through a thorough examination of the provinces' finances and to make a complete and accurate registration of land.

The malfeasance they found was incredible, and the examples of false and overlapping registrations so complex that they despaired of ever unraveling them. In some cases, the auditors found, landowners had divided their holdings under literally hundreds of false names, confident that in each of these tiny units the tax liability was so low that no magistrate or clerk would take the time to chase up arrears. The auditors' attempts at on-the-spot examination were met by delays, hostility, blocked roads, cut bridges, even riots and physical assault. Those imprisoned for questioning were often rescued by jail-storming crowds. Coded logbooks confiscated by the auditors showed how, generation after generation, local financial clerks had exempted wealthy families from nearly all their tax obligations in return for payoffs. Yet even with this evidence, the auditors still found it hard to pin down the guilty parties and even harder to collect more than a small percentage of the 10 million taels they found was owed from the area to the government.

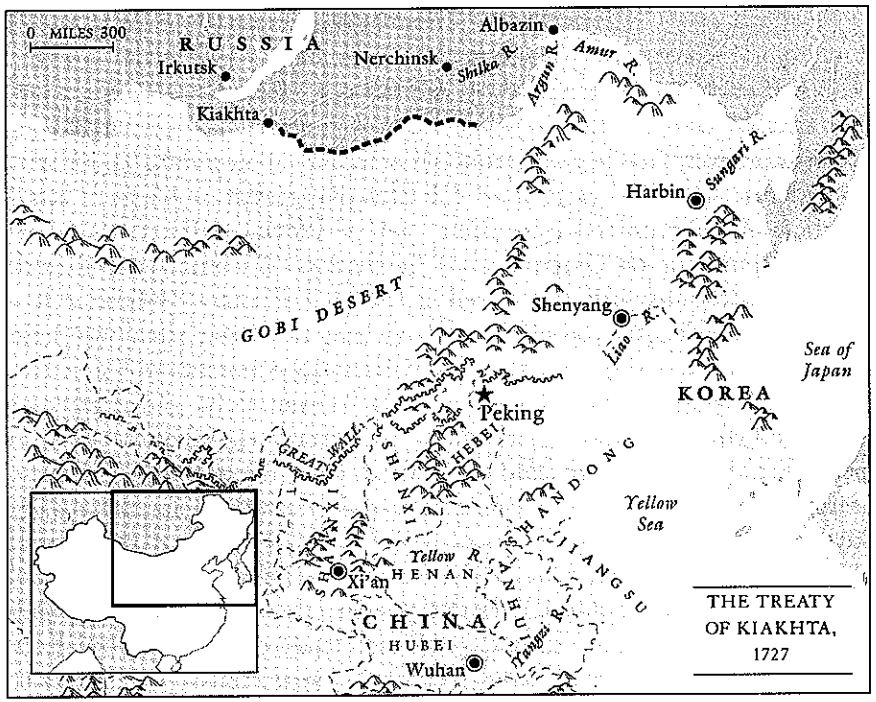
The very tenacity of this opposition showed that the attempted reforms were a step in the right direction. For the reforms suggested that with persistence, the efforts of officials of integrity, and the emperor's encouragement, the Qing state could reach a new level of centralized bureaucratic efficiency. Thus China might be able to build on the achievements of national reunification gained between 1644 and 1683, and the foreign-policy successes that had followed, to create a genuinely lasting and viable governmental system. In particular, if the center could control and exploit the rich resources of China's most prosperous provinces, that would surely benefit and strengthen the country as a whole.

The Center and Channels of Power

Rulers are rarely free to concentrate on one problem at a time, and Yongzheng was never able to give his full attention to the problems of rural taxation and administration in China's central provinces. It became necessary again to reinforce Qing power on the borders. Zhu Yigui's rebellion in Taiwan had been swiftly suppressed in 1721, but effective pacification was complex. After lengthy consultations, Yongzheng decided to strengthen local control there by subdividing several of Taiwan's counties into smaller units, and by allowing the pioneer emigrants in Taiwan to be joined by their wives and children to make for a more settled social environment. He also permitted Chinese to rent land on contract from the original Taiwanese inhabitants, while setting aside certain formal reservations for the aborigines.

There was need as well for careful new negotiations with Russia to prevent the Treaty of Nerchinsk from falling apart over arguments concerning the border tribes, trade caravans, and clashes sparked by the discovery of gold in southern Siberia. A senior negotiating team, consisting entirely of Manchus, worked with the Lifan Yuan to draw up a supplementary treaty, signed at Kiakhta in 1727. The Treaty of Kiakhta drew a line between the two countries from Kiakhta to the Argun, and stated which tribes should be based in Chinese territory. Kiakhta was to be one of two new border trading towns, one Russian caravan was to be allowed to trade in Peking every three years, and a Russian Orthodox church was to be maintained in Peking. Most members of the small Russian community in the capital had been captured in earlier wars and were now incorporated in the banners. (The treaty specifically stipulated that they were to be encouraged to learn the Chinese language.) Yongzheng also consolidated his hold over the last of the Manchu banners still controlled by Manchu princes and noblemen, and began to take serious note of problems in Tibet and among the Miao aborigines in China's southwest.

Yongzheng saw the renewed Zunghar threat as the most serious one in the long term, despite their defeat by Kangxi's forces in 1696. He was convinced that the Zunghars could be suppressed only if he meticulously prepared a major military buildup in the far west. But the supply lines were immensely long, and it was hard to keep the preparations secret. The court was full of ears, and the emperor's main policy discussion group—the Deliberative Council of Princes and High Officials—proved unable to keep its proceedings confidential. Peking was also full of Mongol princes and



princesses, banner generals, traveling merchants, and lamas loyal to the Tibetan Buddhist church, any of whom might spread news of Qing intentions. So Yongzheng initially kept much of his military planning private by limiting discussions to a small group of his most trusted grand secretaries, whom he came to call the "inner grand secretaries." (The title distinguished them from those who worked in the "outer" court with the regular bureaucracy.)

The three key members of this group were his trusted younger brother Yinxiang (who was also running the revenue-auditing bureau) and two Chinese grand secretaries, Zhang Tingyu and Jiang Tingxi. Zhang Tingyu, son of one of Kangxi's most trusted advisers, was fluent in Manchu and had served as minister of revenue; Jiang had also been in charge of that ministry and was a nationally prominent painter as well. Both men also held the senior *(jinshi)* examination degree, had served in the prestigious imperial Hanlin Academy on the basis of their scholarly excellence, and came from the prosperous Yangzi delta provinces, Zhang from Anhui and Jiang from Jiangsu. They may be seen, therefore, as representing the most talented upper levels of the traditional Chinese bureaucracy who now, more

than eighty years after the conquest, were firmly loyal to their Chinese-seeming Manchu emperor. By 1729 the three men were overseeing a secret new bureau, the Office of Military Finance, aided by a small group of experienced middle-echelon officials, both Manchu and Chinese, who were drawn from various ministries—especially the Ministry of Revenue—and were trusted to be discreet. Not even all the other grand secretaries knew the details of their work, and only in the reign of Yongzheng's son, Qianlong, was this office to gain public notice and prominence as the Grand Council.[2]

So once again, as he had in the matter of finance, Yongzheng created an informal yet efficient network to enhance his own power and to deflect certain information and decisions away from the regular six ministries and their staffs. Why the secretive departure from conventional channels? Part of the answer is probably that Yongzheng and his advisers feared there would be questionable financial dealings in the complicated and expensive logistical preparations for the western campaigns, and wanted to keep their inquiries concealed from the formal ministries. It is also likely that they wanted to keep the scale of their operations secret. Hence we find the Office of Military Finance keeping the most detailed accounts on such items as the number of mules or camels and carts that might be needed to transport the supplies for a given number of troops.

Another reason for these new arrangements was that the inner grand secretaries frequently needed to deliberate over secret palace memorials. In some cases these had to be filed; for the emperor, after all, could not keep all these details in his head, and the only safe place to file them was in a specially staffed office under tight security. Yongzheng could also communicate with his generals at the front through so-called "court letters" drafted for him, after discussion, by the inner grand secretaries, and dispatched swiftly and secretly to the recipient. This saved time for the emperor, who was already rescripting in person, and often at great length, from fifty to a hundred palace memorials a day. With court letters drafted for him in secrecy, the emperor could now take the time to add personal notes to show his frontier generals how he trusted them. "How are you after riding your horse through wind and snow?" the emperor wrote to General Yue Zhongqi, stationed in the far western provinces. "Are the officers, troops and animals in good condition?" Or, again to Yue: "I have made a selection of auspicious days for you to start on your journey from Xi'an to the front, and am sending it to you."[3]

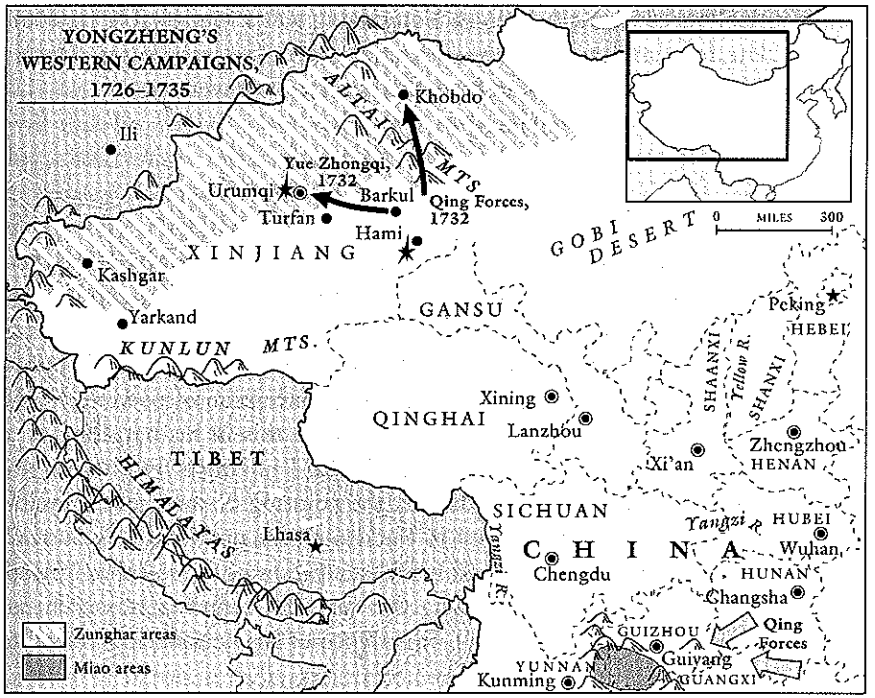
Finally the new measures were prompted by considerations of state security as they related to the safety of the emperor from his own forces. Potential threats abounded. For instance, one of Yongzheng's least trusted brothers

had been serving as a general in the Tibetan campaigns when Yongzheng ascended the throne. One of Yongzheng's closest friends, while serving as commanding general in Sichuan and Gansu, had also been implicated in the plots of Yongzheng's brothers and ordered to commit suicide in 1727. And the new commanding general in the region, Yue Zhongqi, though given the just-quoted marks of affection and appreciation by the emperor, was a descendant of Yue Fei, famous to all Chinese as a great patriot who, in the twelfth century, was killed in prison by his own Song dynasty rulers despite his courage in fighting Jürchen invaders. To avoid any or all of these potential threats from his own military, Yongzheng would have had cause to tread cautiously.

The long-planned campaign against the Zunghars went badly. In 1732 General Yue Zhongqi, from his forward headquarters at Barkul, was able to raid the enemy in Urumchi but could not protect his own forces in Hami from enemy counterattacks. Yue's fellow senior general rashly led his army of ten thousand troops into an ambush near Khobdo; although he escaped, he lost four-fifths of his men and most of his officers. Both generals were sentenced to death by Yongzheng for these failures and related charges of corruption, although he later commuted the death sentences. As a result of these failures, it would take another thirty years to settle the border problems in this region.

Yongzheng also employed some of his new communication channels to coordinate the fighting in southwest China against the indigenous Miao peoples. Chinese settlers had been pressing into the provinces of Yunnan and Guizhou since the suppression of the Three Feudatories, pushing the local valley dwellers up into the hills and disrupting local society by opening silver and copper mines. In 1726 Yongzheng made Oertai governor-general of the entire region. An experienced administrator, from a warrior family in the blue banner, and fluent in Chinese as well as Manchu, Oertai kept constantly in touch with the emperor through his palace memorials. These traced his efforts to break the power of the local Miao chieftains, to confiscate their tribal lands, and to have them reregistered and administered as part of the Chinese prefectural system. Those who resisted were surrounded and killed by Qing armies; those who submitted still lost the rights to their land but were often reinstated as administrators with their own stipends.

In 1728, in a highly unusual move, Oertai was also named governor-general of Guangxi to speed the suppression of the tribesmen there. Yongzheng's long comments on the palace memorials constantly spurred Oertai on, debated knotty problems, and discussed the performance of other officials in the area. In 1732 Oertai, having been largely successful in pacifying



the southwest, was recalled to Peking to serve concurrently in the Office of Military Finance. He took the place of Prince Yinxiang and Jiang Tingxi, both of whom had died while Oertai was in the southwest. Thus he and Zhang Tingyu became Yongzheng's most trusted advisers in the capital.

Surveying these developments in the supervision of finance, the communication system, and military affairs, we can see how the Qing Empire was developing in terms of unity and autocracy. In the near century since the Qing conquest, the power of great Manchu regents or noblemen to rule the country—or even their own banners—had waned. Royal brothers could still be a danger to the emperor, but they could be manipulated or suppressed. The regular bureaucracy was considered useful in many ways but a hindrance in others, especially when speed and confidentiality were required. Yet Yongzheng did not take the route, as autocrats so often do, of simply forming an important new office, staffing it with his own men, and insisting on its monopoly over important decision making. Instead he chose a more roundabout way, establishing an undramatic-looking office with a nondescript title, and having those who worked in it hold other jobs at the same time; thus their salaries and official ranks derived from other, more

conventional bureaucratic functions. Yongzheng was a remarkable tactician with a flair for—and a belief in—informal and secret structures. Dominance of those structures was, to him, the essence of power.

Moral Authority

Emperor Yongzheng's interests took in more than matters of administration. He had a far-ranging concern for moral and cultural values, and many of his major decisions were affected by his moral convictions. He was a man who seems to have been convinced of his own rectitude, and his pronouncements indicate a link between his basic conception of power and his idea of the emperor's superiority. One can gauge this in his handling of a wide range of issues: the Catholic church, the Lu Liuliang affair, his amplification of the Sacred Edict of his father, the printing of the great encyclopedia *Gujin tushu jicheng,* his interest in Buddhism, the problems of industrial laborers and of opium addiction, and his emancipation of the so-called "mean people." At one level, he was playing the role of Confucian monarch; at another, he still bore the autocratic impatience of his conquering Manchu forebears.

With the Catholic missionaries, Yongzheng was even sterner than his father had been in the later years of his life. Not only was the rites controversy still splitting the Catholic community in China, but at least two Jesuits, perhaps believing there was a chance of converting the emperor, had been in correspondence with one of the brothers Yongzheng most distrusted, using the Roman alphabet as a form of code. When Yongzheng discovered this, his anger spread to other scholars who knew the missionaries and to the Catholic church as a whole. Except for the few missionaries on duty at the court in Peking, all the others living in various provinces were ordered to assemble in Canton or Macao; several of the provincial churches were converted to use as schools or as hostels. Since Yongzheng had committed himself publicly against political in-groups and parties by his often-repeated attacks on the whole idea of "factions," he spoke out angrily against the factional influence of the church. Still, he held back from a final ban, taking a high moral stand: "The distant barbarians come here attracted by our culture," he noted in 1726. "We must show them generosity and virtue."[4] Although only one missionary was actually executed in this period, the missionaries as a group had to be extraordinarily circumspect in their behavior. Their influence waned to the point that their only remaining roles of significance at court were as directors of the astronomical bureau and as painters in the imperial studios.

The Lu Liuliang affair produced a similarly complex imperial reaction, involving both vengeance and compassion. Lu was a bitterly anti-Manchu scholar, medical doctor, and monk who had died in 1683 stipulating in his will that he not be buried in clothes of Manchu design. Some of his writings, containing sneering remarks about Manchus and other barbarians, circulated in central China and were read by, among others, an impressionable young schoolteacher named Zeng Jing. Fired with anti-Manchu ardor by Lu's writings and believing the rumors that Yongzheng was a usurper, in 1728 Zeng tried to convince General Yue Zhongqi, who was in Sichuan preparing for the anti-Zunghar campaign, to rebel against Emperor Yongzheng. Yue responded by feigning sympathy until he had unraveled the details of the plot, and then informed Yongzheng of what he had learned.

Checking into the case, Yongzheng was enraged to discover Lu's writings, and how widely rumors of his usurpation had circulated. The imperial response was threefold: to order the exhumation and dismemberment of Lu's corpse and the enslavement or exile of all his surviving family members; to write an angry and detailed rebuttal, attempting to prove that he was indeed his father's chosen successor, a rebuttal that every holder of a state examination degree was required to read; and to make a dramatic gesture of pardoning Zeng with no more than a reprimand on the grounds that he had been young and gullible.

Yongzheng deliberately projected this image linking Confucian benevolence to paternal sternness in other ways, including his amplifications to the Sacred Edict of his father. Kangxi had been content to give a brief summary of sixteen moral points to help his subjects lead obedient and peaceful lives. But Yongzheng elaborated on each of his father's maxims at great length, preparing lectures that were to be delivered by local scholars twice a month right down to the village level. In his elaborations, Yongzheng especially emphasized the need for integrated local communities that would pay their taxes promptly, avoid feuds, and protect themselves from outlaws; the role of thrift and hard work in an agricultural economy; avoidance of litigation; and the fostering of an educational system that taught moral conduct and orthodoxy while renouncing "false doctrines." All examination candidates at the county level had to know the expanded maxims and the emperor's commentaries on them. Simplified versions were also prepared, composed by some of Yongzheng's officials, so that the homilies could be delivered even by those with limited education and to minority peoples who spoke their own non-Han languages. It was a serious and thorough attempt at nationwide indoctrination, which, Yongzheng believed, would improve people's thoughts and behavior, and intensify their loyalty to the state. Such patterns of moral indoctrination would become a recurrent theme in later

Chinese history, both after the great rebellions of the mid-nineteenth century and under the successive governments of the Chinese Nationalists and the Chinese Communists.

The emperor Yongzheng's behavior over the publication of the *Gujin tushu jicheng* marked an apparently petty side of the imperial nature, but the seriousness with which the emperor pursued the project is an important indicator of the interconnection of political and cultural values during the Qing. The *Gujin tushu jicheng* ("Complete Collection of Illustrations and Writings from the Earliest to Current Times") was an enormous encyclopedia, the fruit of decades of scholarship by the scholar Chen Menglei. Chen, helped by scores of other scholars, by Emperor Kangxi's third son—who became his patron—and finally by the patronage of Kangxi himself, sought to assemble all the finest past writings on natural phenomena, geography, history, literature, and government. The result, surely one of the largest books in the history of the world, filled 800,000 pages and contained over 100,000,000 Chinese characters. The copper type for printing this vast work was already set when Kangxi died.

Yongzheng, determined to ensure that credit for this great undertaking should not go to this particular brother, whom he hated, used the fact that Chen had once been forced to serve in the rebel Geng Jingzhong's Fujian feudatory to declare him a traitor and have him banished to Manchuria. Yongzheng then erased all signs of Chen's editorship and all mention of his elder brother's involvement with the project. After a lapse of four years, which allegedly was used to "correct" the encyclopedia, it was issued as the work of Kangxi himself; one of Yongzheng's most trusted inner grand secretaries was listed as editor-in-chief of the "revision."

In the realm of Buddhism, one can again see the polarities in Yongzheng's behavior as he played out the dual roles of ardent believer and autocrat. The school of Buddhism that most attracted Yongzheng was Chan, which had first begun to flourish in China a millennium earlier. Chan devotees practiced an austere program of meditation and introspection so that they would ultimately understand that the so-called "practical" world they inhabited was in truth a realm of illusion. They believed, too, that the Buddha nature was immanent in all beings and that enlightenment could be obtained by all individuals with the requisite faith and concentration. True to this set of beliefs, Yongzheng met regularly in his Peking palace with a fourteen-person Chan study group, consisting of the five brothers he still trusted, select senior officials, one Daoist, and five Buddhist monks. He also authorized a Buddhist press to print sutras—passages from Buddhist scripture. Yet when Yongzheng disagreed with the doctrinal interpretations that had been put forth by two Buddhist monks of the late Ming and

were still adhered to by many Chan believers in his own day, he ordered the two monks' controversial books burned and compelled their later followers to renounce the monks and their works.

One can see Yongzheng's social values emerge in the area of labor relations as well. The territory around Suzhou, south of the Yangzi, was famous in eighteenth-century China as a center of the silk- and cotton-cloth trades. Among the area's large labor force were men, legendary for their great physical strength, who used huge rollers, weighing a thousand pounds or more, to press and finish the cloth. These "calenderers," as they were called, worked furiously hard for poor wages: it took almost a day to process a 68-foot length of cloth, for which each worker received 11 copper cash, or just over one-hundredth of a silver tael. This was barely enough to survive on at a time when the basic price for a picul of grain (approximately 130 pounds weight) was around 1 tael on the open market.

In Kangxi's reign these calenderers went on strike several times, demanding not only better wages, but also the right to build a hospital, an orphanage, and a meeting hall. The strikers got nowhere and their leaders were beaten, but the calenderers rose in protest once more in 1723 and again in 1729. Since there were more than eight thousand of these tough and committed laborers around Suzhou, Yongzheng took the matter seriously, but he was much more concerned with their possible links to outside rebels and agitators than he was about their poor economic conditions. He praised the governor who arrested and interrogated twenty-two of the workers.

Through surviving palace memorials bearing his lengthy interlinear inscriptions, we can see how carefully Yongzheng followed the investigation, which yielded the unsettling news that some of the workers were involved with martial-arts experts, fortunetellers, physicians, owners of male and female brothels, and even some alleged allies of a claimant to the Ming throne who had fled to the Philippines. Only when all these elements had been unraveled in 1730 and the conspirators punished did the emperor write his informant the vermilion notation "Good, now you can send a public memorial." In other words, only now would the ministries in Peking and the grand secretaries be allowed to share in the full details that the emperor and a few favored officials had been brooding about for seven years.

In the area of opium addiction, the emperor was on new and untested terrain. Although some use of opium for its medicinal and narcotic properties had been recorded since the eleventh century, it was only after tobacco smoking had become popular in China during the seventeenth century, and after knowledge of opium-smoking techniques had been brought back from Taiwan by the soldiers who had been sent to suppress the Zhu Yigui rebel-

lion of 1721, that opium addiction spread to the Chinese mainland. Yongzheng was alerted to the extent of the problem early in his reign and determined to ban opium smoking, but since there was no clear precedent in the Chinese legal code, a number of different clauses had to be invoked by analogy. Thus opium dealers were to be sentenced, like those selling contraband goods, to wear the heavy wooden collar called the "cangue" for one month and then to be banished to a military frontier garrison. Those who lured the innocent into their opium dens were to be punished, like those preaching heterodox religions, to strangulation (subject to mitigation after review). Those smoking or growing opium were to be beaten with one hundred strokes in accordance with penalties for those who violated imperial orders.

But in 1729 a long memorial reached Yongzheng and persuaded him to think the whole opium problem through with greater care. The memorial concerned an opium seller named Chen, who had been sentenced under the laws to have all his stock confiscated, to wear the cangue, and to be banished. But the opium seller protested his innocence on the grounds that he had only been selling *medicinal* opium for health reasons and not for smoking. Reviewing the evidence, Yongzheng acknowledged that this was indeed a valid distinction and that officials should always ascertain motivation in actions under investigation. This Chen, a Fujian shopkeeper who had traded his "dried orange cakes" with a merchant in Guangdong for some forty pounds of opium, might well be a legitimate businessman or pharmacist, not a crook. As the emperor sensibly observed: "If the opium is contraband, then Chen should not be graciously pardoned. If it is not contraband, then why have you stored it in the provincial treasure? This is the hard-earned capital of the common people. How can you deal with an error by committing another error, and thus deprive him of his livelihood?"[5] Here was a concrete example of a situation in which the absolute ruler of the world's largest empire could still keep a close watch on social problems, attempt to enforce a measure of economic equity, and pose as a supreme cultural arbiter.

Perhaps Yongzheng's most dramatic gesture in this direction was his decision to emancipate the "mean people" of China. This designation was applied to several groups who were considered social outcasts and were forbidden to serve in any government capacity or take the state exams: the "singing people" of Shaanxi and Shanxi, who sang and played music at weddings and funerals; the so-called "fallen people" of Zhejiang; the hereditary servants of Anhui and the hereditary beggars of Jiangsu; the boatmen, oyster gatherers, and pearl fishers from certain local tribes who worked in the dangerous seas off the southeast coast; the humble "hut dwellers" who

gathered hemp and indigo on the Zhejiang-Fujian border; and others who worked as domestic slaves. Perhaps Yongzheng was moved to change their lowly status more from his desire to establish a unified code of public morals than from genuine compassion, but the fact that he issued a whole series of edicts between 1723 and 1731 to free them shows his consistency and tenacity in seeking to end this type of discrimination.

In the short run the edicts had less effect than he hoped. Many of the "mean people" stayed in their lowly occupations out of choice, while many others were used to their degraded status and simply accepted it even though the laws had changed. Members of the general public were not eager to accept these outcasts as equals, despite the emperor's edicts. But over the long term his pronouncements had the desired effect, and slowly many of the despised groups were able to take a more settled place in Qing society.

Here, as at other times in his reign, Yongzheng had a chance to learn that human nature could be obdurate, and that public pronouncements of moralistic concern did not necessarily change ingrown patterns of behavior; but we cannot tell if he took the lesson to heart. His belief in his own powers of persuasion remained intact, and he continued to exhort his officials and his subjects until the day he died. His practical moralism is a sign of how deeply the conventional Confucian virtues had been internalized by the Manchu rulers of the Qing state.

CHAPTER 5

Chinese Society and the Reign of Qianlong

Social Pressures and Population Growth

The reign of Qianlong, from 1736 to 1799, was the longest in the history of China. When one combines this period with the almost equally long reign of Kangxi, and adds Yongzheng's reign, one sees that just three emperors ruled over China during the entire span extending from 1661 to 1799. Comparing the events of their reigns with the developments in North America over a similar stretch of time, from the founding of New York as an English colony to the death of George Washington, or in Britain from the Restoration of Charles II to the industrial revolution, one can see why China has presented such an extraordinary picture of stability and continuity to foreign observers.

But this apparent stability, and the remarkable successes of the emperors Kangxi and Yongzheng in consolidating China's borders and centralizing the administration, should not blind us to the fact that China was still far from being a fully integrated or homogenous country. China's vast expanses allowed for endless variations in such areas as pace of economic change, types of lineage organization, efficiency of transportation, religious practices, sophistication of commerce, and patterns of land use and landholding. A complete history of China would ideally include information on all these variables on a district-by-district basis, so that precise patterns of change could be charted and connected with political decisions made at the center.

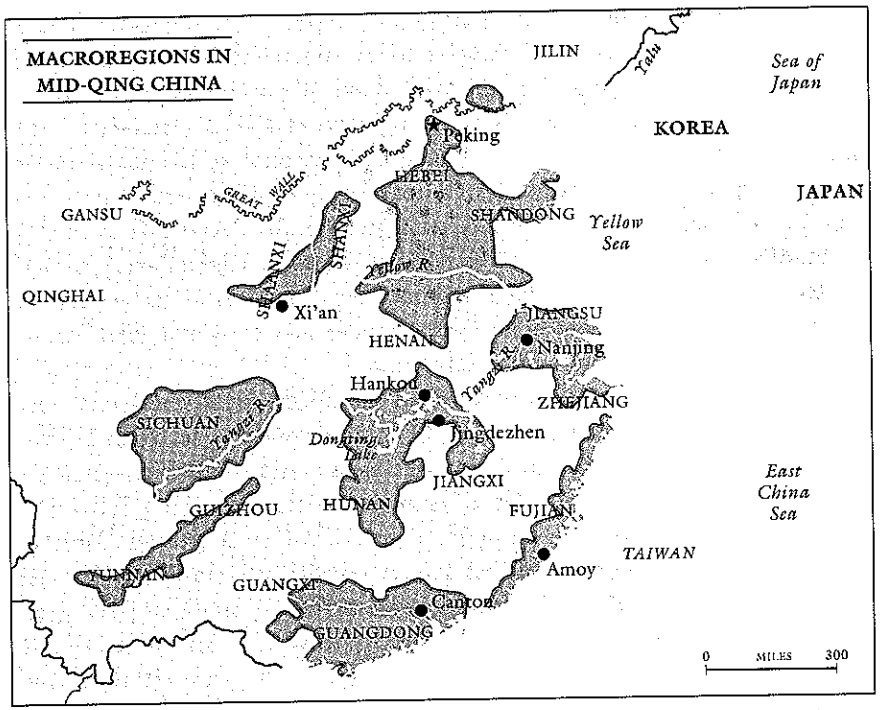
Daunting though this task is, various studies have begun to show that it is feasible. In particular, by analyzing late imperial China in terms of units of economic integration rather than through the traditional provincial and

prefectural subdivisions, we gain a different perspective on the society based on a body of data that was not available to the rulers and bureaucrats of the time. Scholars employing this approach have identified nine "macroregions" (as they term them), each embracing parts of several provinces. Each macroregion had a "core" defined by heightened economic activity in major cities, high population density, and comparatively sophisticated transportation networks for conveyance of food and merchandise. And each core was surrounded by a "periphery" of less populated and developed areas, which isolated the core of a given macroregion from the cores of its neighbors, and also provided a loosely policed area where illegal sects or bandit elements could develop in comparative freedom.[1]

Of these nine macroregions one was in the northeast, in the area coterminus with southern Manchuria, the Qing's preconquest heartland. Two were in the north, in the Xi'an region of Shaanxi and the Peking–western Shandong area. Three extended at different points along the Yangzi River—one on the east coast around Nanjing, one halfway upriver around Hankou, and one deeper up the river in Sichuan. A seventh was on the lower east coast in the Fujian region. An eighth was in the far southeast, centered around Canton. And the last was in the southwest, in the provinces of Yunnan and Guizhou. Without launching a detailed exploration of all nine macroregions, we can take a brief look at three of them to determine what kinds of factors were affecting their patterns of social and economic development in the eighteenth century.

First, the northern macroregion—centered around Peking and western Shandong, and extending into Henan and northern Jiangsu—was, despite the presence of the capital, less urban than most other macroregions: small independent holdings were the economic norm. Flooding was common, brought on by the silt-filled Yellow River, but flood-relief measures and emergency grain distribution in times of famine were more effective than in regions farther from the capital. Cotton was becoming a valuable cash crop of this macroregion as both spinning and weaving techniques grew more efficient, often carried out in home-based cellar workshops that provided a "climatized" environment of controlled dampness to prevent the fragile strands from breaking. Tobacco cultivation was spreading, too, along with glassmaking, coal mining, and brewing. Shifting social conditions, the presence of the many laborers and boatmen who serviced the grain barges on the Grand Canal, overworked soil, and fragmented landholdings all contributed to make this an area where crime and local violence were common.

By contrast, the middle Yangzi macroregion, with its comparatively low population density and its untilled land, was at this time experiencing a



massive in-migration from other regions. The area developed a population of "sojourners" with divided loyalties to their new base and their old ancestral homes, and of disaffected local minorities pushed off their former lands. The booming Yangzi River city of Hankou, a commercial rather than an administrative center with complex systems of banks and guilds, was becoming the focus for a truly interregional long-distance grain trade. To the southeast, Jingdezhen expanded as an industrial city, making porcelain for the export markets of the West as well as for the Chinese elite. Yet along with this commercial growth, peasant strategies of building new dikes in the area of Dongting Lake to protect their tiny plots of farmland from floods, along with larger-scale land-reclamation projects engineered by the elite, led ultimately to terrible flooding by the rivers, which had been deprived of their natural runoff areas by man's hard work and ingenuity.

A different series of factors dominated our third example, the lower-east-coast macroregion that centered around Fujian province and incorporated parts of southern Zhejiang and eastern Guangdong. The coastal location gave this macroregion's merchants a host of profitable trade contacts with Taiwan and Southeast Asia, which brought a certain cosmopolitanism

and a highly developed system of credit and banking particularly to the port of Amoy (Xiamen). Further prosperity came from the rich tea farms of the region. But for a mixture of historical and geographical reasons, this macroregion was also riven by fierce localisms. Powerful lineages controlled whole villages, and feuds between them were deadly and frequent. Many richer homes were heavily fortified. Tenancy rates were high, and there were violent tensions involving recent immigrants or the poorer inland farmers on their terraced mountainsides. Strong local accents and dialects made contact with outsiders difficult. The region's elite were sliding in the scale of national prestige, as the area produced fewer and fewer holders of the coveted highest examination degree, the *jinshi*. The Qing government identified the region as a potential trouble spot and kept it heavily garrisoned with both banner forces and local Chinese troops known as the Green Standard armies.

Since each of the macroregions had its own internal economic logic, there was always danger that differences with other macroregions might escalate into conflict. If the centralizing state proved unable to mediate or control these conflicts, the result might be either fragmentation or civil war. Something close to this had occurred between the 1630s and 1680s, when peasant rebels, Ming loyalists, Koxinga's forces, and the Three Feudatories had each found temporary bases in different macroregional cores. The task of the state, therefore, was to bond the macroregions together by ideological and administrative means—backed if necessary by military force. This task would be eased if trade links between separate macroregions also developed, as began to happen in the later eighteenth century. With economic bonds reinforcing political ones, the nature of Qing state and society might eventually be transformed.

Another factor complicating the mid-Qing society and economy was China's rapidly rising population. Despite Kangxi's attempts through the head-tax registration reforms of 1712 to get a more accurate count of his country's inhabitants, the figures still remain shadowy, and comparisons with earlier periods are hard to make with precision. We can be fairly sure, however, that China's population in the early Ming dynasty, around 1390, was somewhere between 65 million and 80 million. By the end of the reign of Yongzheng's son Qianlong in the 1790s, it had passed the 300 million mark. But the demographic significance of the Ming-Qing transition period is that it interrupted any pattern of steady, moderate growth. In fact the period from just after the Ming emperor Wanli's death in 1620 to the end of Kangxi's war against the Three Feudatories (1681) witnessed a catastrophic drop in China's population overall, the result of foreign invasion, civil war, bandit upheavals, natural disaster, irrigation-system failures, and

virulent epidemics. How catastrophic the drop was we cannot say. In the late Ming, China may have had well over 150 million people; in the 1670s, the population might not have been much over 100 million. Precision is impossible.

What does seem clear is that these demographic catastrophes made possible the economic revival and population rise of the eighteenth century, for in many areas there was good land going begging for tenants and cultivators. During Kangxi's rule, there was a resettlement of the devastated areas of north China and of the war-ravaged parts of once-prosperous Sichuan. In Yongzheng's reign, settlers began to push down into southwest China. Under his son Qianlong, Chinese began to defy government prohibitions and move into southern Manchuria in large numbers, and also to populate the uplands of the Yangzi and Han river drainage areas. Others sailed from east China to Taiwan or farther afield—to Manila or Southeast Asia.

The picture we get for the Qianlong period is of a rapidly expanding population across the country as a whole. If, by the end of Kangxi's reign, China's population had climbed *back* to a late Ming level of around 150 million, there is no doubt that it had doubled by the end of Qianlong's. Much more precise population figures for the Qianlong period allow us to chart this growth in specific communities, and the Qing dynasty archives let us check the results for accuracy. The accompanying table gives us sample figures for the two northern provinces of Hebei and Shandong as well as for the whole of China, rounded out to the nearest thousand.

The population growth traced in these figures had some major social and political implications. Although old lands were being resettled and new ones constantly opened up in this period, the crude figures suggest that while the population may have tripled from the mid-Kangxi period to the

Population Figures: Hebei, Shandong, and All of China[2]

Year	*Hebei*	*Shandong*	*China*
1573 (est.)	4,625,000	5,644,000	150,000,000
1685 (est.)	3,297,000	2,111,000	100,000,000
1749	13,933,000	24,012,000	177,495,000
1767	16,691,000	25,635,000	209,840,000
1776	20,291,000	26,019,000*	268,238,000
1790	23,497,000	23,359,000	301,487,000

*This figure is for 1773. The fact that Shandong province showed a drop in population between 1776 and 1790 is an anomaly, probably caused by natural disasters and outbreaks of rebellion in that same period.

late Qianlong, the acreage of arable land only doubled; the size of individual holdings therefore shrank. Moreover, since the Chinese did not follow the practice of leaving the bulk of a family's land to the eldest son, but divided all land equally among the sons under the system known as "partible inheritance," new, large landowning families tended not to emerge. Family holdings in the north China-Peking macroregion, for which we have good figures in the eighteenth century, were only around 2.5 acres on average; a holding of over 20.0 acres was rare, and a quarter or more of the rural households were landless. China remained a nation of small landholders engaged in highly labor-intensive agriculture without the aid of significant technological innovations.

Following traditional practice, the families moving onto upland areas along the Yangzi and Han rivers, or into the forests of southern Manchuria, cleared these areas for agriculture without understanding the ecological effects of their actions. Although yields on virgin lands were high, intensive agriculture was rapidly followed by soil erosion and deforestation. Massive hillside runoffs into the rivers caused corresponding silting problems and the danger of serious flooding in settled farming areas downstream. Furthermore, with human wastes constituting much of the fertilizer source, exhausted soil in isolated upland areas could not be replenished easily (as, for instance, farms near heavily urban areas could be) and often had to be abandoned.

Much of the country's population growth in the eighteenth century was speeded up by a massive ecological change: the introduction of new crops into China from the New World. Sweet potatoes, for example, were widespread in coastal China by the mid-Qianlong reign, while maize and the Irish potato became common in the north and in the southwest in the same period. Peanuts had spread rapidly in south and southwestern China in the late Ming, and were also becoming an important crop in north China by the end of Qianlong's reign. All these crops helped to boost the caloric intake of China's rural workers; but because the crops also grew well in poor, hilly, or sandy soil, they enabled the population to rise rapidly in areas of otherwise marginal productivity, where alternate sources of food or gainful employment were rare.

Surviving documents from the rural village of Daoyi, north of Shenyang in southern Manchuria, enable us to get a closer look at local population figures and age profiles, and suggest some of the rhythms of family life at the end of Qianlong's reign. Since birth dates in Daoyi were recorded monthly and were most common during February and March, we can tell that conception most often occurred in early summer, during the lull between spring planting and harvesting. One-third of the males died in their first year of

Age of Women Giving Birth: Daoyi, 1792*[3]

Age of Women Giving Birth	*Number of Sons Born*
15–19	87
20–24	226
25–29	255
30–34	191
35–39	118
40–44	68
45–49	23

life, and half before they were twenty. The average life expectancy for the men of Daoyi was around thirty-two years, and some 4 percent lived past sixty-five. The age span for women was comparable.

An unusual aspect of the Daoyi figures is that they enable us to see the ages at which women bore their male children. Surprisingly, these figures indicate that women in their later twenties were the most likely to have children. This suggests that because of scarce food supplies there was parental and economic pressure to hold off having children during the early years of maximum female fertility.

The social and cultural consequences of one final demographic factor can be drawn from these figures. Because of childhood illnesses, a less-than-adequate diet, even infanticide in time of famine—and because wealthy men tended to keep several female consorts—there were many fewer marriageable women than men in Daoyi, as in so many other areas of China. The effects of this on family patterns are telling: although almost every woman in Daoyi over thirty was married or widowed, 20 percent of the adult men never married at all. The Chinese idealization of the family, the attention paid to children, and the insistence that descendants practice ancestor worship to keep forebears from suffering in the afterworld—all these deeply held beliefs must have seemed a cruel jest to these millions of men. For women, any attempt to avoid marriage must have been out of the question. This was just one more of the many areas in which sources of social discontent were always present, and yet could seldom be articulated because of China's prevailing social beliefs.

*These detailed figures are for the birth of sons only. Since Daoyi was a village owing military service in the banner system, the focus of census takers was on potential recruits. But elsewhere in China also, more attention was paid to accurate counting of males than females.

"Like the Sun at Midday"

Oblivious to many of the broad problems that were beginning to plague his country, Emperor Qianlong began his long reign (1736–1799) in a spirit of forceful optimism. Yongzheng's fourth son, Qianlong, came peacefully to the throne at the age of twenty-five, having been spared the factional battles that plagued his father's youth. Yongzheng had had the foresight to write down his choice of heir in secret and to lock the designated name in a casket in the palace so that there could be no dispute. Qianlong had been carefully groomed for the role of emperor, and had no doubts about his abilities nor the grandeur of the dynasty over which he presided.

Qianlong's most important achievement was the conquest and integration of huge areas of western territory—the region later known as Xinjiang, the "New Territories"—into the Chinese state. By doing this he doubled the territorial extent of China, finally ended the Zunghar troubles, and fixed a firm western border with Russia to go along with the northern borders settled by treaties at Nerchinsk and Kiakhta. The achievement of this vast task took much time and money, and was linked (as it had been in Kangxi's and Yongzheng's time) to the progress of campaigns in western Sichuan and northeastern Tibet.

Qianlong put much of his faith for leadership of the western battles in a previously obscure Manchu bannerman named Zhaohui, who had risen through the bureaucratic ranks in the Grand Secretariat during the 1730s and become quartermaster of the Qing armies in Sichuan before being sent to the Zunghar front in the same capacity. There he volunteered for active duty. After a series of extraordinary adventures between 1756 and 1759 that included the defection of his key allies, the murder of his emissaries by Muslims in Turkistan, deprivations that reduced his troops to cannibalism, and forced marches of hundreds of miles in difficult terrain, Zhaohui was able to capture the cities of Kashgar and Yarkand in 1759. Qing troops slaughtered the last Zunghar forces with great cruelty. The new territories were henceforth run by a military governor stationed in Ili and a second-in-command based in Urumchi, and the tribes of Mongolia were drawn closer in their allegiance to the Qing. When General Zhaohui returned to Peking, Qianlong came out beyond the city gates to welcome him in person, an almost unparalleled honor.

Just as all the diplomatic negotiations with the Zunghars and the Mongols had been handled by the Manchu staff of the Lifan Yuan, so now the administration of the new territories in the west was kept in the hands of

the Manchus and a few experienced Chinese bannermen. The region was not thrown open to Chinese colonization and settlement, but was maintained as a strategic frontier zone. It was occupied by massive Manchu and Chinese banner garrisons of 15,000 to 20,000 troops, with 100,000 dependents, at an annual cost to the Qing of at least 3 million taels. The largely Muslim inhabitants kept their own religious leaders and followed their own strict dietary practices; the Manchus also excused them from shaving their heads and growing the queue. The civilian Muslim leaders, known as the Begs, were bound by salaries and titles to the Qing state. Trade was expanded in such items as copper, precious stones, saltpeter, shawl wool, and slaves, although the Manchu court preserved a virtual monopoly over the mining of jade and gold, the most valued minerals from the region.

These immense campaigns had not been conducted from the small, secretive Office of Military Finance, as in Yongzheng's reign. Although the office through which the campaigns were coordinated bore the same name in Chinese as Yongzheng's, its scope and personnel had vastly expanded, as had its power and visibility in the government as a whole. For this reason, from Qianlong's reign onward the office is translated as the "Grand Council" in English, for it now transcended in power all the six ministries and

even the Grand Secretariat itself. Among the first of Qianlong's grand councilors were his father Yongzheng's two trusted advisers, Oertai and Zhang Tingyu. They gave continuity to the government, and were gradually joined by a small number of hand-picked ministers, the total remaining at around six or seven during most of Qianlong's reign. The grand councilors were backed by a secretarial staff of 250 or more, who served in rotation and round the clock so that the key offices were never empty.

The Grand Council now became the filing center for the crucial palace memorials conveyed by senior officials throughout China. As these memorials were copied out, evaluated by a wider circle of advisers, and often passed on to the ministries for discussion, both their symbolic and their real functions as special devices bonding official and ruler began to fade. As if recognizing this, Qianlong's comments in vermilion ink on the memorials were usually perfunctory—"Noted," "Read," "Send to the relevant Ministry," etc.—and conveyed little of the sense of warmth and intimacy, nor indeed of anger or concern, that had characterized the comments of his father and grandfather.

This is not to say Qianlong was not a conscientious ruler, for he was. He met senior officials regularly in audience, read the documents submitted to him, traveled extensively both to the Yangzi delta cities and in Manchuria, coordinated military campaigns, and issued numerous edicts on important policy matters. It was rather that he left a great deal of the actual decision making to his grand councilors, and allowed the sense of dynamic central leadership that had characterized the reigns of Kangxi and Yongzheng to fade away.

This loss of impulse can be seen in his approach to the reform of rural tax collection that had featured so largely in Yongzheng's thinking. Although Qianlong had ordered all candidates for the senior level *jinshi* exams in 1742 to write essays on the provincial revenue retention system, and asked the same of his senior officials, slowly—almost casually—the key elements of that tax strategy faded. The wealthy provinces that had surplus local revenue were made to hand it over to the poorer provinces. The result was that the rich provinces lost the opportunity to take important local initiatives that might have strengthened their government, while the poorer provinces lost any incentive to expand their collection system or reform their economic base.

More and more often, magistrates kept the local taxation surpluses to themselves rather than forwarding them to the provincial financial commissioner. The old abuses of extra fees, payments, and illegal surcharges crept back in. The Ministry of Revenue slowly instituted a system by which every item of local expenditure had to be approved by members of its Peking

staff before the money could be spent. This led to an avalanche of paper work and an absurd system in which trivial matters were held up for years and important ones never got done at all. One Ministry of Revenue document of this time from the capital province of Hebei shows that provincial officials had to clear such items as 48 taels to pay some guards on a bridge, 105 taels for sailors' wages, and 12 taels as pension allowance for two widows.

In cultural affairs, Qianlong's approach was similar to his father's. He made a public show of his filial piety, particularly in his ritualized treatment of his own mother, the dowager empress. He pampered and flattered her to an extraordinary degree, taking her with him on lavish tours to the Yangzi delta region and even building a copy of southern streets in the northern palace after she was no longer able to go on her travels. Claiming filial loyalty to his insulted father, he reversed Yongzheng's edict of clemency and ordered the unfortunate Zeng Jing—that inept popularizer of Lu Liuliang's ideas back in 1728—sliced to pieces in the market square of Peking. He gave additional examinations to scholars of outstanding caliber who had been unsuccessful in the regular state exams, made much of the local lecture systems that promulgated Confucian values and the Sacred Edict, celebrated the aged in special festivals, and praised virtuous wives and widows.

In some areas he took new initiatives. He expanded the imperial collection of painting and calligraphy enormously, drawing into the court many of the finest works from the previous millennium. (He has been blamed, by later connoisseurs, for writing elaborate poems on many great paintings in his neat but undistinguished calligraphy, thus ruining the subtlety of the original compositions.) He patronized a number of Jesuit painters at the court, especially the talented Italian Giuseppe Castiglione, whose royal portraits and large panoramas of hunts and processions marked a unique blend of Chinese composition with Western perspective and coloration. Qianlong employed Jesuit architects and designers to work on a magnificent European-style summer palace, the Yuan Ming Yuan, erected in a lakeside park just outside Peking. He ordered the compilation of a number of important works—genealogies, histories, accounts of rituals—that would accurately preserve and enshrine the Manchu heritage. And to emphasize the power of the Qing as religious patrons, he had a replica of the great Tibetan lamaist temple, the Potala, built on the grounds of his extensive summer palace in Rehe (Jehol).

To preserve the greatness of Chinese culture, Qianlong also ordered a massive compilation to be made of the most famous literary and historical works of the past. Known as the *Four Treasuries* from its four main components of classics, histories, philosophy, and miscellaneous literary works, this was not just a selection of passages on given topics, as was the *Gujin tushu jicheng,* (the encyclopedia brought forth under Qianlong's grandfather and father); rather, it was a complete anthology, with learned introductions, into which the works selected were copied in their entirety. The assembling of this collection, which ended up comprising 3,450 complete works and commentaries on 6,750 others, filled 36,000 manuscript volumes and took ten years to complete. It is one of the great achievements of Chinese bibliography.

Compiling the *Four Treasuries* also served some of the functions of a literary inquisition, since private libraries were searched and those people owning works considered to be slighting to the Manchus were strictly punished. Such books, along with volumes of geography or travel containing information considered harmful to China's defenses, were destroyed. So thorough was this campaign that over 2,000 works that we know were scheduled for destruction by Qianlong's cultural advisers have never been rediscovered. Some of Qianlong's senior editors on the *Four Treasuries* project were also able to support the schools of philosophy they espoused by omitting the works of major rivals, or by emphasizing their own philosophical views in their commentaries.

One can trace, running through many of Qianlong's pronouncements and actions, an undercurrent—faint yet disturbing. It is that of a man who has been praised too much and has thought too little, of someone who has played to the gallery in public life, mistaken grandeur for substance, sought confirmation and support for even routine actions, and is not really equipped to make difficult or unpopular decisions. In the midst of Qianlong's many glories, signs of decay and even collapse were becoming apparent. One of the five Chinese classics, the *Book of Changes,* had anticipated this, as any educated Chinese would have known. The fifty-fifth hexagram of the *Changes* is *feng* (豐), meaning "abundance" or "fullness" (豐), and its main description says:

> ABUNDANCE has success.
> The king attains abundance.
> Be not sad.
> Be like the sun at midday.[4]

But the ancient commentary on this passage adds:

> When the sun stands at midday, it begins to set; when the moon is full it begins to wane. The fullness and emptiness of heaven and earth wane and

wax in the course of time. How much truer is this of men, or of spirits and gods!

Eighteenth-Century Confucianism

If questioned, Qianlong would surely have insisted that he presided over a Confucian system of government with Confucian means, and there were many ways in which he could have justified such a claim: the works of Confucius were regarded by the emperor and his officials as the key repositories of ethical wisdom; the Confucian Classics formed the basic curriculum in schools and were central to the competitive state examination system; Confucian values of loyalty and filial piety bonded officials to rulers and children to parents, just as lectures on Confucian topics by scholars and officials in the countryside were aimed at unifying the populace in obedience to the state. Yet "Confucianism" was constantly changing as accretions were adopted or swept away. In the eighteenth century, the doctrine began to develop in new directions, paralleling changes in the society and the economy.

During the second half of the seventeenth century, scholars had been absorbed in searching out the reason for the collapse of the Ming dynasty, and many of them found a satisfactory explanation in the extreme individualism and belief in innate moral knowledge that had been so popular in the late Ming. Senior scholar-officials under the early Qing emperors Shunzhi and Kangxi—as well as those emperors themselves—sought to counter what they considered decadent Ming trends by reasserting the central values of Song-dynasty (960–1279) Confucianism. They emphasized the Song because it was then that the philosopher Zhu Xi (d. 1200) had given prominence to the view that there were indeed underlying principles (*li*) that explained heaven's actions and guided human conduct. Understanding such principles, Zhu Xi and his later followers believed, would help men to live rationally and in tune with heaven, and would justify the attempts of moral men to find meaning in a public career. Thus there was a state-oriented tilt to Song Confucianism, even though the elaboration of such beliefs demanded multifaceted levels of cosmological speculation as individual thinkers probed for heaven's purposes. Furthermore, the realization that even the most moral of men might never be able to fathom the dictates of heaven and would, therefore, inevitably fail in their duties to state and community led to complex levels of anxiety and guilt among Confucian thinkers.

Just as early Qing scholars in state positions had rejected elements of Ming thought and had found security in the earlier texts and interpretations

of the twelfth-century Song dynasty, so did later Qing thinkers reject those Song norms and search for certainty elsewhere. By the time of Qianlong, many scholars had begun to find a new security not so much in particular texts as in a methodology. This methodology, which they called *kaozheng* (考證), has been usefully translated as "practicing evidential research," because it involved the meticulous evaluation of data based on rigorous standards of precision. *Kaozheng* scholars sought to get away from speculation altogether, to root their studies in "hard facts." They devoted their energies to studies in linguistics, mathematics, astronomy, and geography, confident that these would lead to greater certainty about what the true words and intentions of China's ancient sages had been and, hence, to a better understanding of how to live in the present.[5]

The most important precursors of the *kaozheng* movement, and those its followers spoke of with greatest awe, were men who had lived during Kangxi's reign. One of the *kaozheng* heroes was Gu Yanwu, the Ming loyalist who had sought to defend his home territory against the Manchu forces. As noted above, Gu eventually made a tacit peace with the new Qing dynasty, and spent the last part of his life traveling across north China to study aspects of local technology as well as to track down old steles, from which he took careful rubbings that would help scholars with their philological research. Gu also kept the most careful record of his work in notebooks which, unlike the moralistic or metaphysical "diaries" of speculative Confucians, were jammed with precise notes on texts, rare sources, geographical observations, and ancient artifacts. (It is worth noting that elements of Western scholarship brought by the seventeenth-century Jesuit missionaries, especially in the realms of mathematics and computational astronomy, may have affected the *kaozheng* scholars' research methodologies and given them confidence that there was a realm of "certainty" that lay above individual philosophical schools.)

Yan Ruoju, a friend of Gu's, applied similar techniques to collating the chronology and linguistic structures of part of the Confucian classic of historical documents. His conclusions, though circulated only in manuscript until the 1740s, had a shattering effect on many intellectuals of the time. Yan proved, with carefully marshaled evidence, that several sections of this major work (on which generations of state examination questions had been based) were a later forgery and thus did not deserve the reverence that scholars ascribed to it.

By the 1740s the examinations as a whole were coming under attack as sterile exercises that failed to select the finest scholars for office, and Yan's work heightened this sense of state Confucianism's weakness. Social tensions further undermined confidence in this system, for by the mid-eighteenth

century the state had not increased quotas of examination candidates proportionately to the rise in China's population. The consequent pressures on students and the difficulties of finding employment even if one passed the exams brought frustration and disillusionment to many members of the educated elite.

Eighteenth-century scholars used *kaozheng* insights and methodologies to begin a profound exploration of the Confucian past. Many spent much of their time reading texts and commentaries from the Han dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 220), since these were so much nearer to Confucius's time than the Song texts still used in the state's schools and, hence, were believed to be nearer to the true sentiments of the sage himself. Partisans of the Han texts subsequently divided into groups, according to whether they placed more faith in scholarship done earlier or later in the Han dynasty. These were not just abstruse debates, but explorations of the past that began to approach the Classics as history and to treat history itself with a sharp and penetrating skepticism. The work of the *kaozheng* scholars also had major implications for eighteenth-century policy, since the scholars' "ant-like accumulation of facts"—as one of them described his studies—brought insights into hydraulics, astronomy, cartography, and ancient texts on government that enabled the scholars to evaluate Qing reality with a shrewder eye.

Kaozheng scholarship became so influential by the mid-Qianlong reign that it was supported by an interlocking infrastructure of book dealers and publishers, printers, library owners, and professional teachers of the many skills needed for advanced research of this kind. Often the lines between scholars and the commercial world blurred, since many merchants became patrons of *kaozheng* learning and accumulated huge libraries that they put at the scholars' disposal. Other *kaozheng* scholars were descended directly from merchant families, reflecting the growth of new urban centers in China and the blurring of previously sharp occupational categories.

In Emperor Qianlong's massive compilation project of the *Four Treasuries, kaozheng* scholars dominated the editorial process, using their new learning to denigrate speculative Confucian theories of the Song period (even though those theories remained "orthodox" in the examinations as a whole) and to boost the reputations of writers working in a *kaozheng* vein. Qianlong, in return, was so grateful for the amount of rare material that these scholars made available to him that he ordered officials to write out three extra manuscript sets of the rarest works included in the *Four Treasuries* compendium. These were to be deposited in libraries at the three main centers of *kaozheng* learning—Yangzhou, Zhenjiang, and Hangzhou—so that area scholars could consult them.

There was something highly intellectualized and even ingrown about all

this work. It was extraordinarily difficult, for one thing, and hence enabled *kaozheng* scholars to reformulate a vision of a scholarly elite that had become endangered by the swelling number of unemployed degree candidates in the eighteenth century. (The plight of that elite, and the corruptibility and pomposity of many self-satisfied scholars, were poignantly and amusingly caught in a novel entitled *Unofficial History of the Scholars* [*Rulin waishi*], written between 1740 and 1750 and first published in 1768.) The elite world of *kaozheng* scholarship was largely closed to the poorer, self-educated scholars and to women. Certain theorists in the eighteenth century had once again been advocating the education of women with a vigor that had not been seen since the late Ming dynasty. Several women did achieve some prominence as poets during Qianlong's reign, but the new techniques and the need for decades of intense research demanded by *kaozheng* skills ensured that women would remain outside this self-defined intellectual elite, as indeed would any scholar without the necessary leisure, teachers, or wealthy patrons.

At the same time, by late in Qianlong's reign, even devotees of the *kaozheng* tradition were beginning to find that their techniques had limitations. One of the most brilliant scholars, Dai Zhen, while allegedly staying within the *kaozheng* camp, also began to write in purely philosophical terms, returning to an era of speculation about human goals, motivations, passions, and the meaning of moral action. It is significant that his closest friends refused to acknowledge the importance of this work, although exploration of these problems was central to his vision of himself.

But Confucianism was not just a matter of philosophy. Painting and calligraphy had always been essential adjuncts to the Confucian value system, and here again there were significant eighteenth-century shifts in style and matter. Conventional techniques of Chinese painting had been put in the hands of just about any moderately educated person by the production of "how to do it" painting manuals like the *Mustard Seed Garden* of 1701. From such a book, one could quickly learn to render a passable branch of plum blossom, a thatched cottage, or a distant mountain range, allowing any member of the educated public to produce a reasonable painting. In response, the literati painters now began to cultivate a greater sense of eccentricity, deliberately violating the norms of composition and color to show an "amateurism" that was in fact highly planned. Such eccentricity had been a feature of Ming loyalist painting in the seventeenth century, when it was used to convey a political position; by the eighteenth century, it showed a more class-conscious face.

Significant changes also took place in calligraphy. *Kaozheng* scholars' discoveries and reprintings of archaic scripts, and the circulation of careful rubbings of stone engravings, enabled the cult of the far past to dominate

the present. At some extremes, painters would render the calligraphy on their paintings as if it were carved with a chisel, managing to be evocative and erudite at the same time. Thus by the end of Qianlong's reign, as literacy spread in the largely peaceful and cultivated Chinese world, it was perhaps no coincidence that the most highly educated men developed new modes of cultured expression that were out of the reach of almost everyone else.

The Dream of the Red Chamber

The Dream of the Red Chamber, China's greatest novel, was written in the middle of Emperor Qianlong's reign. The author, Cao Xueqin, was descended from one of the Chinese bannerman-bondservants who had enjoyed wealth and influence as a favorite of Emperor Kangxi. But the Cao family, which had lived for years on a grand scale in Nanjing, was subsequently punished for dishonesty and incompetence by Emperor Yongzheng and suffered confiscation of most of its holdings. Cao Xueqin was thus thoroughly familiar with the Sino-Manchu tensions that persisted through the Qing dynasty and, by the time of his death in 1763, had tasted the nectar of luxurious living and the gall of bankrupt gentility.

The Dream of the Red Chamber—often known by its alternate title, *The Story of the Stone*—presents a meticulous description of the Jias, a wealthy Chinese extended family who occupy a series of linked mansions in an unnamed big city that seems to have some elements of Nanjing and some of Peking. Many aspects of the fictional Jia family's story are clearly drawn from the history of Kangxi's reign: the Jias are aware of Manchu culture and deportment, carry out confidential financial assignments for the emperor, and have a favored relationship with the court, where one of the Jia daughters is a secondary consort. Yet the novel is not content to offer a realistic portrayal of Qing life. Each of the novel's two titles points to different and complex elements in the novel's structure: the "dream" that is ascribed to the "red chamber" constitutes an elaborate yet mysterious foretelling of the fates of the main female protagonists who are related or linked to the Jias in some way; the "stone" whose "story" is to be told is a miraculous artifact, empowered by the gods with a magical life of its own, and living out its existence on this earth through the religious mediation of a Buddhist and a Daoist priest.

In simple outline, *The Dream of the Red Chamber* is a love story. The fate of the novel's hero, Jia Baoyu ("Jia of the Precious Jade"), is closely entwined with the lives of two young women, Lin Daiyu and Xue Baochai, each of whom bears one of the elements of his name in her own. The three grow up in the Jia family mansions with a host of other young companions, but their idyllic relations come to a sharp end when Jia Baoyu, who deeply loves Lin Daiyu, is tricked by his parents into marrying the wealthier and stronger Xue Baochai. This deceit leads to Lin Daiyu's death; at the novel's end, Jia Baoyu—although he has just passed the highest level of the state examinations—leaves his young wife and the spacious grounds of his crumbling estate to seek the pure life of a religious pilgrim.

Cao Xueqin had a serious purpose in writing the novel, as well as the simple desire to entertain. Beyond its plot, the *Dream* is a story of the quest for identity and for an understanding of the human purpose on earth. The novel also explores the different levels of reality and illusion that lie entwined inside so-called success and failure. In Cao's words in the introduction to the book, "From the Void (which is Truth) we come to the contemplation of Form (which is Illusion); from Form is engendered Passion; by communicating Passion we enter again into Form; and from Form awake to the Void (which is Truth)."[6] Or, put another way in the same introduction, "Truth becomes fiction when the fiction's true."

Although this suggests that Cao intends to disavow "realism," so rich are the texture and structure of the novel—which is 120 chapters long and contains hundreds of richly drawn characters in addition to the main protagonists—that it can nevertheless be seen as a kind of summation of the many elements of mid-Qing elite life, including family structure, politics, economics, religion, aesthetics, and sexuality. Even allowing for all the freedoms of the creative writer's imagination and for the rich allegorical overtones that pervade the whole work, a look at each of these six categories can still tell us much about the grandeur of Qing society in the mid-eighteenth century, and about its underside.

In the realm of family structure, Cao Xueqin points to the immense power of the father over his children, especially on questions of their moral growth and education. It is the Jia father who chooses the schoolteacher for the local lineage school, who grills Jia Baoyu over the progress of his studies in the Confucian classics, and who punishes him for negligence or immorality. So terrible is the father's anger that the mere mention of it reduces the son to abject fear. The mother, in this context, is comparatively powerless; but the matriarch of the family, Jia Baoyu's grandmother, is shown as having great economic and intellectual strength, and as being able to moderate family behavior on the basis of the respect owed her for her advanced age and generational seniority. Similarly, generational hierarchies give Jia Baoyu prestige over younger siblings or cousins, while forcing him to defer to those older than he.

In political terms, the Jias are powerful not just because a member of their family is a consort to the emperor, nor because they hold high office in the bureaucracy and undertake imperial commissions. Their real power is local, in that they can use their prestige to bend the judicial system to their advantage. Any country magistrate knows better than to prosecute one of the Jias or their friends—it would be more than his job is worth. The family is thus subject to a kind of corrupting influence, which leads its younger members to believe they can break the law with impunity, even to the extent of hushing up homicides in which family members have been involved. This political power is potentially self-perpetuating, since the web of princely friends and the patterns of examination success will propel the younger men of the lineage into positions of influence, and the young women of the family into powerful marriages.

Economically, the Jia family can call on resources that would be beyond the imagination of most Chinese families. Their home is full of silver bullion, bolts of silk, paintings, and scrolls. Their grounds and buildings are spacious, and their coffers constantly replenished with the rents brought by loyal bailiffs from urban holdings and from far-off farms that the Jias own as absentee landlords. They indulge in profitable business deals of great complexity, and gain additional income from carrying out imperial commissions and acquiring exotic goods from merchants who trade with Western countries. They also have scores of indentured servants, male and female, who perform all duties in the family compound and act as retainers whenever the Jias go outside the walls.

In matters of religion, the Jia family are as eclectic as Qing society was. Central to the family's prestige and sense of fulfillment is the meticulous worship, in the Confucian tradition, of their own ancestors. Funerals, like marriages, are occasions for intense, careful pomp and ritual performance. But the Jias also call, as necessary, on priests of the Daoist and Buddhist religions; they follow the prescribed ceremonies of these religions, and even keep a group of young female Buddhist novices in the purlieus of their own home. The Jias practice both Buddhist and Daoist rites in times of fear or illness, and on occasion have priests conduct exorcisms to rid the family houses of harmful spirits and malignant influences. Jia Baoyu himself is, for a long period in the novel, immobilized by an enemy's use of black magic, against which not even his precious jade can protect him. One senior member of the family has withdrawn to a temple to follow his own pattern of religious enlightenment. (He later dies from imbibing too many magical Daoist elixirs of immortality.)

Aesthetically, the life in the Jia mansions is a joy, recalling the range and elegance that typified elite life in the late Ming dynasty. The high level of

literacy of the young men and women makes possible an endless array of poetry games and the exchange of erudite jokes and riddles. The clothes, decor, gardens, and accouterments of the main characters are exquisite; the preparation of tea, drinking of wine, and eating of an evening meal are a triumphant blending of taste and artifice. Music and drama are also an integral part of life for the Jias: the family keeps its own troupe of actors and actresses who, whenever they are requested to do so, perform scenes from now-classic works such as *The Peony Pavilion,* by the Ming dramatist Tang Xianzu.

Finally, in the realm of sexuality, there are few limitations on the behavior of the Jia family members. The children and adolescents may live together in a youthful world where banter is essentially innocent even if full of sexual innuendo, but their elders are lustful creatures, and the children are growing up to be like them. Both men and women use their powers in the family hierarchy to obtain their sexual pleasures. Jealousy goes with adultery, love affairs lead to murders. Servants and bondslaves become sexual objects and are powerless to protest except by flight or suicide. Erotic paintings stir up great passions, as in the case of Jia Baoyu's initiation into sexual life. Jia Baoyu falls asleep after viewing a sensual painting and has a complex yet graphic erotic dream. His awakening is followed by a re-enactment of the dream experience, but this time in literal terms with his own favored serving-maid. Novice nuns or young male actors are also caught up in the patterns of seduction and deceit, and even in the schoolroom, where Confucian precepts are allegedly being internalized, homosexual liaisons flourish among the young male scholars.

Cao Xueqin had not completed his novel when he died in 1763, and for several decades it circulated in various manuscript editions among his family and friends. Only in 1792 did a "full" version, with lacunae filled in by later hands, appear in published form, and it became an immediate success. One may speculate that the novel's wide readership was composed of men and women from the upper class, of underemployed scholars, and also of those with some education who lived and worked as merchants and traders in the flourishing cities of the largely peaceful mid-Qing world.

Although *The Dream of the Red Chamber* is full of echoes from the great plays and novels of the late Ming and from earlier Chinese poetic traditions, and although we cannot be sure which sections of the last forty chapters were the author's personal work, the novel remains a dazzling and original triumph, anticipating in its subtlety and scale many of the great works of the nineteenth-century Western tradition. Cao himself was tongue-in-cheek about his achievement, and in a speech that he puts into the mouth of the Jia family grandmother, he speculates on why most conventional Chinese

tales and dramas written prior to his novel were so repetitive and unconvincing:

> 'There's always a reason for it,' the old lady went on, 'In some cases it's because the writer is envious of people so much better off than himself, or disappointed because he has tried to obtain their patronage and failed, and deliberately portrays them in this unfavourable light as a means of getting his own back on them. In other cases the writers have been corrupted by reading this sort of stuff before they begin to write any themselves, and, though totally ignorant of what life in educated, aristocratic families is really like portray their heroines in this way simply because everyone else does so and they think it will please their readers. I ask you now, never mind *very* grand families like the ones they pretend to be writing about, even in average well-to-do families like ours when do you ever hear of such carryings-on? It's a wonder their jaws don't drop off, telling such dreadful lies!'[7]

Cao Xueqin might have been disappointed in his life, but it is unlikely that he was envious of those in power and certain that he was not corrupted by the fiction of the past. His triumph was his own. The only real irony, perhaps, is that his great novel adds luster to the reign of Qianlong, although Cao's own sharp gaze was able to see that so much was wrong underneath all that grandeur.

Qianlong's Later Years

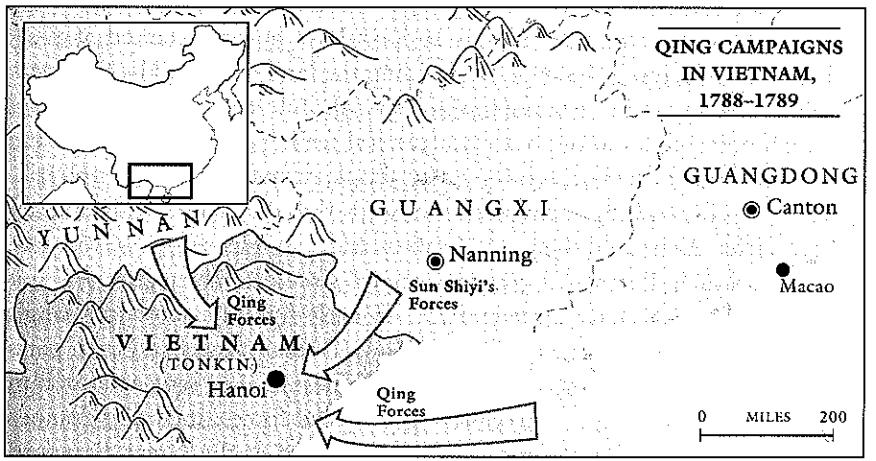
As if echoing the warning note sounded by the *feng* hexagram, in Emperor Qianlong's later years a series of crises erupted. There was no particular pattern to these troubles; it was rather that a series of misjudgments on the government's part coincided with previously unsuspected levels of domestic resentment to produce a tense situation overall. Bungled military border campaigns, local rebellions, bureaucratic corruption, and imperial favoritism were all part of the story, which took place in a context of intellectual uneasiness over traditional scholarly values, the state's failure to address pressing financial and administrative needs, and a steadily growing population that put unprecedented pressures on the land.

In public pronouncements, Qianlong prided himself on his sagacity as a coordinator of military campaigns, and the conquest of Xinjiang in the 1750s—although owing a good deal to luck—had indeed been a great achievement. But a campaign against Burma in the 1760s was badly mismanaged, in sharp contrast to the efficiency with which Wu Sangui had pursued the last Ming prince in the same region a century before. And the

brief war that China waged against Vietnam in 1788 and 1789 throws a sharp light on the inadequacies of Qing policy.

In 1788 the ruler of Vietnam's Le dynasty fled with his family from the usurping Nguyen family, who had seized Hanoi. Taking refuge in Guangxi province, he begged for Qing protection. Qianlong responded swiftly, ordering a three-pronged attack on Vietnam, with one army marching south from Guangxi under General Sun Shiyi, a second southeast from Yunnan, and a third transported by sea from Guangdong. The Chinese armies under General Sun entered Hanoi in December 1788 and declared total victory and the restoration of the Le dynasty. Qianlong at once promoted General Sun to ducal rank. But just one month later, while Sun and his troops were in Hanoi celebrating the Chinese new year festival, the Nguyen armies counterattacked, killing over 4,000 of Sun's troops and forcing his ignominious flight back to Guangxi. Qianlong pragmatically commented that the Le had been fated to fall, and he acknowledged the succession of the Nguyen victor as Vietnam's legitimate ruler. At one level this showed that China still had the prestige to confer title on border rulers; at the same time, however, Chinese military leadership was called into question. (This misadventure marked the end of China's attempts at direct military involvement in Vietnam until their equally unsuccessful invasion of 1979.)

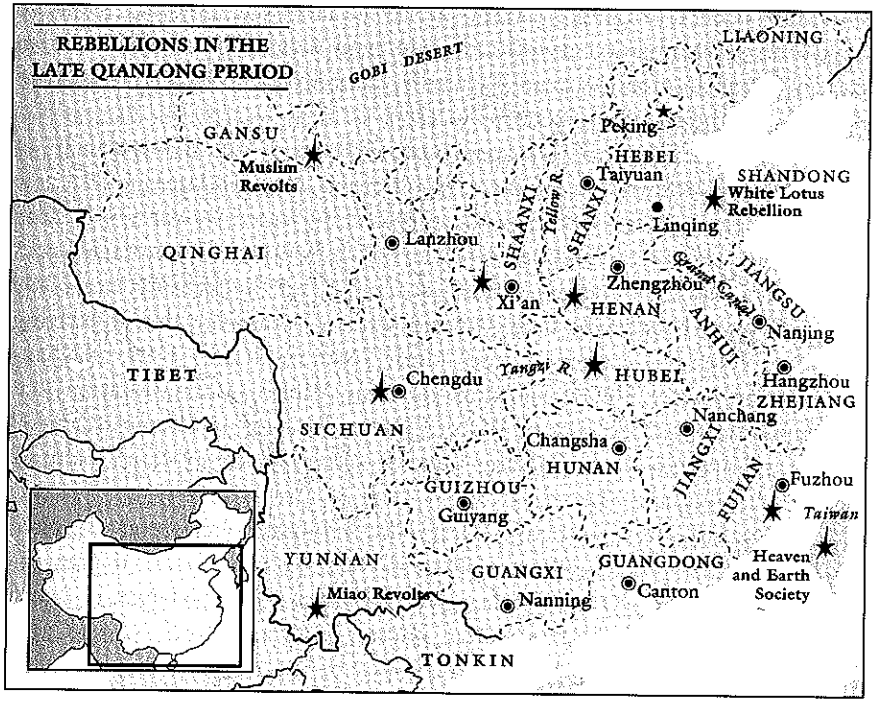
That some Manchu generals could still muster amazing military skills was shown by the Qing victories over the Gurkhas of Nepal, who attacked Tibet in 1790 and 1791. Qing troops under Manchu generals reached Tibet in 1792 and defeated the Gurkhas in a series of battles, forcing them back into Nepal through the Himalayan passes. The Qing troops showed



remarkable skills at logistics and at fighting in some of the harshest terrain in the world. In the ensuing peace treaty, Nepal agreed to send tribute to China every five years, a promise that they kept up until the year 1908. But the campaign had been extremely expensive for the Qing, and a great deal of the money expended was never accounted for satisfactorily. The man in charge of writing up the accounts was that same General Sun Shiyi who had bungled the Vietnam campaign. Despite Sun's failure there, Qianlong had transferred him to Lhasa, demonstrating more the strength of the emperor's will than the shrewdness of his evaluation of character.

These long-range campaigns against foreign states were conducted in an unsettling context of indigenous rebellions, which began to occur in different parts of the Chinese Empire during the later eighteenth century. One major uprising took place not far from Peking, in Shandong province near the city of Linqing, a key point on the north-south grain-transportation axis along the Grand Canal. This was an area near the periphery of the northeast macroregion, where population had been rising sharply and where disaffected peasants mingled easily with the restless barge pullers and coolies who kept the Grand Canal in operation. In 1774 Chinese rebels under the leadership of a martial-arts and herbal-healing expert named Wang Lun rose up against the Qing, invoking the support of an "Eternal Venerable Mother" goddess. In this way the revolt showed its links to a tradition of underground or sectarian White Lotus folk-Buddhism, which venerated the same female deity and was based on a millenarian view of catastrophe on earth that reached back to ideological roots at least five centuries earlier. Wang drew his followers from a wide variety of occupations: many were peasants or other rural laborers, but there were also traveling actresses, carters, fish sellers and dealers in bean curd, monks, vegetable-oil retailers, and a moneylender. We cannot say that Wang Lun had a firm political agenda: although some peasants did support him, he never talked of abolishing rent, or helping the poor, or dividing the land equally. His followers rose in rebellion not in response to some specific political program for social and economic amelioration, but from general feelings of antagonism to the dominant forces of society, reinforced by simple forms of spiritual euphoria.

Wang Lun's teachings convinced the rebels that they could withstand all Qing attacks. As he told them, "If I call on Heaven, Heaven will assist me; if I call on Earth, Earth will give me magical strength. Their guns will not fire. What men will dare impede me?"[8] In early fighting, some of Wang's predictions seemed correct: he captured several small towns and even parts of Linqing city, and many Manchu and Chinese troops sent against him fled or deserted. But the state called up massive forces, including banner troops and local armies of Chinese soldiers known as the Green Standard



troops; Wang Lun and his various "soldiers," armed mainly with spears or knives, could not withstand the coordinated attacks of these Qing troops. Despite brave street fighting, often house to house, the rebels were pinned down and slaughtered with their families. A vivid rendition of Wang Lun's final apocalypse was given to Qing authorities by a captured rebel who fled his leader's burning headquarters. Wang Lun, he testified, met his death wearing a long purple robe and two silver bracelets, his dagger and double-bladed sword beside him. He sat cross-legged in the corner of the room, motionless, his clothes and beard aflame.

Wang Lun's uprising was more important as a symptom of deep underlying discontents than for its immediate effects, and it should be considered along with other rebellions that erupted elsewhere in China, often with no precisely stated grievances or goals. In the 1780s, members of a group known as the Heaven and Earth Society, which had its own religious rituals and social bondings through oaths of allegiance, rose in revolt on Taiwan, seizing several cities and declaring a new dynasty with the reign title of *Shun tian* (順天), "Obedient to Heaven." Echoing the reign titles used by so many claimants in the 1640s, this one suggested that the Manchus had

somehow been outraging Heaven, but in actuality the uprising seems to have been more a battle between different groups of emigrants from Fujian province for dominance over Taiwan's economy. The rebels were suppressed and their leaders executed in 1788.

Also in the 1780s, in Gansu province, there were two major revolts of the Muslim communities, sparked by adherents of a fundamentalist "new sect" who opposed the local Muslim officials appointed by the Qing. Both Muslim uprisings were suppressed after heavy fighting, as were a series of revolts by Miao tribesmen in southwest China. But the fighting was costly to the Qing, who despite their victories did not eradicate the underlying causes of religious, economic, and ethnic resentments. In 1799, as Qianlong's reign ended, rebels claiming the same White Lotus affiliation that had animated the followers of Wang Lun were rising up all across central China and were actively fighting Qing troops in many areas of Sichuan, Hubei, Shaanxi, and Henan.

Can one link these outbreaks to specific Manchu policies that alienated the people? The evidence is not clear on this, but it is certain that in the late eighteenth century many Qing government institutions began to falter: the emergency granaries were often empty, sections of the Grand Canal silted up, regular banner troops behaved with incompetence or brutality, efforts to stop ecologically dangerous land-reclamation projects were abandoned, the bureaucracy was faction-ridden, and corruption ran deep. It is also possible that Qing reluctance to create new county governments in areas of new settlement or dense population put impossible stresses on officials in the bureaucracy. Moreover, the intense pressure for jobs meant that those who had finally obtained office sought a swift return for all their waiting and anxiety, pressing local peasants in their jurisdictions for speedy tax payments and for supplementary charges. The White Lotus insurgents of the 1790s, for instance, stated categorically that "the officials have forced the people to rebel."[9] It is also true that in the conduct of the border campaigns, as in the suppression of local rebellions, Qing officials indulged in an unusually high level of graft. This was made possible by collusion between high figures in military and civil government, who often hid the real situation from Emperor Qianlong. And Qianlong, having allowed the secret palace memorial system of his father Yongzheng to become impersonal and routine, now had no reliable, confidential sources from which to learn of his officials' malfeasance.

There is no doubt that this pattern of corruption grew worse after 1775, when a young Manchu guards officer named Heshen became entrenched as the elderly emperor's court favorite, although Heshen was not responsible for everything that was going awry. At that time Heshen was twenty-

five and the emperor sixty-five, and the following year the favorite received an extraordinary series of promotions: Qianlong named Heshen a deputy lieutenant general of the Manchu plain blue banner, a minister of the imperial household, vice-minister of revenue, and a grand councilor. There were no parallels in Qing history for giving so many powerful appointments to a young man, and Qianlong later piled honor on honor. Heshen was made minister of revenue (and, for a time, minister of civil office), a grand secretary, a director of the *Four Treasuries* compilation project, commanding officer of the Peking troops, superviser of transit dues at the Peking gates, and a baron. His son was married to Emperor Qianlong's tenth daughter in 1790.

It is not surprising that rumors swirled around the emperor's relations with his favorite. A homosexual liaison was implied in popular stories, such as one suggesting Heshen was the reincarnation of one of Emperor Yongzheng's concubines, with whom Qianlong had been infatuated as a youth. A Korean diplomatic official on a visit to China, perhaps influenced by such rumors, described Heshen at thirty as "elegant in looks, sprucely handsome in a dandified way that suggested a lack of virtue." In 1793 Lord Macartney, who was visiting China as ambassador for King George III, described Heshen as "a handsome, fair man about forty to forty-five years old, quick and fluent."[10]

There is, in fact, no clear evidence about the relationship one way or the other. Certainly Qianlong trusted Heshen implicitly for the rest of his life. It is possible that Qianlong initially wanted Heshen to be the emperor's "ears and eyes" that Kangxi and Yongzheng had found in the bondservants and officials who used the palace memorial system in its earlier days. Thus in 1780 the emperor sent Heshen on a confidential mission to Yunnan province to investigate corruption charges against the governor-general there, and in 1781 sent him to assist in suppressing the Muslim uprisings in Gansu. But Heshen, who was often ill, mainly stayed in Peking as Qianlong's chief minister and confidant. Heshen's physicians concluded that his "symptoms were owing to a malignant vapour or spirit which had infused itself into, or was generated in his flesh, which shifted itself from place to place," and were unable to help him. Boldly turning to Western medicine as an alternative, Heshen summoned Lord Macartney's Scottish doctor Hugh Gillan for a consultation. Gillan found that Heshen was suffering from acute rheumatism and a serious hernia, conditions that had plagued him since childhood, and arranged for him to be fitted with a truss.[11]

In various comments on Heshen, both Macartney and Gillan showed that they found him to be forceful and intelligent, if evasive. Moreover, miscellaneous Chinese sources also show that Heshen possessed a lively intelli-

gence, keen curiosity, tact, and a high level of literacy. But he did use his offices to make prodigious amounts of money for himself and his cronies. He took on himself nearly imperial pretensions, coerced favors, and demanded fees for all services. He raked in extra millions by misreporting the needs for supplies and services on the numerous campaigns conducted during Qianlong's later years, especially the protracted, savage, and badly executed forays against the White Lotus rebels. By all these actions, Heshen compounded the problems of the time and contributed to a growing demoralization among the bureaucracy and the people.

Heshen's dominance was even stronger after 1796. In that year, Qianlong "abdicated," an action devised as a "filial" one to show that he did not consider himself worthy to reign longer than the sixty-one years of his famous grandfather, Kangxi. But Qianlong did not allow his son to exercise power, and during this twilight period, even though Qianlong's name was not used in dynastic titles, it was his will that was manifested through Heshen's continuing official power. When Qianlong died at last in 1799, Heshen's base crumbled. He was charged with corruption by Qianlong's son and forced to commit suicide. It was a melancholy yet somehow fitting end to one of the richest centuries in China's long history, an end that highlighted the curious mix of strength and weakness that was now emerging as lying at the heart of the Qing dynasty.

CHAPTER 6

China and the Eighteenth-Century World

MANAGING THE FOREIGNERS

The Qing state had no Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Relations with non-Chinese peoples were instead conducted by a variety of bureaus and agencies that, in different ways, implied or stated the cultural inferiority and geographical marginality of foreigners, while also defending the state against them.

In the north and northwest, relations with the Mongols, Zunghars, and Russians were handled mainly by the Lifan Yuan, or Office of Border Affairs, which had been founded by Hong Taiji in 1638. Staffed exclusively by Manchus and Mongols, the Lifan Yuan's task was to keep things quiet in China's dangerous northwest crescent, whence so many of her conquerors in the past had come. To this end, the office forged an elaborate system of agreements regulating the visits of central Asian caravan traders to China. Imperial daughters were commonly married off to influential Mongol princes, forming a protective network of personal alliances, bolstered by Qing garrisons located at strategic points in the region. Muslims, some of whom were of central Asian origin and some Chinese, were watched with care but generally allowed to practice their religion in peace; and after a Qing military presence in Lhasa became established under Yongzheng, the tribes that owed religious allegiance to the lamaist Buddhist hierarchy of Tibet ceased to be a grave threat. The variety of tasks coordinated by officials in the Lifan Yuan did, therefore, give the bureaucrats considerable skill and breadth of experience in dealing with "foreign policy" problems, and made

the Great Wall largely redundant as an aspect of northwest frontier defense.

European missionary contact with China was supervised mainly by the imperial household, an autonomous bureaucratic institution in Peking. This agency managed a wide range of the emperor's affairs, including the stockpiling of bullion and food reserves, the maintenance of imperial estates and palaces, the manufacturies for precious silks and porcelain, and the collection of extra revenues from such items as the salt monopoly and the transit dues on internal and foreign trade. It was most commonly the bondservants in the imperial household—often men of considerable wealth and power—who dealt directly with the missionaries and escorted papal embassies. Their general role in missionary business underlined the prevailing view that this dimension of foreign affairs was an aspect of the court's prestige rather than of national policy. The Jesuits especially found their role much constricted by this arrangement and tried to emphasize their independence in letters back to European colleagues. Some of the Jesuits, along with other Catholic missionaries and Chinese priests, worked secretly inside China, sheltered by their converts. All faced serious punishment if caught by the authorities.

Interaction with non-Chinese peoples in Korea and on the southern crescent of China's coastal and land frontiers, in countries such as Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, and the Ryukyu Islands, was supervised by officials in the Ministry of Rituals. These countries shared many of the basic values of Chinese culture, a Chinese-style calendrical system, some form of script adapted from Chinese models, similar types of food and dress, the practice of Confucianism and Buddhism, and the outlines of Chinese bureaucratic organization. By freighting its international relations with the weight of custom and symbol prescribed by this ministry, China tried to control these states without excessive military expenditures. Emissaries from these countries were expected to make a formal acknowledgment of China's cultural and political prestige by employing a language of subservience in diplomatic documents and by making the ritual prostrations (kowtow) before the Chinese emperor in royal audiences. In return these countries were allowed to conduct a controlled volume of trade with China, mainly through special delegations, termed "tribute missions" by the Chinese, which the countries were permitted to send on a fixed annual schedule to Peking. After ritual gifts had been offered to the emperor, both the diplomatic personnel and the merchants accompanying these embassies to Peking were allowed to trade, although all of them had to live in hostels managed by the Ministry of Rituals and had to leave China with their goods at the end of each stipulated visit.

Within this system, there was considerable flexibility. The most frequent missions were those from Korea, which came every year; Korean visitors

mingled freely with Qing scholars and officials, and left vivid accounts of the social and cultural life in Peking and of the political attitudes of the Confucian literati. Embassies from Japan, however, had completely ceased during the later Ming, and Japan's continuing refusal to acknowledge China's ritual superiority, when combined with the Tokugawa government's decision to restrict all foreign residence and trade to Nagasaki, meant that formal Qing relations with Japan were minimal. The military dimension of "tributary" relations emerged in 1788, when the Chinese invoked their right and obligation to go to the aid of the ruling Le in Vietnam. As we have seen, the Chinese swiftly switched their support from the Le to the Nguyen ruling house when the Nguyen accepted the traditional tributary position of deference to the Qing state. In the Ryukyu Islands, there was a curious case of divided loyalties. The islanders were in fact controlled by the southern Japanese lords of Satsuma, but on ritual occasions continued to profess themselves loyal tributary subjects of the Qing. Contemporary eighteenth-century accounts show Japanese ships retreating discreetly out of sight when Chinese diplomatic missions visited the islands, only to return promptly as soon as the Chinese left.

These three broad patterns of foreign management—with the northwest, the missionaries, and the south—shared some fundamental Chinese premises of great importance. At their root was the assumption that China was the "central" kingdom and that other countries were, by definition, peripheral, removed from the cultural center of the universe. The Chinese, therefore, showed little interest in precise information or detailed study of foreign countries. Even during the peak periods of eighteenth-century "evidential" *kaozheng* research, the interest of scholars in geography and linguistics was largely concentrated on Chinese territory. Chinese descriptions of foreign countries continued to contain an exotic blend of mystical tales and fantasy in which foreigners were often likened to animals or birds and were described in patronizing or deliberately belittling language.

Those Chinese who chose to leave China and go overseas for trade or travel were seen as having abandoned their country; and even though an extensive Chinese trade developed with Southeast Asia, the Qing state showed no interest in standing up for Chinese rights there or elsewhere in the world. (An exception was the case of Taiwan, but that had been formally incorporated as a part of Fujian province.) The Qing were basically uninterested in the potential governmental gains to be made from foreign trade, although they were willing to skim a certain amount off for themselves through the imperial household. They distrusted traders and—as in the 1660s—were willing to take harsh measures against their coastal populations in order to achieve military or diplomatic goals. They reserved for

themselves the absolute right to regulate foreigners trading with China, not only as to location and frequency, but down to the smallest details of personnel and goods involved.

This body of Qing beliefs and practices was bound to clash with those of the Western powers, especially after the newly expanding states of Britain, France, and Holland all began to develop major overseas empires at the expense of the earlier dominant partners, Spain and Portugal. One can trace this process of cultural opposition through the gradual emergence in China of a fourth type of "foreign management" structure, commonly known as the "Canton System." In the early Qing, Dutch and Portuguese embassies both tried to establish broad trading privileges with China but had to be content with the status of "tributary nations," registered with the Ministry of Rituals and permitted to send trade missions only at stipulated intervals. British ships sporadically appeared off the east China coast beginning in 1635; and under the Qing, perhaps because the British had the sense not to seek formal relations, British merchants were permitted to trade with the Chinese in Zhoushan (Chusan), Xiamen (Amoy), and Canton. All the Western powers benefited when the Qing ended the coastal trade-restriction policy in the 1680s and the idea of their "tributary" status was generally dropped. In an attempt to control foreign trade and increase their profits by regulating prices, in 1720 Chinese merchants in Canton formed their own monopolistic guild called the Cohong (from *gonghang,* 公行 or "combined merchant companies"). In 1754 these "Hong" merchants were each ordered by the Qing to stand surety for the foreign crews' good behavior and for the payment of transit dues.

The British East India Company, founded in 1600 and granted a monopoly of east Indian trade by the British government, was now rising rapidly from a small operation to a position of global significance as it attracted sizable new investments and started to conquer territories in the subcontinent of India itself. During the Qianlong reign, its directors began to chafe at Qing restrictions, as did the British government itself. In 1741, the British discovered the importance of having a Far Eastern base (the Portuguese already had Macao, the Spaniards Manila, and the Dutch Batavia) when a commodore in the Royal Navy, George Anson, on assignment to attack Spanish shipping in the East, put into Canton harbor after his flagship suffered severe storm damage. Anson apparently believed that the Chinese, following the international laws of the sea now prevalent in the West, would treat him hospitably as a benevolent neutral. But the Canton bureaucracy erected dozens of administrative hurdles, refused to meet with him or acknowledge his messages for weeks on end, charged him what he considered outrageous prices for the shoddy supplies they provided, and refused

to let him make many of the repairs he wanted. Anson's published account of his alleged mistreatment was widely circulated and translated into several European languages, helping to build a ground swell of anti-Chinese feeling in Britain and elsewhere in the West.

The East India Company tried to enlarge the scope for China trade and negotiation in 1759 by sending James Flint, a company trader who had learned Chinese, to present complaints to the Qing court concerning the restrictions on trade in Canton and the rampant corruption there. By dint of tenacity and a certain amount of bribery, Flint, sailing first to Ningbo and then to Tianjin in a small 70-ton vessel, the *Success,* was able to have his complaints carried to Peking. The emperor initially seemed to show flexibility, and agreed to send a commission of investigation to the south. But after the *Success,* sailing back to Canton, was lost at sea with all hands except for Flint (he had traveled south independently), the emperor changed his mind. Flint was arrested and imprisoned for three years for breaking Qing regulations against sailing to northern ports, for improperly presenting petitions, and for having learned Chinese.

The Qing response to the growing number of foreign traders who began to push at their doors in the later eighteenth century was to reinforce all the preceding rules, while protesting that they wished justice done to all foreigners. All European trade was restricted to the one port of Canton after 1760, and foreigners were forbidden residence there except during the trading season, which ran each year from October to March. The Europeans now had to deal exclusively with the licensed Chinese Hong merchants—of whom there were normally around ten—despite the indulgence of many in sharp business practices and the considerable number who went bankrupt by overextending their resources. Westerners could communicate their grievances or petitions only to these Hong merchants, who in turn forwarded any written materials to the Hoppo, the court-appointed trade official. (Like *Cohong, Hoppo* derived from the Western pronunciation of a Chinese word—in this case, for Qing government personnel.) The Hoppo, if he chose, might then communicate with the provincial governor or with Peking; or he might, on a myriad grounds of procedure or impropriety, refuse to forward the documents at all.

It was a complex and exasperating procedure, far from the kind of diplomatic and commercial equality among nations that Western powers were beginning to take for granted. Tensions on both sides increased after the 1770s as British traders in particular, worried by the trade deficits that forced them to offer hundreds of thousands of pounds' worth of silver bullion each year in exchange for Chinese silks, porcelains, and teas, began to ship opium grown in India to southern Chinese ports and to exchange it

there for Chinese manufactures and produce. The stakes became higher each year as the passion for tea drinking grew in both Britain and America: by 1800, the East India Company was buying over 23 million pounds of China tea at a cost of £3.6 million. (From 1784 onward, merchants in the newly independent United States, free now to trade where they chose, began to send their ships to the lucrative China tea market directly; but they too were subjected to the restrictions that bound Europeans.)

It was near the end of Qianlong's reign that the British East India Company, acting in agreement with King George III's government, decided to try to rectify the situation in a direction they believed was consonant with the new dignity of Britain as a world power. They selected as their emissary to China Lord George Macartney, a politically well-connected peer from Northern Ireland who had had diplomatic experience at the court of Russia's Catherine the Great. Macartney had also gained practical experience as governor of Grenada in the Caribbean and administrator of the region of Madras in eastern India. The British embassy traveled in a man-of-war of 66 guns, with two support vessels, each loaded with expensive gifts designed to show the finest aspects of British manufacturing technology. Macartney was accompanied by a retinue of almost 100, including scientists, artists, guards, valets, and Chinese language teachers from the Catholic college in Naples.

Leaving London in September 1792, Macartney's ships touched briefly at Canton in June 1793, but were allowed to proceed directly to Tianjin and land there since they claimed to be saluting Qianlong on his eightieth birthday. Once ashore, the embassy was escorted to Peking with much pomp but with the official status of "tribute emissaries." Macartney managed to persist in his refusal to prostrate himself full-length on the ground before the emperor in the ritual kowtow, agreeing instead to bow on one knee to Qianlong as he would to King George. Despite this stubbornness, Macartney was courteously received in September 1793 by Heshen and by the emperor at the northern summer palace of Rehe (Jehol). In his audience, Macartney asked for British rights of diplomatic residence in Peking, the ending of the restrictive Canton trading system, the opening of new ports for international commerce, and the fixing of fair and equitable tariffs. Unfailingly bland, neither the Qing emperor nor his minister would yield to any of the British requests.

Qianlong instead sent an edict to George III explaining that China would not increase its foreign commerce because it needed nothing from other countries. As Qianlong wrote, "We have never valued ingenious articles, nor do we have the slightest need of your country's manufactures. Therefore, O king, as regards your request to send someone to remain at the capital, while it is not in harmony with the regulations of the Celestial Empire we also feel very much that it is of no advantage to your country."[1]

Macartney had no counterforce to employ. He could only leave China by the designated land route to Canton, taking as many notes about the country as he could along the way and jotting in his journal his personal view that this awesome-appearing country had grave internal weaknesses that threatened to destroy it. He drew his main metaphor, suitably enough, from the sea across which he had traveled with such cost of time and discomfort. "The Empire of China," he wrote in his journal, "is an old, crazy, first rate man-of-war, which a fortunate succession of able and vigilant officers has contrived to keep afloat for these one hundred and fifty years past, and to overawe their neighbors merely by her bulk and appearance." But with lesser men at the helm, Macartney added, China would slowly drift until "dashed to pieces on the shore." China's opposition to British goals was ultimately futile, wrote Macartney, since it was "in vain to attempt arresting the progress of human knowledge," as the Qing were doing. "The human mind is of a soaring nature and having once gained the lower steps of the ascent, struggles incessantly against every difficulty to reach the highest."[2]

The entire venture had cost the East India Company a small fortune, for which the company had received no return. It was not an auspicious opening to the era of face-to-face diplomatic relations, although Macartney himself did nicely. He had insisted on an annual allowance of £15,000 before undertaking the venture, and had cleared a profit of over £20,000 from his mission. At least China had not stood in the way of his own personal progress.

Aliens and Chinese Law

One of Lord Macartney's more interesting acquisitions in China was a copy of the Qing dynasty's legal code. When this code was brought back to England and translated by a scholar who had learned his Chinese as a member of Macartney's retinue, it made clear what had seemed probable to generations of British traders—namely, that the Chinese and the Europeans had very different views of what constituted "the law" and, accordingly, that recourse to legal expedients might exacerbate rather than lessen international tensions.

Although based on a wide range of prior experience and precedent, Chinese law was codified and interpreted by the state. There was no independent judiciary either in the provinces or in Peking: it was the county magistrate who acted as the local representative of justice. A series of reviews by the

prefect and the judicial intendant of a given province could bring a case to the Ministry of Punishments in Peking. Appeals by plaintiffs were also possible but only within a rigorous hierarchy that culminated in a "court" of senior officials. Death sentences did have to be reviewed by the magistrate's superiors, and technically the emperor himself passed final judgment on all crimes meriting execution. But that was not always possible in practice and often arbitrary. In local insurrections, rebels were customarily executed immediately to discourage their followers and to prevent the possibility of their being freed from jail by other dissidents. In cases involving foreigners, summary executions were also common.

The county magistrates acted essentially as detectives, judges, and jury. They accumulated the evidence, then evaluated it, and finally passed sentence. Punishments for particular crimes were prescribed in the legal code, which magistrates had to follow. Although these officials often relied on a member of their clerical staff who was allegedly "expert" in the law, there was no independent profession of law and no lawyers. Those who tried to intervene from outside in criminal cases were castigated for their interference. Suspects were routinely treated with great harshness in jail, and often beaten or tortured with wooden presses if they refused to confess. Confession always preceded the "trial," the result of which was therefore a foregone conclusion unless some startling new exonerating evidence could be produced. Since the beatings with a heavy wooden pole sometimes used to extract confessions could lead to a suspect's death or cripple him for life, it is not surprising that many Chinese feared the legal structure, although they did use the magistrates' courts in serious disagreements over real estate, inheritances, and other economic matters.

In most other disputes the Chinese had recourse to mediators who were either respected members of the local community or leaders of influential lineage organizations. Those threatened with suit in such cases might well pay to hush a case up; and the junior personnel of the magistrate's official staff—the so-called "yamen runners"—routinely supplemented their meager incomes by accepting bribes to keep matters quiet. Those accused of committing criminal acts such as theft, rape, or homicide would also try to pay their way free, with gifts to the magistrate's staff or even to the magistrate himself. The grim and possibly fatal experience of a stay in prison (which description, of course, applied as well to the filthy, crowded prisons of Europe at the time) could be ameliorated by regular payments to one's jailers and by distribution of food to one's fellow inmates.

The Qing penal system also maintained the hierarchical social values that were propagated through the state's Confucian teachings. Crimes against the emperor and his family were the most serious, and crimes against

bureaucrats or state property were also severely punished—by execution or prolonged periods of exile. Within the family structure, fathers committing a given crime against their sons were punished far more lightly than sons who committed the same crime against their fathers, and the same was true of husbands harming their wives, or older relatives their younger ones. In one case in which a father killed his son by burying him alive, the Ministry of Punishments carefully reviewed the facts and concluded that the governor had acted wrongly in sentencing the father to be beaten for the crime. Fathers who killed sons should be beaten only if they had acted "unreasonably," argued the ministry. In this case, the son had used foul language at his father, an act that deserved the death penalty: "Thus, although the killing was done intentionally, it was the killing of a son who had committed a capital crime by reviling his father."[3] The father was acquitted.

Had the Ministry of Punishments not intervened, the father could have avoided punishment nonetheless. After trial and sentencing, a great many punishments could be commuted for cash, depending on the severity of the offense: ½ tael of silver for twenty blows with the bamboo, 3 taels for sixty blows, 10 taels for one-and-a-half year's exile, 720 taels for perpetual banishment, and 1,200 taels and up for strangulation or beheading. Although such commutations were based on sliding scales according to an individual's official rank or assumed ability to pay, the system clearly benefited the wealthy, to whom such sums were comparatively trivial. For a poor peasant or urban worker they might constitute several weeks or even years of income. Furthermore, those scholars who had passed the lower-level Confucian examinations were exempt from corporal punishment and, hence, escaped the fearsome beatings that often forced confessions from terrified commoners.

The Qing judicial structure received reinforcement from a community mutual-responsibility system known as the *baojia.* A *bao,* a group of 1,000 households, consisted of 10 *jia,* each of which contained 100 households. All Chinese households were supposed to be registered in *jia* and *bao* groups and supervised by a "headman" chosen from among their own number on a rotating system. These headmen were expected to check on the accuracy of each household's registration forms, which listed family members by gender, age, relationship, and occupation, and to ensure local law and order. The headmen also supervised community projects such as dike repairs, crop watching, or militia operations. In cases of serious crime or suspected rebellion, these men called in help from the magistrate's office. The headmen were also meant to enforce prompt tax payments from the members of their own *baojia.* Their job was difficult, frustrating, and sometimes dangerous; in many communities, the system grew moribund because no one wanted

to serve as headman. But of most importance to foreigners was the overall concept represented by the *baojia*—namely, that members of a given community were *all* responsible for the good order of that community and that neighbors or friends of guilty parties might be held equally liable for illegal acts and penalized for them.

Although China's penal system was harsh, its standard of law and order was probably comparable to that prevalent in Europe or the United States at the time. But there was really no room within the system for special treatment of foreigners. In all routine matters, foreigners fell within the jurisdiction either of the Lifan Yuan, the Ministry of Rituals, the Hoppos, or the imperial household. If they transgressed, the Chinese assumption, at least initially, was that they would be handled by the Chinese courts in the conventional way.

Several cases in which the crews of foreign ships accidentally killed Chinese show that the local Qing authorities were at first content to accept cash payments in restitution. In Kangxi's reign, Qing authorities demanded 5,000 taels after the crew of a British ship killed a Chinese near Canton harbor in 1689. When the British counteroffer of 2,000 taels was rejected, the ship abandoned its trading plans and sailed away. At the end of the reign, in 1722, the Chinese accepted 2,000 taels from the captain of the *King George* after his gunner's mate accidentally killed a Chinese boy while out hunting. In 1754, when an English sailor was killed by a Frenchman in Canton, Qing officials showed their determination to intervene in cases occurring within their jurisdiction even when no Chinese were involved. All trade with France was stopped until the French officers yielded up the killer. Ironically, the killer was shortly thereafter released because the emperor Qianlong, to celebrate the twentieth year of his reign and the Qing victories in the Zunghar wars, had ordered a general amnesty for all convicted criminals.

More ominous for Westerners were a number of legal cases that occurred in the later years of Qianlong's reign, after the cementing of the Cohong monopoly. In 1773 the Portuguese authorities in Macao tried an Englishman who had allegedly killed a Chinese; they found him innocent and released him. But Qing officials, insisting on their right to intervene in homicide cases in which the victim was Chinese, retried the Englishman and had him executed. Seven years later, Qing authorities successfully reasserted their right to intervene in cases in which foreigners killed foreigners on Chinese soil: a Frenchman who had killed a Portuguese sailor in a fight was forced out of his refuge with the French consul and publicly executed by strangulation.

The two cases that made the greatest impact on Western thinking and forced a serious reconsideration of how to deal with the Qing at the international diplomatic level were those involving two trading vessels, the *Lady Hughes* and the *Emily*. The first of these occurred in 1784, nine years before Lord Macartney's embassy arrived in China. The *Lady Hughes,* one of the so-called "country ships"—that is, owned by private business interests but trading between India and China under license to the British East India Company—fired a salute near Canton, and the discharge from the shot killed two Chinese bystanders. When the captain of the *Lady Hughes* declared to the Chinese that he could not tell which gunner had fired the fatal shot, the Chinese, following their ideas concerning mutual responsibility, arrested the ship's business manager. They also threatened to cancel all trade with the West. In an attempt to cow the Chinese, the crews of most foreign ships then trading at Canton—British, French, Danish, Dutch, and the first Americans in Chinese waters, from the New York–registered *Empress of China*—took up arms and posted themselves around their warehouses on shore. But the Chinese stood firm. Facing disruption of all trade and the possible execution of the business manager, the *Lady Hughes* surrendered the gunner probably responsible. He was strangled in January 1785.

The case of the United States merchant ship *Emily,* which occurred in 1821, was the first to involve American interests in a central way. A crew member on the *Emily* (ironically, he was named Terranova, "New World" in English) dropped an earthenware pitcher onto the head of a Chinese fruit seller in a boat below; she fell overboard and drowned. When the Chinese demanded Terranova's surrender, the Americans at first held firm, insisting that the trial be held on the ship. But after the Qing ordered the cessation of all American trade in the Canton region, the captain of the *Emily* wavered, perhaps because his ship had a hold full of illegal opium, which he feared would be confiscated. Terranova was handed over to the Chinese authorities. At a trial at which no Westerners were allowed, he was found guilty, and executed the next day. This sentence and the rapidity of the execution violated Qing procedures in cases of accidental homicide.

Cumulatively these trials, clashes, and executions convinced Western nations that the Chinese must be compelled to yield up jurisdiction over cases involving foreign nationals. Yet this was the very point on which the Chinese sought to hold firm. Misunderstanding helped fuel the dispute, for the complexity of the Qing legal position could not be fully gauged from a quick perusal of their statutes; it demanded careful study, which few Westerners were then equipped to give. Moreover, the legal position of foreigners in China had evolved over time. Under Ming-dynasty law, for instance, it had been declared that "all aliens who commit offenses shall be sentenced according to the Chinese Penal Code," if such offenses took place on Chinese

soil. The Qing, in 1646, amended this to read that "all aliens who come to submit themselves to the government of the empire shall, when they commit offenses, be sentenced according to the Chinese Penal Code," implying full obedience from all foreigners who sought to trade with China. In Emperor Yongzheng's reign, another change placed those aliens in areas supervised by the Lifan Yuan—Zunghars, Mongols, Russians—under that bureau's legal control, leaving all other aliens subject to the Chinese penal code on the grounds that since "they have attached themselves to the empire, when they commit offenses they should be punished just as ordinary Chinese subjects."[4]

Finally, in an attempt to streamline cases involving foreigners, the Ministry of Punishments, while pledging itself to fairness under the law, added in 1743 that in alien cases the procedures "concerning detention and obtaining a confession" need not "conform to the pattern followed in the interior."[5] Chinese officials believed that by making these changes they were "deferring to barbarian wishes," and such might indeed have been the case in the 1740s and 1750s. By the 1820s, however, the law as amended was perceived by Westerners as depriving them of the appellate review, and the mitigations and commutations that ordinary Chinese defendants could expect as a right under the conventional code.

It was not only foreigners who began to protest that Chinese law was inadequate. From a diametrically opposite point of view, Chinese gentry and commoners grew exasperated by Qing officials' weakness in the face of foreign demands for certain exemptions and special treatment. When in 1807 brawling sailors from the British ship *Neptune* killed two Chinese, Qing officials and the British taipan (trade supervisor) worked out a compromise by which a scapegoat was produced. They subsequently charged him with accidental homicide and permitted him to redeem his sentence for 12.42 taels in accordance with the commutation table of the Qing code. In what seems to have been a concerted campaign, placards were posted all over Canton accusing the Qing of selling out to the "foreign devils." The initiators of that campaign are unknown, but they were sounding a theme that was to become a central one in the gradual emergence of a new force in Chinese history: antiforeign nationalism.

Opium

The captain of the *Emily,* in offering up the sailor Terranova to Chinese justice so that the ship's cargo of opium could be safeguarded, was very much a figure of his times. Over the previous century, the growing demand

in Europe and America for Chinese teas, porcelain, silks, and decorative goods had not been matched by any growth in Chinese demand for Western exports such as cotton and woolen goods, furs, clocks and other mechanical curiosities, tin, and lead. The result was a serious balance-of-payments problem for the West. Westerners had to pay for Chinese goods mainly in silver, and this steady flow of silver into China—one of the causes of the general prosperity in Qianlong's reign—became a source of alarm to the British government. In the decade of the 1760s, for example, silver flow into Qing China exceeded 3.0 million taels; in the 1770s, the total grew to 7.5 million, and by the 1780s, 16.0 million taels. By the late eighteenth century, however, the British had developed an alternative product to exchange in China for Chinese goods: opium. Although the trade was subject to severe fluctuations, figures for sales of opium to China show the overall trend with bleak clarity. Each chest contained between 130 and 160 pounds of opium, depending on the area of origin, so that by the 1820s enough opium was coming into China to sustain the habits of around 1 million addicts. When one adds to this supply a certain amount of domestically grown opium (although this was still on a very small scale), one can begin to sense the extent of China's opium problem.

For opium to sell steadily in China, several factors were necessary: the narcotic had to be available in large quantities; there had to be a developed means of consuming it; enough people had to want to smoke it to make the trade viable, and government attempts at prohibitions had to be ineffectual. It was the conjunction of all these elements that brought China into this particularly agonizing cycle of its modern history.

British Sales of Opium to China[6]

Year	*Number of chests*
1729	200
1750	600 (est.)
1773	1,000
1790	4,054
1800	4,570
1810	4,968
1816	5,106
1823	7,082
1828	13,131
1832	23,570

The British conquest of large areas of India first spurred the organized production and sale of opium. At the instigation of the East India Company's directors, and speeded by the brilliant generalship of Robert Clive and the administrative skills of Governor-General Warren Hastings, between 1750 and 1800 the British had gained control of much of northern India, from Bombay in the west to Calcutta in the east, and with additional bases in the south at Madras (where Lord Macartney had once served as governor). Eager to find a cash crop that would earn revenue through export sales, the British discovered that the opium poppy grew especially luxuriantly in certain areas of India. Moreover, there was an abundant supply of labor to collect the sap from the incised poppy pods and to process it (by boiling) into the thick paste that was best for smoking.

The East India Company established a monopoly for the purchase of Indian opium and then sold licenses to trade in opium to selected Western merchants known as the "country traders," preferring this indirect means of profit making to getting directly involved in the shipment of the narcotic. Having sold their opium in China, the country traders deposited the silver they received in payment with company agents in Canton in exchange for letters of credit; the company, in turn, used the silver to buy tea, porcelain, and other Chinese goods for sale in Britain. Thus a triangular trade of goods from Britain to India, India to China, and China to Britain developed, at each step of which high profits could be made.

The consumption of opium was perhaps a simpler aspect of the process. History offers examples of many ways of taking opium derivatives—from steeping them in potions or smoking them mixed with other herbs, to the concentrated morphine tablets of the late nineteenth century and the heroin injections of our own day. The style of opium smoking favored in China—heating a tiny globule of refined opium paste over a flame and then smoking it from the bowl of a long-stemmed pipe—may have been initially popular because tobacco smoking had become a craze in the early Qing. Tobacco plants had been introduced into Fujian province from Latin America and had spread swiftly from there to Shandong and other parts of China. In scrolls from Kangxi's reign, scores of Chinese smoking tobacco pipes can be seen strolling down city streets; and the brand names of popular varieties were displayed in front of stores. The practice of smoking opium mixed with tobacco probably came to China in the 1720s, brought there by troops returning home from Taiwan after having suppressed Zhu Yigui's rebellion of 1721. By the middle of Qianlong's reign, detailed accounts of the drug and how to prepare it for consumption were available to anyone who could read. Small public rooms where, for a few coppers, people could get a pipeful of opium and smoke it as they reclined in comfort brought the drug in reach of urban dwellers and the poor.

Why did the Chinese of the mid- and late Qing begin to smoke so much opium? Since there is no contemporary Chinese literature on this, we can only speculate; but we know that the taking of opium derivatives has the effect of slowing down and blurring the world around one, of making time stretch and fade, of shifting complex or painful realities to an apparently infinite distance. Chinese documents of the time suggest that opium appealed initially to groups confronting boredom or stress. Eunuchs caught in the ritualized web of court protocol smoked opium, as did some of the Manchu court officials, who often had sinecures or virtually pointless jobs in the palace bureaucracy. Women in wealthy households, deprived of opportunities for education and forbidden to travel outside the walls of their homes, smoked opium. Secretaries in the harried magistrates' offices smoked, as did merchants preparing for business deals and students preparing for—and even taking—the state examinations. Soldiers on their way into combat against groups of rural rebels smoked.

Later on in the nineteenth century the practice spread, especially among the leisured classes seeking a means of social relaxation. Coolie laborers also began to take opium, either by smoking it or by licking tiny pellets of the drug, to overcome the drudgery and pain of hauling huge loads day after day. (Shrewd yet ruthless employers, observing that the coolies could carry heavier loads if they were under the influence of opium, even made the drug available to their workers.) By the end of the nineteenth century, many peasants also became addicts, particularly those who themselves had begun to grow the poppies as a cash crop to supplement their tiny incomes.

The Qing government was not sure how to handle the problem. As we saw above, Yongzheng, the first emperor to pronounce on the narcotic, was aware that there was a legitimate need for opium as a medicinal drug—it could be particularly valuable in stemming the effects of diarrhea or dysentery—but that nonmedicinal uses of opium seemed to be harmful. His compromise was an uneasy one in which "pushing" the drug to potential users and running public opium dens were strictly punished, while "medicinal" sales continued openly.

During the eighteenth century, most of the wholesale opium purchases were handled by the Cohong merchants. But the trade became more indirect after 1800, when an edict forbade both opium imports and domestic opium production in China, and especially after 1813, when further edicts banned opium smoking altogether. Chinese smokers could be punished with 100 blows of the bamboo and with the public wearing of the "cangue," a heavy wooden collar, for a month or more. The Cohong merchants no longer dared deal in opium, but foreign traders found that if they anchored at selected spots off the China coast, there were plenty of Chinese adventurers willing to come out and purchase their opium stocks. Large fortified

hulks anchored off Lintin Island in the bay below Canton also formed a convenient distribution point for the drug. Sailing or rowing in swift, shallow-draft boats, Chinese dealers could elude all attempts by the sparse provincial Qing naval forces to intercept them. Thereafter they distributed the opium through the network of local trade routes, by road, river, and track.

As the Qing government tried to enforce its ban by punishing pushers severely and rigorously questioning smokers as to their sources of supply, those involved in opium deals grew more circumspect, covering their trail through numerous intermediaries. The 1831 transcript of an arrested court eunuch's testimony to officials in the imperial household succinctly illustrates this:

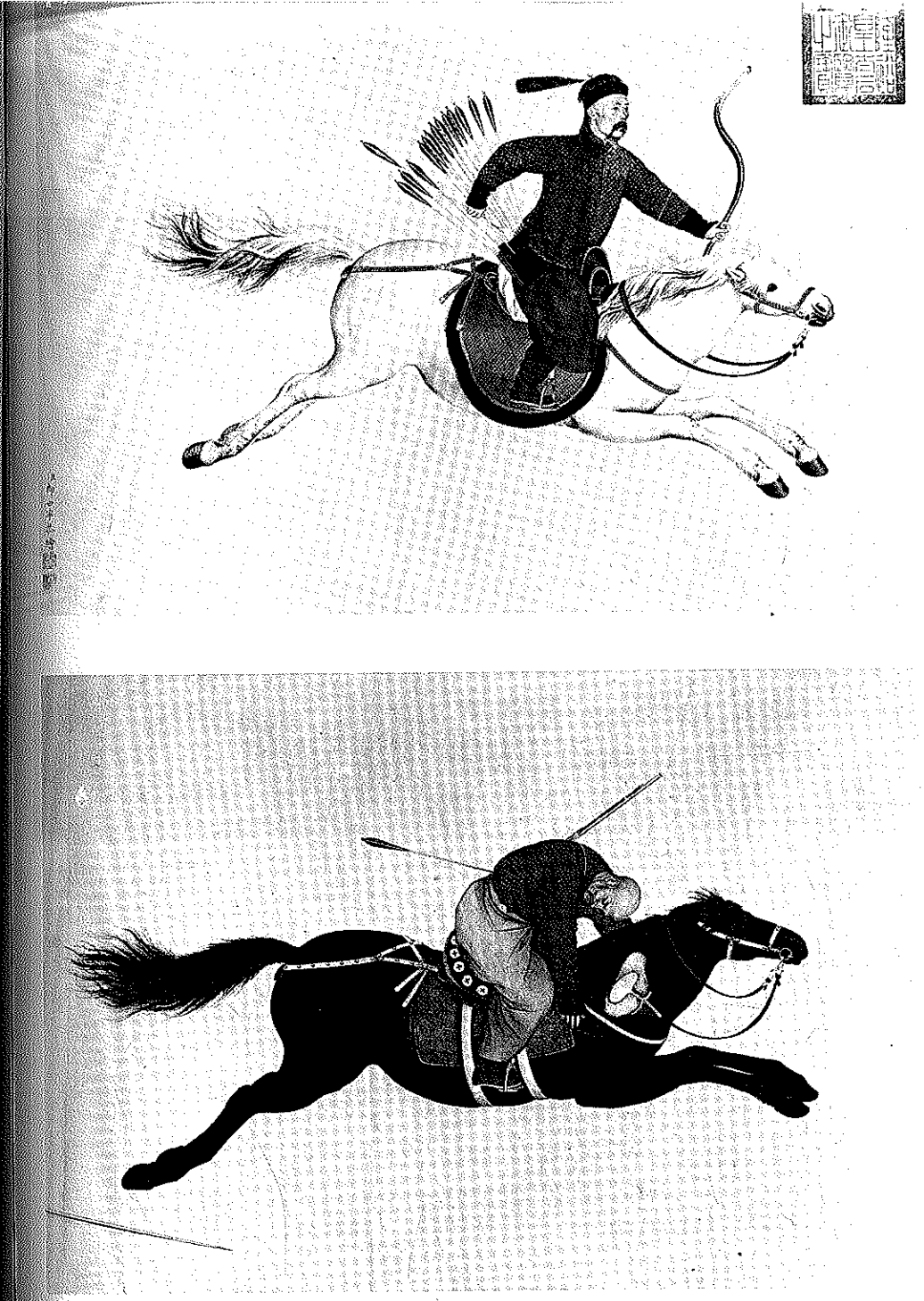
> At first we bought the opium we smoked in small quantities directly from the Muslim Zhu Da. Then I learned that when the sea vessels came into Tianjin the opium pills got cheaper, so I asked Kekesibuku for a loan of 100 strings of local cash, and I also sold my mule cart for money. I took my servant Qin Baoquan with me to Tianjin, and got Qin's old friend Yang Huiyuan to act as my agent. Yang bought 160 ounces of opium from Zhang for 240 strings of cash. I gave Yang a commission of 3.8 strings of cash.[7]

If the Qing authorities ever did pursue this case with vigor, they might have gotten past the two intermediaries and reached the local pusher, Zhang. But Zhang himself was probably only a small dealer, and by the time he was arrested the larger distributors and the foreign vessels that supplied them would long since have gone on their way.

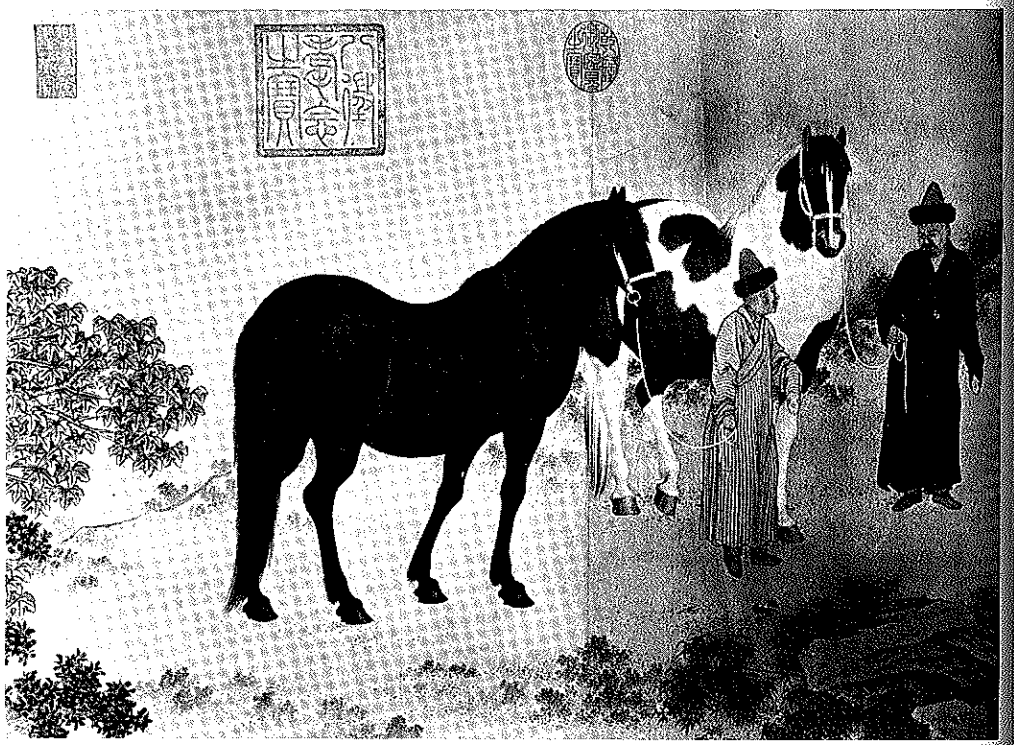
WESTERN IMAGES OF CHINA

Until the middle of the eighteenth century, China generally received favorable attention in the West. In large part this stemmed from the wide dissemination of books and published correspondence by Catholics, especially the Jesuits, who saw in the huge population of China a potential harvest of souls for the Christian faith. Although mindful of some of China's problems, most Catholic observers followed the example of the Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci, who had lived in China from 1583 to 1610 and admired the industry of China's population, the sophistication of the country's bureaucracy, the philosophical richness of its cultural traditions, and the strength of its rulers.

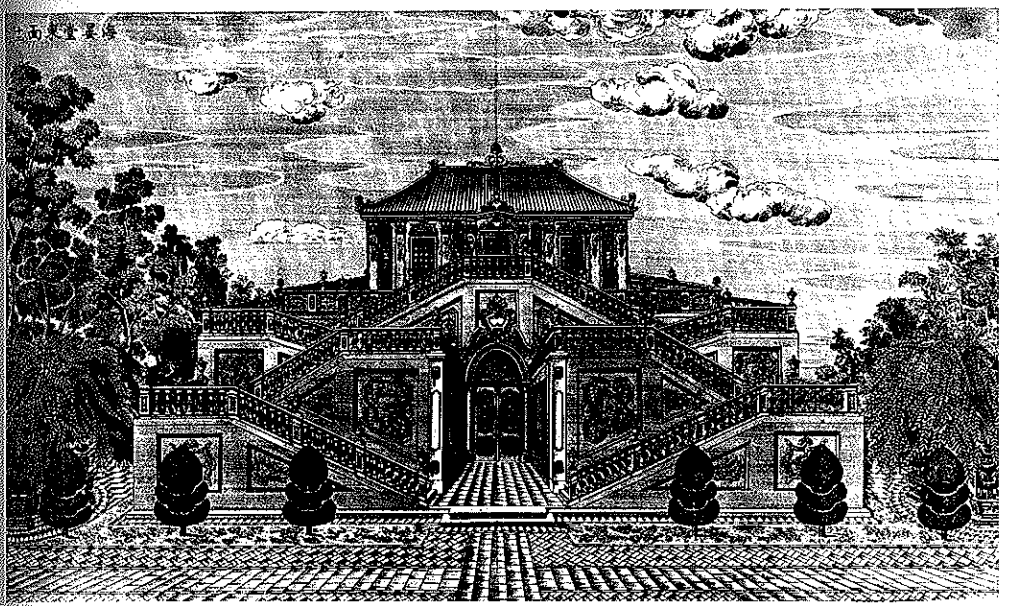
The French Jesuits, who dominated the China missions late in Kangxi's reign, presented an even more laudatory picture of the early Qing state, one deliberately designed to appeal to the "Sun King," Louis XIV, and to per-



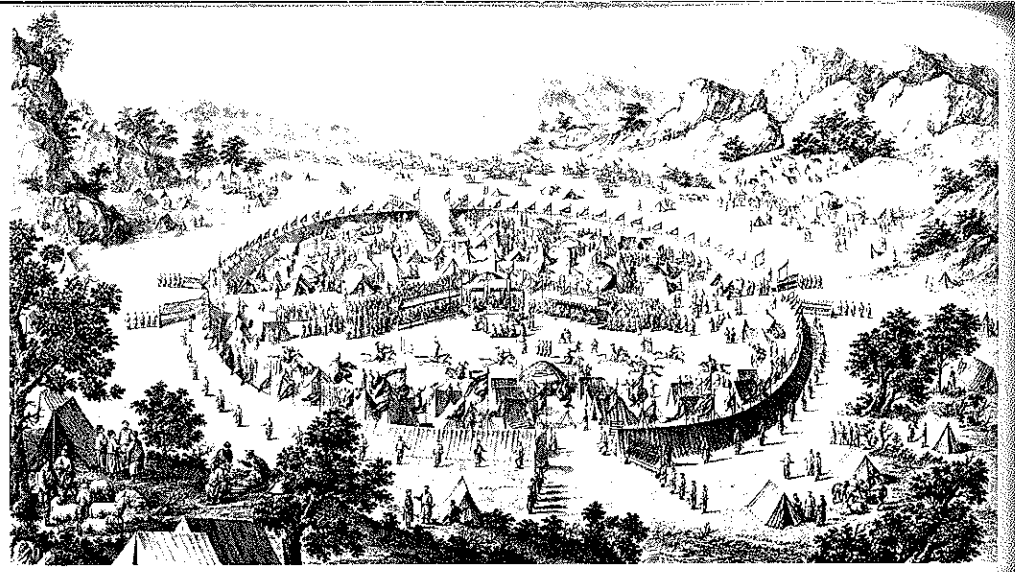
"Machang Chasing the Enemy," detail of a handscroll by Giuseppe Castiglione Castiglione (1688–1766), a talented Jesuit painter at the court of Qianlong, depicts here a Qing general famous for his victories over the Uighurs in Xinjiang.



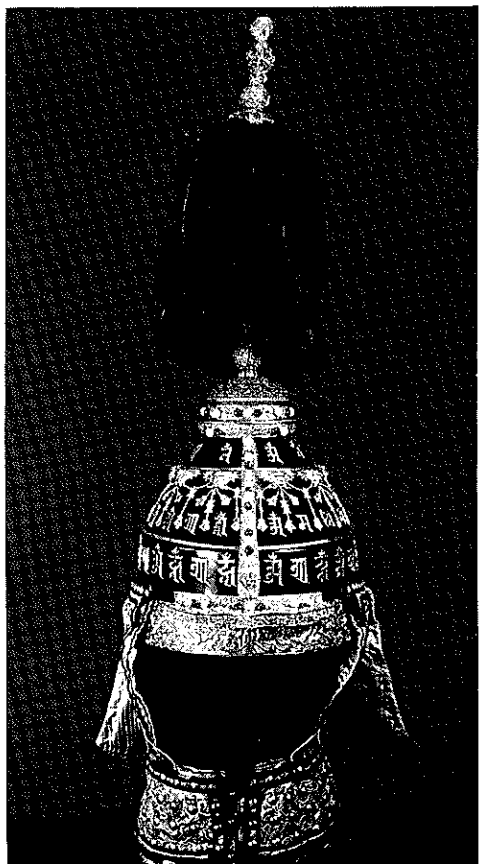
"Kazaks Presenting Horses in Tribute" (detail), 1757 Castiglione shows Kazaks from the northwest offering tributary gifts to the emperor Qianlong.



The Yuan Ming Yuan, the summer palace designed by Jesuits in China for Qianlong, located just outside Peking This engraving shows the Hall of Peaceful Seas.

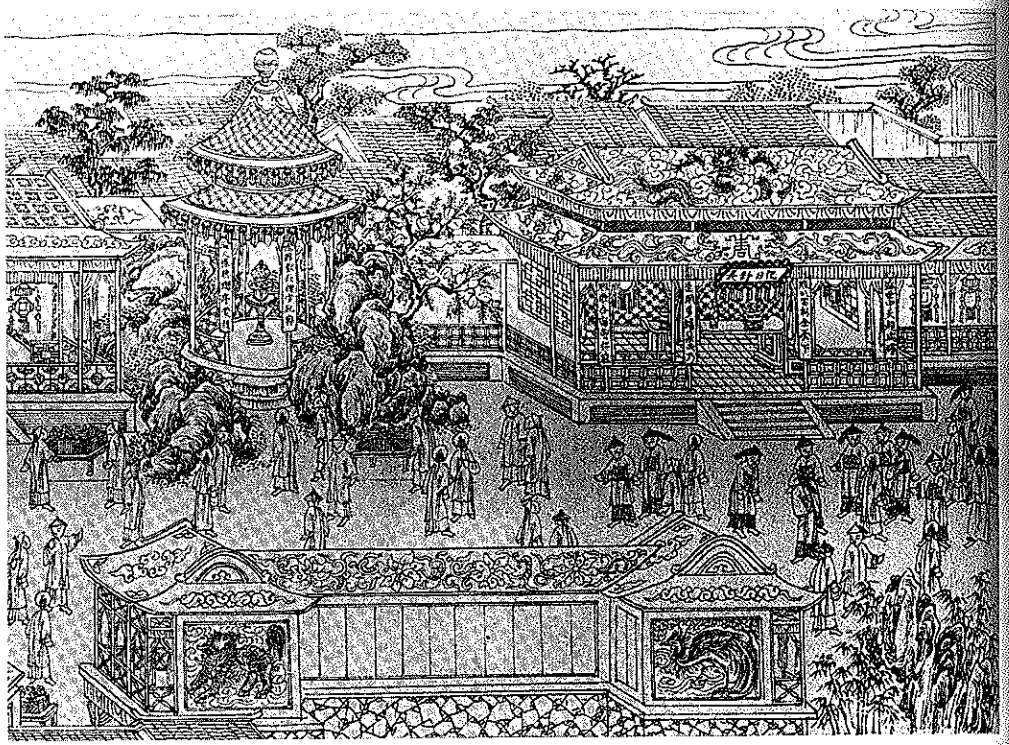


Qianlong's greatest achievement was the conquest and integration of huge territories in the west now known as Xinjiang. This engraving shows Qing forces encamped during their drive to take Kashgar and Yarkand in 1759.

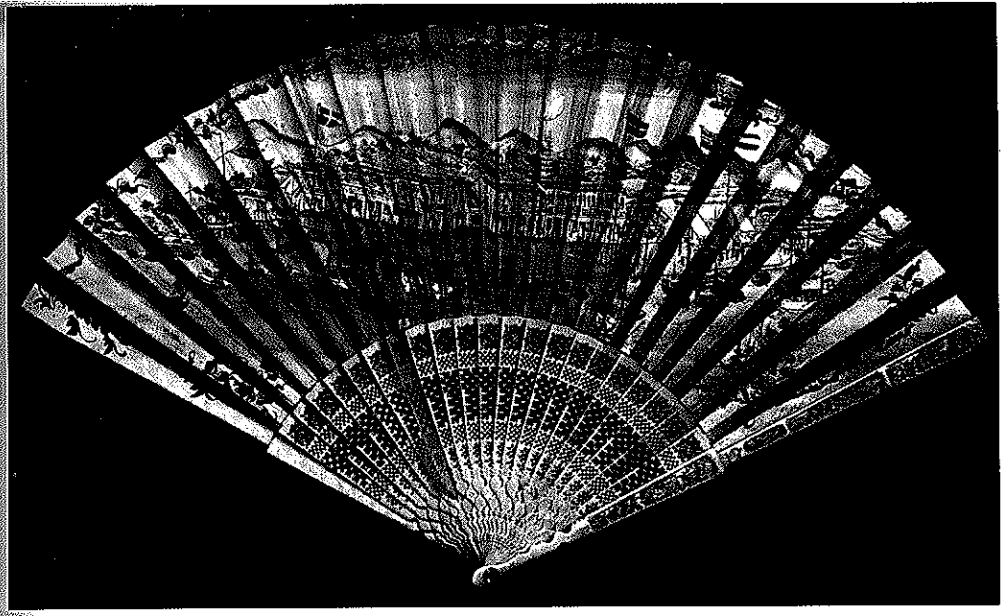


The emperor's helmet Qianlong's helmet is made of lacquered leather, sable, pearls, and precious stones, and decorated with Buddhist invocations in gold Sanskrit characters.

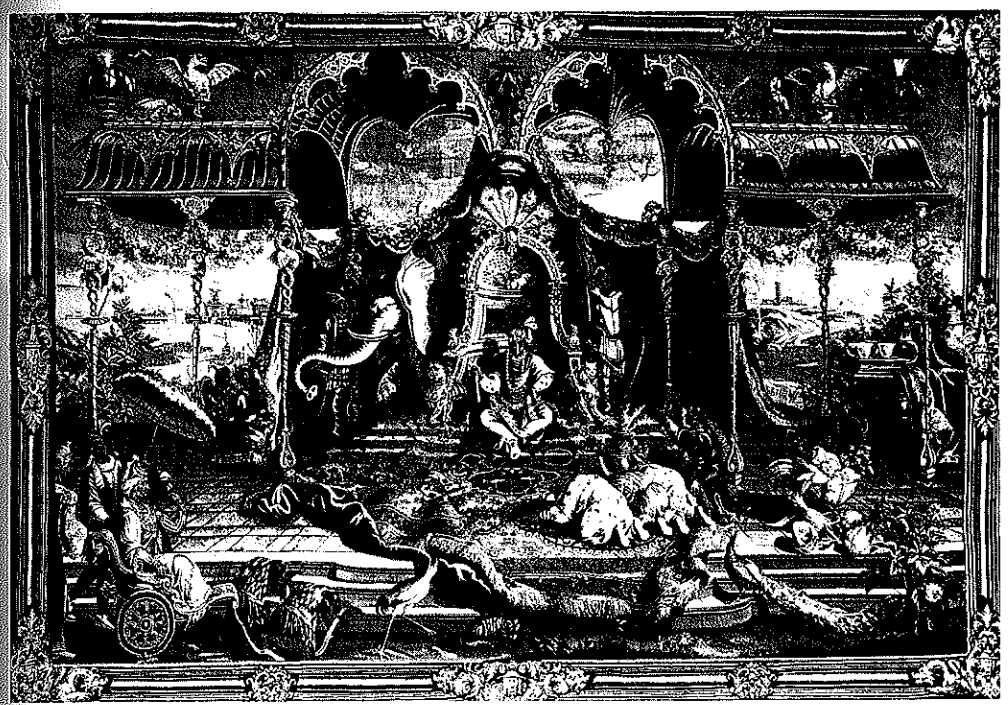
"The Dream of the Red Chamber" This painting shows a scene from China's greatest novel, written by Cao Xueqin in the middle of Qianlong's reign.



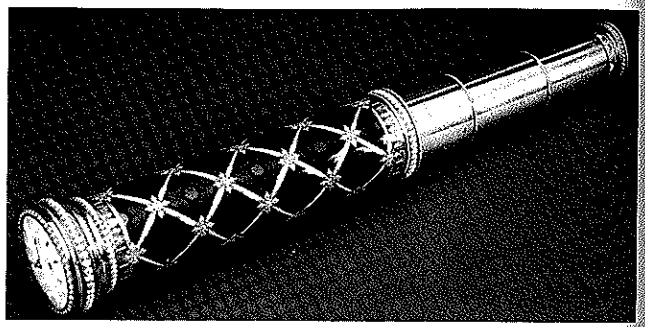
Celebration of Qianlong's birthday, from the Wenyuan edition of the "Four Treasuries" The compilation of the massive anthology called the "Four Treasuries," which comprised 36,000 manuscript volumes, was in part a literary inquisition in which works critical of the Manchus were destroyed and their owners punished.



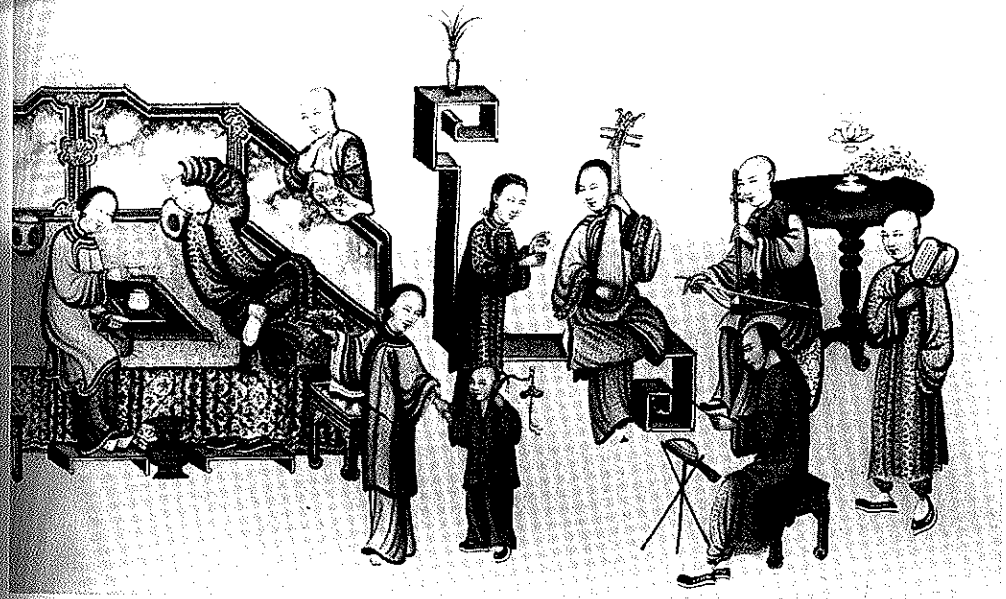
A painted fan depicting foreign factories along the Canton waterfront, c. 1750 In 1760, the Qing restricted all European trade to the port of Canton in an effort to control the growing numbers of foreign merchants.

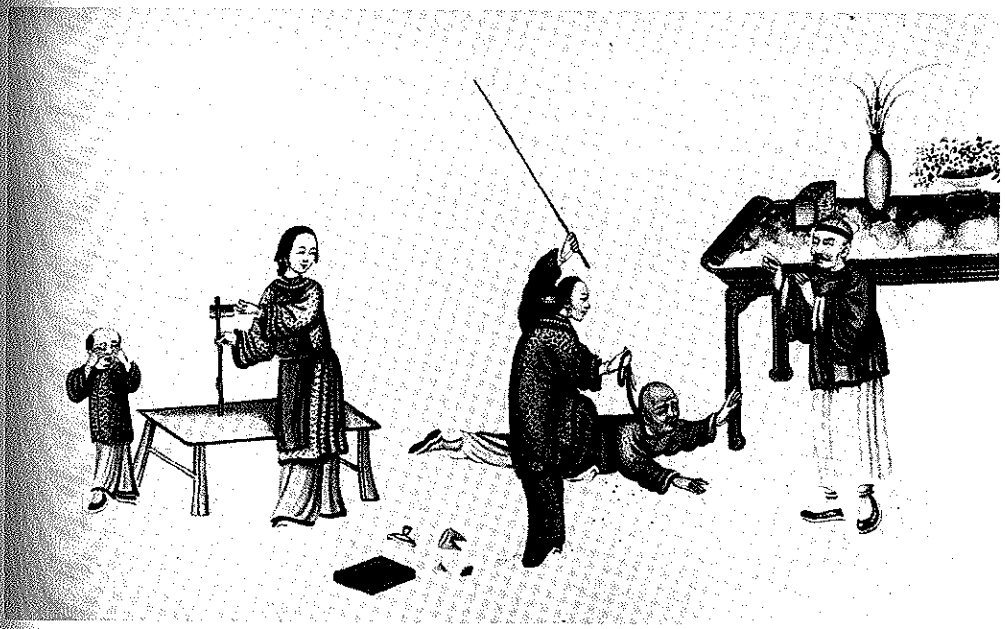


"Chinoiserie" While Jesuit architects were designing Qianlong's summer palace, Europeans of the mid-eighteenth century were swept by a fascination with Chinese design expressed in the fashion called *chinoiserie.* Here a French tapestry entitled *The Audience* (c. 1725) shows tributaries kowtowing before the

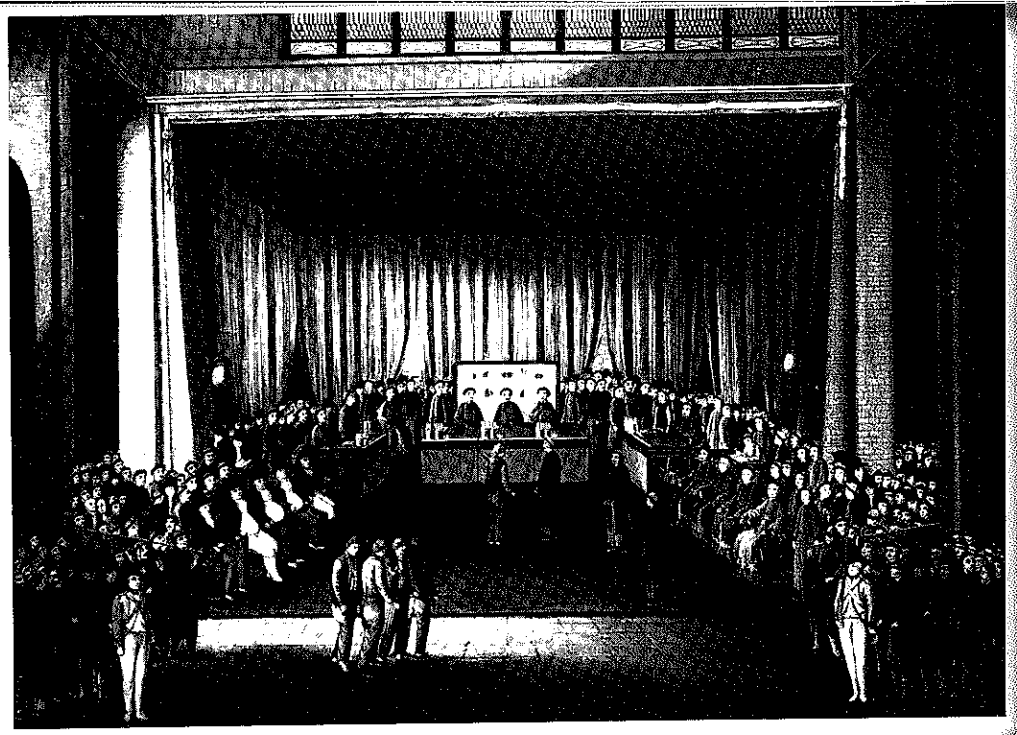


Lord Macartney's embassy of 1793 sought diplomatic and commercial concessions from the Qing. The ritual exchange of gifts included three jade *ruyi,* or scepters (top), presented by the emperor to Macartney, and a gold-plated, enameled, bejeweled telescope with clock (middle) offered in return along with the scientific and technological instruments depicted in this Chinese tapestry (bottom). But Qianlong's response in an edict to King George III was "We have never valued ingenious articles, nor do we have the

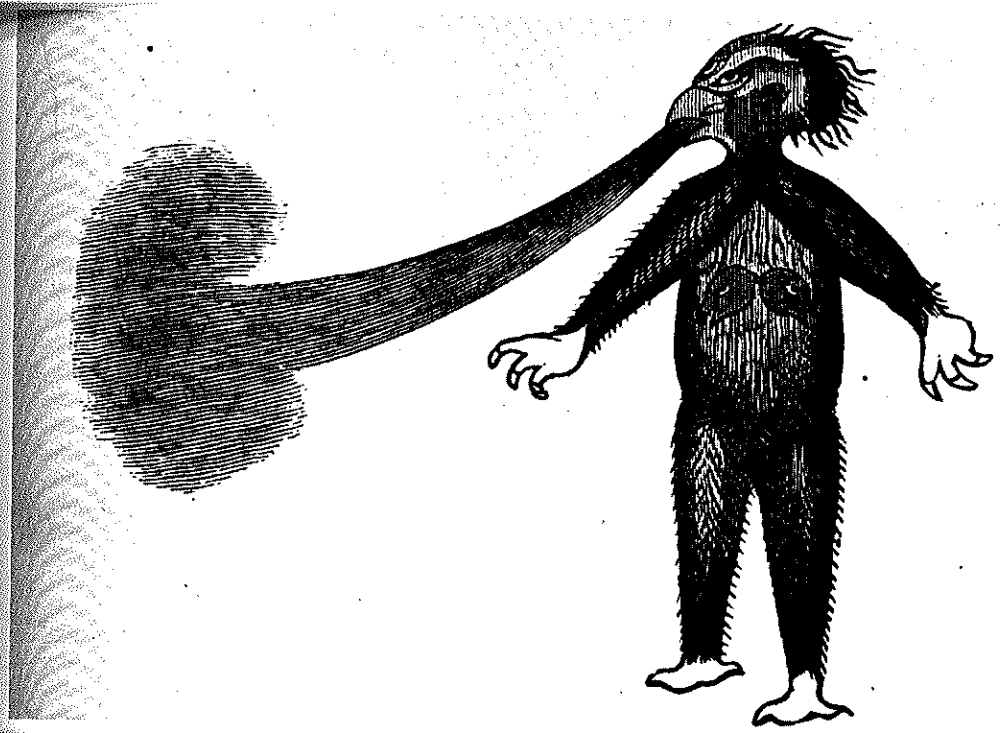




"The Decline of an Opium Smoker," c. 1860 From a series of twelve Chinese watercolors. Top: "This is the first step toward the vice of opium smoking accompanied by women, music, and singing"; bottom: "While his [the opium smoker's] mother is belaying him with a cane to the great delight of his father, his wife is cutting the opium-smoking pipe to the great horror of his child."



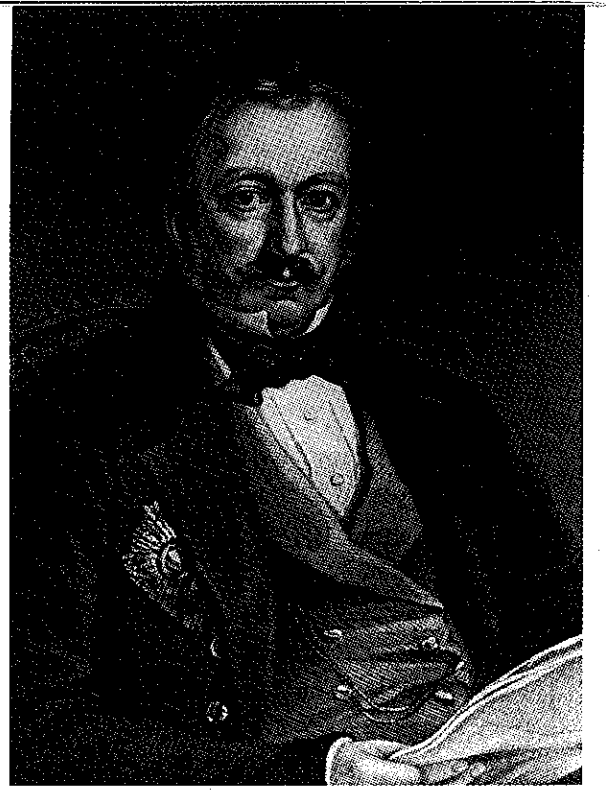
The trial of the "Neptune"'s sailors, Canton, c. 1807 Of fifty-two British sailors tried for the death of a Chinese man in February 1807, one was fined a small amount; Cantonese officials imprisoned and heavily fined the Hong merchant responsible for the *Neptune*.



An "old hairy one" A Chinese sketch of an English sailor, 1839.

Lin Zexu In 1838 Emperor Daoguang decided to end the opium trade and appointed Lin Zexu to the task. After ordering a blockade of the foreign factories in Canton and destroying 3 million pounds of raw opium handed over by the traders, Lin reported to Daoguang in 1839 that the foreigners "do not dare show any disrespect, and indeed I should judge from their attitudes that they have the decency to feel heartily ashamed."

The "Nemesis" (right) During the Opium War the *Nemesis,* an uncoppered paddle-wheel iron ship that operated by sail or steam, proved effective for the British in the campaigns off Canton and Sh



Sir Henry Pottinger, British plenipotentiary to China

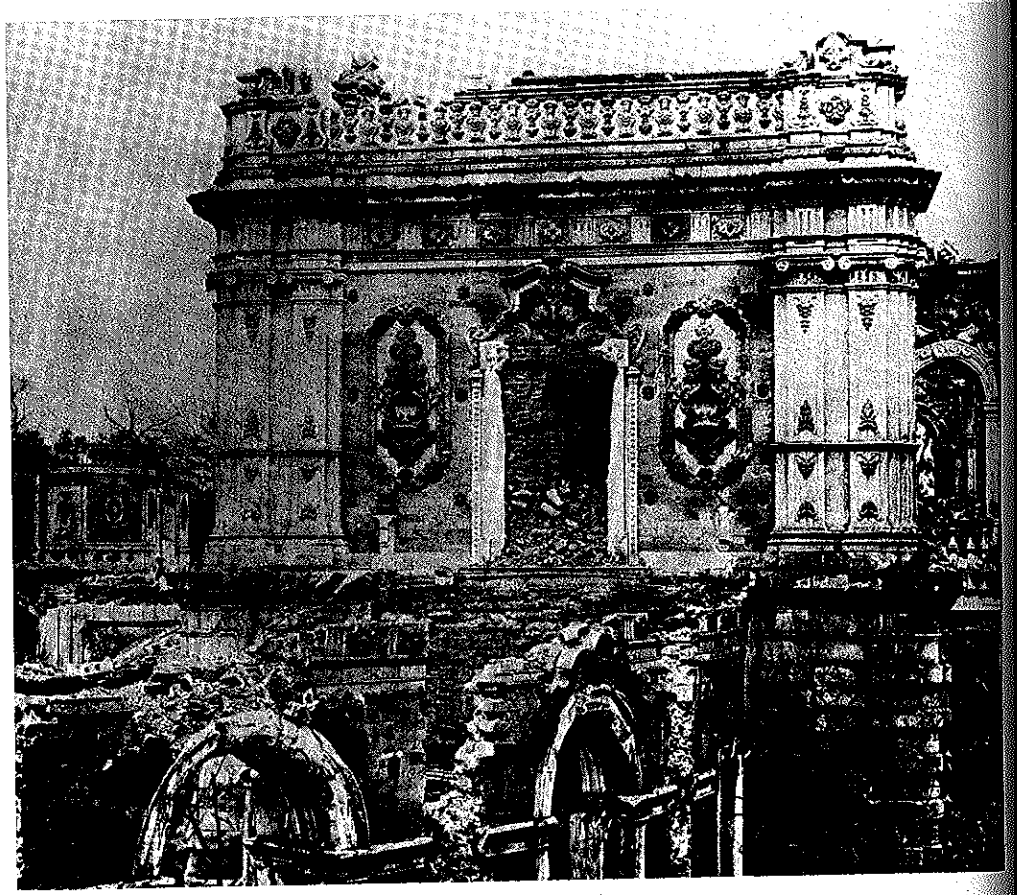
Qing troops retaking Nanjing from the Taiping rebels, 1864

Qiying, Qing commissioner and chief negotiator After yielding to the British in the Treaty of Nanjing (1842), Qiying recommended to Emperor Daoguang that China not "fight with them over empty names," but "pass over these small matters and achieve our larger scheme." This "larger scheme" was the survival of the Qing dynasty itself.

Zeng Guofan, organizer of the Xiang Army and architect of the Taiping suppression

General Charles "Chinese" Gordon, the British artillery officer who led the Ever-Victorious Army against the Taiping, dressed here in Chinese robes presented by the emperor

Interior of one of the Dagu forts, August 1860 (photograph by Felix Beato) Continuing to resist European incursions even after signing the Tianjin treaty (1858), the Qing repulsed British forces at the strategic Dagu forts in 1859, but succumbed to Anglo-French attacks the following year. This is the earliest "news-photo" taken in China.



Ruins of the Yuan Ming Yuan (photograph by Thomas Childe, c. 1875) On October 18, 1860, Britain's Lord Elgin ordered his troops to destroy the summer palace designed by Jesuit architects for Qianlong. That same day, the Qing capitulated to further British demands.

suade him to back the missionaries with money and personnel. Central to these flattering presentations was the idea that the ethical content of the Confucian Classics proved the Chinese were a deeply moral nation and had once practiced a form of monotheism not so different from that found in the Judaeo-Christian tradition. With a little effort, therefore, the Chinese could be brought back to the true values they had once espoused, and did not have to be forced to convert.

Although the Jesuits rapidly lost influence in China during the last years of Kangxi's reign, and declined in prestige in Europe during the eighteenth century until suppressed altogether in 1773, their books on Chinese government and society remained far the most detailed available. The German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibnitz read them and became deeply interested in the structure of the hexagrams in the *Book of Changes.* Even the anticlerical philosopher Voltaire was intrigued by what he read about the Chinese. Since Voltaire was intent on attacking the power of the Catholic church in eighteenth-century France, he cleverly used the information about China provided by the Catholics to disprove their more extreme claims. If, argued Voltaire, the Chinese really were so moral, intelligent, ethical, and well governed, and if this was largely attributable to the influence of Confucius, it followed that since Confucius had not been a Christian it was obviously possible for a country to get along admirably without the presence of Catholic clerical power.

In a series of influential works written between 1740 and 1760, Voltaire expounded his ideas about China. In one novel he presented his views on the parallelism of moral values in different societies, European and Asian. In a play he suggested that the innate moral strength of the Chinese had been able to calm even the Mongol conquerors led by Genghis Khan. And in an unusual historiographical gesture, Voltaire *began* his review of world history—*Essai sur les moeurs et l'esprit des nations* ("An Essay on the Customs and Spirit of Nations")—with a lengthy section on China. He did this to emphasize the values of differing civilizations and to put European arrogance in perspective: "The great misunderstanding over Chinese rites sprang from our judging their practices in light of ours: for we carry the prejudices that spring from our contentious nature to the ends of the world."[8] Unable to find a "philosopher-king" in Europe to exemplify his views of religion and government, Voltaire believed Emperor Qianlong would fill the gap, and he wrote poems in the distant emperor's honor.

Voltaire's praise for Chinese institutions appeared in a cultural context that was intensely sympathetic to China. During this same brief period in the mid-eighteenth century, Europe was swept by a fascination with China that is usually described by the French word *chinoiserie,* an enthusiasm

drawn more to Chinese decor and design than to philosophy and government. In prints and descriptions of Chinese houses and gardens, and in Chinese embroidered silks, rugs, and colorful porcelains, Europeans found an alternative to the geometrical precision of their neoclassical architecture and the weight of baroque design. French rococo was a part of this mood, which tended to favor pastel colors, asymmetry, a calculated disorder, a dreamy sensuality. Its popular manifestations could be found everywhere in Europe, from the "Chinese" designs on the new wallpapers and furnishings that graced middle-class homes to the pagodas in public parks, the sedan chairs in which people were carried through the streets, and the latticework that surrounded ornamental gardens.

Yet this cult of China, whether intellectual or aesthetic, faded swiftly as angry and sarcastic accounts like George Anson's became available. Voltaire's very enthusiasms made him the object of sarcasm or mockery as other great figures among the French Enlightenment philosophers began to find his picture of China unconvincing. Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the Baron de Montesquieu worried that the Chinese did not seem to enjoy true liberty, that their laws were based on fear rather than on reason, and that their elaborate educational system might lead to the corruption of Chinese morals rather than to their improvement. Other writers declared that China did not seem to be progressing, had indeed no notion of progress; from this it was but a short step to see the Chinese as, in fact, retrogressing. In the somber words of the French historian Nicolas Boulanger, written in 1763 and translated from the French the following year by the English radical John Wilkes:

> All the remains of her ancient institutions, which China now possesses, will necessarily be lost; they will disappear in the future revolutions; as what she hath already lost of them vanished in former ones; and finally, as she acquires nothing new, she will always be on the losing side.[9]

Reflecting on these arguments concerning China and the Chinese, some leading European thinkers labored to assess the country's prospects. One of these was the Scottish philosopher Adam Smith, who wrote on China in *The Wealth of Nations,* first published in 1776. In his analysis of the productive capacities of different countries, Smith found China useful for comparative purposes, especially with the nations of Europe and the developing societies of North America. Examining population growth as an index of development, he concluded that in Europe, where countries doubled their populations every five hundred years, growth was steady if undramatic. In North America, where the population doubled every twenty or twenty-five years, there was instant employment for the entire new work force; the New World was therefore "much more thriving, and advancing with much greater rapidity to the further acquisition of riches."[10]

China, however, "long one of the richest, that is, one of the most fertile, best cultivated, most industrious, and most populous countries in the world," had reached that stage in the cycle of growth where it had "acquired that full complement of riches which the nature of its laws and institutions permits it to acquire." In such a situation, continued population growth brought serious economic repercussions: "If in such a country the wages of labour had ever been more than sufficient to maintain the labourer, and to enable him to bring up a family, the competition of the labourers and the interest of the masters would soon reduce them to this lowest rate which is consistent with common humanity." The result was that "the poverty of the lower ranks of people in China far surpasses that of the most beggarly nations in Europe" and infanticide became an integral social practice. As Smith acidly phrased it: "Marriage is encouraged in China, not by the profitableness of children, but by the liberty of destroying them." China was exacerbating these problems, according to Smith, by refusing to consider change. By staying aloof from the growth of the world economy, China was sealing its fate: "A country which neglects or despises foreign commerce, and which admits the vessels of foreign nations into one or two of its ports only, cannot transact the same quantity of business which it might do with different laws and institutions."[11]

In a famous series of lectures delivered by the German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel in the early 1820s, the various critical analyses explored by Boulanger, Rousseau, Montesquieu, and Smith were synthesized in such a way that "Oriental Civilizations"—China pre-eminent among them—came to be seen as an early and now by-passed stage of history. The view of "Asiatic Society" synthesized by Hegel was to have a profound influence on the young Karl Marx and other later nineteenth-century thinkers. History, to Hegel, was the development of what he called the ideas and practices of freedom throughout the world. Freedom was the expression of the self-realization of the "World Spirit," and that spirit was reaching its fullest manifestations in the Christian states of Europe and North America. Optimistic about his own time, Hegel developed a theory that downplayed China's past. He described China as dominated by its emperors or despots, as typical of the "oriental nations" that saw only *one* man as free. In the West, the Greeks and Romans had come to see that *some* men were free; and, centuries later, Hegel's generation had come to see that *all* humans were free. Lacking an understanding of the march of Spirit in the world, even the Chinese emperor's "freedom" was "caprice," expressed as either

"ferocity—brutal recklessness of passion—or a mildness and tameness of the desires, which is itself only an accident of Nature."[12]

Part of China's fate, Hegel wrote, turned on geographical factors: "The extensive tract of eastern Asia is severed from the general historical development." In a powerfully worded passage, Hegel explained that China had lacked the great boldness of the Europeans in exploring the seas and instead had stayed tied to the agricultural rhythms of her great plains. The soil presented only "an infinite multitude of dependencies," whereas the sea carried people "beyond these limited circles of thought and action. . . . This stretching out of the sea beyond the limitations of the land, is wanting to the splendid political edifices of Asiatic States, although they themselves border on the sea—as for example, China. For them the sea is only the limit, the ceasing of the land; they have no positive relation to it."[13] Though such a statement would have startled the wealthy ocean-going merchants of Fujian had they seen it, Hegel was basically correct that the Qing state itself was not interested in maritime exploration.

In a series of bleak conclusions, Hegel consigned the Chinese permanently to their space outside the development of the World Spirit. Although China had historians galore, they studied their country within their own limited preconceptions, not realizing that China itself lay "outside the World's History, as the mere presupposition of elements whose combination must be waited for to constitute their vital progress." Although Chinese emperors may speak words of "majesty and paternal kindness and tenderness to the people," the Chinese people "cherish the meanest opinion of themselves, and believe that men are born only to drag the car of Imperial Power." In a passage that moved beyond anything Lord Macartney had opined about the fate of the Qing dynasty, Hegel mourned for the Chinese people themselves: "The burden which presses them to the ground, seems to them to be their inevitable destiny: and it appears nothing terrible to them to sell themselves as slaves, and to eat the bitter bread of slavery."

Yet perhaps China was not caught forever in a metaphysical and geographical isolation. In one of his most ambiguous asides, Hegel added that "a relation to the rest of History could only exist in their case, through their being sought out, and their character investigated by others."[14] The question of by whom or how that seeking out was to be done was left open by Hegel, but the Western powers, with their ships, their diplomatic missions, and their opium, were rapidly beginning to provide an answer.

II | FRAGMENTATION AND REFORM

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China's Confucian-trained scholars were aware of the moral and economic pressures on their society in the early nineteenth century. Drawing on the intellectual tradition in which they had been raised, they proposed administrative and educational reforms, warned about the rapidly rising population, and urged greater fairness in the distribution of wealth. Some also pointed to the social inequities separating men and women, and pleaded for greater sensitivity toward the status of women in daily life.

The spread of opium addiction posed a particularly complex social dilemma. Scholars, officials, and the emperor himself were torn over whether to legalize the drug or ban it absolutely. At the same time, massive British investments in the drug's manufacture and distribution, and the critical part that opium revenues played in Britain's international balance-of-payments strategy, made the opium trade a central facet of that nation's foreign policy. The Qing, believing the problem to be a domestic one, decided to ban the drug. The British responded with force of arms. Defeating the Qing, they imposed a treaty in 1842 that fundamentally altered the structure of Qing relations with foreign powers, and ended the long cycle of history in which China's rulers had imposed effective controls over all foreigners resident on their soil.

This new foreign presence in China coincided with—and doubtless contributed to—new waves of domestic turbulence. Uprisings against the Qing had been growing in frequency during the later eighteenth century. The widening social dislocations of the nineteenth century brought even greater unrest, until in mid-century four major rebellions erupted, at least two of which—the Taiping and Nian—had the potential to overthrow the dynasty. The Taiping was based on fundamentalist Christian and egalitarian principles that cut at the heart of Confucian and imperial values; the Nian introduced new patterns of mobile guerrilla warfare that threatened the prestige of the state's basic

military institutions. The other two rebellions, both led by Muslims, broke out in China's far southwest and northwest, and challenged the hold of the Qing over the non-Chinese peoples in its more inaccessible regions. Only an extraordinary series of military campaigns led by Confucian-trained scholars who put their loyalty to traditional Chinese values above all else, and were determined to perpetuate the prevailing social, educational, and family systems, enabled the Qing dynasty to survive.

The irony was that, in winning their great victories, Confucian statesmen were drawn to emulate and adopt certain elements of foreign military technology and international law that were ultimately to undermine the sanctity of the very values they endeavored to preserve. But initially such consequences could not be foreseen, and in the name of self-strengthening the Qing not only established new arsenals for arms manufacture and shipbuilding, they also set up schools to teach foreign languages, hired foreigners to collect customs dues on an equitable basis, tried to hire a small fleet of Western ships and seamen, and established the equivalent of a Foreign Ministry, the first such institution in China.

Relations between Chinese and foreigners remained strained, however. Antimissionary outbreaks in China were matched by anti-Chinese outrages in the United States, and the flow of Chinese immigrants was ultimately slashed back by a series of unilateral American restrictions. In both cases, misunderstandings of the other's culture and goals abounded, even though personal efforts made clear the possibilities for tenderness, compassion, and imaginative adaptation between the races.

By the late nineteenth century, despite the foreign pressures and domestic turbulence, it looked as if the Qing might construct a viable new synthesis. But the many achievements in the application of foreign technology to China's military and industrial needs were shattered by two defeats that the Chinese suffered in brief yet bitter wars—one with the French and one with the Japanese—that left much of China's vaunted "modern" navy at the bottom of the sea. When a burst of reforming zeal in 1898 was stillborn because of conservative opposition, the stage was set for the Boxer Uprising of 1900, in which a profound anti-Westernism led to widespread attacks on foreign missionaries and their converts. The Boxers were suppressed by foreign force, but in their wake came the first signs of a growing anti-Manchu Chinese nationalism, expressed in newspaper articles and pamphlets, in economic boycotts, and in a flurry of insurrectionary activity aimed at undercutting the power of the Qing state from within.

The final attempt of the Qing to rally their dynastic forces was a potentially effective mix of political, military, and economic reform: there were experiments in constitutional government on Western models, efforts at rearming and reorganizing the army along Western lines, and a move to gain a stronger hold over China's economy by developing a centralized railway network. Yet the combination, instead of bringing stability, brought confrontations and new layers of misunderstanding. The constitutional assemblies established in each province provided a focus for criticisms of the Qing and for the emergence of local interests. The vision of a tough, modernized army under skilled Manchu direction could not but be threatening to Chinese nationalists dreaming of their own future independence from the Qing. And the government's attempts to centralize railways and use foreign loans to do so angered provincial investors and patriots alike. When these flames of dissent were skillfully fanned by radical leaders and their impatient followers, the Qing found its foundations seriously undermined.

Helpless in the face of a military mutiny that erupted in late 1911, the Manchus saw no choice by early 1912 but to abdicate their power and declare the Qing dynasty at an end. There remained a crucial vacuum at the center of the Chinese state and no specially talented leaders able to fill it, only various groupings with rival ideologies and claims. The legacy of dynastic collapse was not a confident new republic, but a period of civil war and intellectual disorder that, tragically for the Chinese people, was even harsher than the period that had followed the fall of the Ming 268 years before. Yet amid the confusion, the dreams for a strong China held out by statecraft thinkers, self-strengtheners, constitutional reformers, and revolutionaries were never wholly eclipsed. The constructive aspect of the last century of Qing rule was that the idea of China's greatness was not allowed to die.

CHAPTER 7

The First Clash with the West

The Response of China's Scholars

Even before the death of Emperor Qianlong in 1799, Confucian scholars were becoming aware of the severity of the problems confronting the dynasty, both domestic and foreign. From within the *kaozheng* tradition of evidential research new trends began to emerge. Several Chinese scholars began to plead with their fellows to pay more attention to current needs and administrative problems; others began to speculate boldly on China's future and to wonder if, in the Confucian tradition itself, elements encouraging change could not be found; yet others thought that the *kaozheng* school was growing sterile and formalistic, and they worked to develop a new political focus for their writings.

Still it remained dangerous for scholars even to hint at criticism of the ruling Qing. One scholar who learned this was Hong Liangji. A friend of many *kaozheng* scholars, a member of the *Four Treasuries* compilation staff, and a tenacious examination taker who failed the top-level *jinshi* exams four times before finally passing in 1790 at the age of forty-four, Hong spent three years as inspector of education in Guizhou province, which enabled him to add intimate knowledge of the distant southwest to his ongoing analysis of political factions in the capital. In a series of essays written in the 1790s, he discussed a number of problems facing China. One of these was unchecked population growth and the difficulties it would cause as it outraced China's productive capacity. Hong also addressed the growth of luxury in the cities, the spread of corruption in local government, and the problems attendant on the attempts to suppress the White Lotus and other rebels. These essays were not censored, but when, in 1799, Hong ventured

to criticize the policies of the just-deceased emperor Qianlong and his favorite Heshen, Hong was promptly sentenced to death on a charge of "extreme indecorum." Only the personal intervention of the new emperor Jiaqing (ruled 1799–1820)* commuted the sentence to exile in Ili, a barren settlement in China's far northwest.

As if conscious that Hong had true insights into the difficulties facing China, Emperor Jiaqing, who had been investigating the web of corruption surrounding Heshen and his clique, pardoned Hong altogether in 1800, and Hong returned to a life of scholarship and writing in Anhui. Hong died in 1809, but the kind of probing yet practical work for which he had become known was continued by many others. One of the best known was He Changling, who compiled a massive collection of documents on Qing statecraft. This was not just a theoretical work, but one that included the finest memorials of earlier and contemporary Qing administrators, and ranged widely over such fields as personnel evaluation, salaries, banditry, taxes, the *baojia* mutual security system, stipends for military bannermen, granaries and famine relief, salt monopolies, currency, folk religions, and flood control. The model for He's statecraft compendium was a collection produced in the late Ming by emulators of the Donglin Society activists. When the full edition of He's work appeared in 1827, many contemporaries read its descriptions with a real sense of urgency about a faltering dynasty.

He Changling was himself not just an exponent of statecraft thinking, but also an administrator of experience and insight. It is ironic that at just the same time that Hegel was discussing China's rejection of the sea, He Changling was trying to develop an elaborate plan to circumvent the decaying Grand Canal system by transporting government grain supplies from central and southern China to the north by sea. In 1826, on his advice, 4.5 million bushels of rice were shipped successfully in this way, on a fleet of over 1,500 junks. But He's plan was soon canceled, mainly in response to the vested interests of those who worked on the Grand Canal system. Had it been allowed to continue, the plan might have led to considerable growth of China's commercial ocean shipping.

Other scholars were seeking a theoretical justification for change. One of these was Gong Zizhen, born in 1792 to the family of a wealthy scholar-official in the beautiful Zhejiang city of Hangzhou. Initially Gong was in many ways a mainstream scholar of his time; he was involved in the training and scholarship needed for evidential research, and was drawn to the

*Jiaqing technically began his reign in 1796 when his father abdicated; but, as we saw above, Qianlong did not relinquish power until he died in 1799.

early commentaries and texts studied by advocates of the "Han Learning" school. But his critical feelings about Chinese society and government led him particularly to one set of documents, the Gongyang commentaries on the Confucian Classic *The Spring and Autumn Annals.* These commentaries were unlike most Chinese historical texts, which seemed to imply a cyclical view of history and thus to preclude any linear conception of "progress" in China, as European critics had pointed out. The Gongyang commentaries instead posited a genuine theory of historical development through a sequence of three ages: an age of chaos, an age of ascending peace, and a final period of universal peace.

Gong Zizhen was an emotionally complex and cantankerous man who in some ways echoed the behavior patterns of the early Qing "eccentrics": he paid no attention to dress or deportment, wrote wild calligraphy, consorted with all social classes, gambled recklessly, and insulted his elders. Yet the range of his social commentary was even wider than Hong Liangji's had been. Not only did Gong attack official corruption, court rituals such as the kowtow, and the clichés of the state examination system, he also underlined the sense that China was currently in the lowest of the three epochs—the age of chaos—with his criticisms of the judicial system, the unequal distribution of wealth, foot-binding of women, opium smoking, and all trade with foreigners.

On the redistribution of wealth, Gong was eloquent. In some forgotten early period, he wrote, rulers and subjects had been like guests at a feast to which all have contributed and in which all share alike. But in the Shang and Zhou dynasties (some three thousand years ago), "it was as if people were sitting around a bowl of soup; the rulers filled a dish as their share, the ministers used a large spoon, the ordinary people a small one." Pursuing the metaphor, Gong pointed to the development of a Chinese society in which those with large and small spoons began to attack each other, while the ruler tried to appropriate the entire kettle. Not surprisingly, the kettle "often dried up or toppled over." Now the time had come once again to spoon things out fairly.

> [For] when the wealthy vie with each other in splendor and display while the poor squeeze each other to death; when the poor do not enjoy a moment's rest while the rich are comfortable; when the poor lose more and more while the rich keep piling up treasures; when in some ever more extravagant desires awaken, and in others an ever more burning hatred; when some become more and more arrogant and overbearing in their conduct, and others ever more miserable and pitiful until gradually the most perverse and curious customs arise, bursting forth as though from a hundred springs and impossible to stop,

> all of this will finally congeal in an ominous vapor which will fill the space between heaven and earth with its darkness.[1]

If scholars like Gong could move from an interest in evidential research via the study of the new texts to a blunt form of social criticism, others took a more indirect route. One of China's greatest satiric novels, *Flowers in the Mirror,* was written during the critical years between 1810 and 1820. Its author, Li Ruzhen, was a conventionally educated Confucian scholar from Peking whose first intellectual passion was for phonetics. But the crises of his times led Li to re-examine not only the world of philosophy and its relation to politics, but also the particularly sensitive question of the relationship between the sexes. In central sections of his novel, he presented a world in which all conventional gender roles were completely reversed. In a chapter entitled "Country of the Women," it is the man who must taste the life of humiliation, pain, and subjugation as he has his ears pierced with needles, endures the agony of binding his feet, and spends hours over his make-up to please his female lords. Although other Chinese writers had toyed with such ideas before, no one had pursued them as vigorously as Li, and surely few Qing men could have read of the travails of the merchant Lin without at least a shudder of sympathy for their pain-racked female contemporaries:

> In due course, his feet lost much of their original shape. Blood and flesh were squeezed into a pulp and then little remained of his feet but dry bones and skin, shrunk, indeed, to a dainty size. Responding to daily anointing, his hair became shiny and smooth, and his body, after repeated ablutions of perfumed water, began to look very attractive indeed. His eyebrows were plucked to resemble a new moon. With blood-red lipstick, and powder adorning his face, and jade and pearl adorning his coiffure and ears, Merchant Lin assumed, at last, a not unappealing appearance.[2]

Li's sense of social dislocation must have been common among scholars living in Jiaqing's reign who found it difficult to pass the state examinations or to find a job. Despite the swelling numbers of educated men in early nineteenth-century China, the government still refused to increase examination quotas or enlarge the size of the bureaucracy. If these scholars had no private incomes, no interest in reform, no satiric power, and no great artistic talent, their lives took on a certain melancholy. One such man, Shen Fu, in a brief and poignant memoir written around 1807 when he was in his forties, gives a haunting picture of what it was like to be an educated Chinese without prospects at this time. Born in Suzhou in the middle of Qianlong's reign, Shen had drifted through a number of roles as part-time

scholar, part-time merchant, part-time secretary. His memoirs, appropriately entitled *Six Records from a Floating Life,* show him wandering around China in search of patrons, completely subordinate to his dictatorial father or the whims of various short-term employers.

Not that Shen's life was entirely somber. He saw something of the world on his business trips, even traveling as far south as Canton. He had a loving wife, his companion for twenty-three years until her death, with whom he shared aesthetic, sensual, and culinary joys. She was a good poet, imaginative and gentle, and did everything she could to stretch their small and erratic income. Shen's portrayal of their life together shows that it was indeed possible to have a close and affectionate marriage despite the rigorous views of the superiority of husband to wife—and the legal and philosophical justifications for that superiority—that had become part of the Confucian tradition. Ultimately, however, the couple were worn down by their poverty and his failures, though to the last Shen could not understand why fate did not allow them to be happier. "Why is it that there are sorrows and hardships in this life?" he asked. "Usually they are due to one's own fault, but this was not the case with me. I was fond of friendship, proud of keeping my word, and by nature frank and straightforward."[3] But the society he was living in did not seem to reward those quiet, conventional virtues anymore.

China's Political Response

Apart from some British sparring to make sure Macao did not fall into French hands, China enjoyed a respite from foreign pressure during Jiaqing's reign. But the reason for this was not, as many Manchus and Chinese must have believed if they thought about the problem at all, because King George III had been awed into submission after receiving Emperor Qianlong's complacent edict of 1793. Rather, the explanation lay in the Napoleonic Wars in Europe, which left the British and French few resources for an expansive policy in east Asia at a time when no other enemies of China were powerful. When there was a similar situation a century later during the First World War of 1914–1918, Japan was able to exploit the absence of Westerners to develop its own territorial ambitions in China; but in the early nineteenth century, Japan's Tokugawa rulers were still pursuing a policy of isolation and had no interest in putting pressures on the Chinese.

Within a year of Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo in 1815, however, the British East India Company dispatched another embassy to China under the leadership of William Pitt, Lord Amherst. The Amherst mission, which

like Lord Macartney's sought expanded trading privileges, additional open harbors, and diplomatic residence in China, was received with considerable rudeness by the Qing. Amherst, exhausted by the long journey and by Chinese insistence that he perform the kowtow, was harried into attending an imperial audience before he had had a day's rest in Peking. When he requested more time to prepare, he was first threatened and then humiliatingly expelled from China.

Although this episode might seem to show that the Qing were unwilling to deal rationally with foreigners, in fact the political complexities of relations with the West were slowly becoming apparent to Qing officials. One indication of this was the growing importance that began to attach to Canton and to the officials who governed the Guangxi-Guangdong region. The sums of money circulating in the southeast because of the opium trade and the stockpiling of silks and teas for export in turn brought heightened official corruption and a rise in state revenues from transit dues and from taxation of legitimate foreign trade. The Cohong merchants were forced to make immense "donations" to the court and to local officials in order to assure continued imperial favor. Their base of security was always frail, and many of them ran up enormous debts by buying on credit from Western firms, or went bankrupt altogether, to be replaced by new—often reluctant—nominees. It is likely that the Cohong system lasted as long as it did because of the establishment of a mutual guarantee system known as the "Consoo fund," into which each major Hong merchant paid 10 percent of his trading profits, to be used as a cushion in times of emergency. Initially a secret shared only by the merchants, the fund was publicly supported by the Qing after 1780 with a 3 percent surcharge on foreign imports. By 1810, payments to the Qing government out of the Consoo fund reached a level of around 1 million taels a year.

As Canton became a major financial center, scholars were attracted there and academies began to proliferate. Ruan Yuan, the influential governor-general of the region from 1817 to 1826, founded the Xuehai Tang, the name literally meaning "Sea-of-Learning Hall." The academy became a famous center of scholarship, producing among other works a history of the Canton region. Ruan had earlier published a study on the important mathematicians of the Qing dynasty, among whom he included thirty-seven European missionaries who had lived in China and written treatises there; as this work circulated, it stimulated some interest in Western scientific accomplishments. Ruan Yuan also took a hard line against the opium trade. In one show of strength in 1821, he rounded up a number of opium dealers in Macao and tried to stop opium smoking in Canton.

The taking of a hard or soft line on the problem of opium addiction now

became a central issue in China's foreign affairs and domestic economy. Moreover the controversy began to affect the formation of factions and alliances within the metropolitan and the provincial bureaucracy. Jiaqing's successor, Emperor Daoguang, who reigned from 1821 to 1850, seems to have been a well-meaning but ineffective man, anxious to shore up imperial prestige that had been weakened since the Heshen episode in Qianlong's reign and never successfully restored by Jiaqing. The strict prohibitions that Jiaqing had imposed on opium dealing in 1800 and 1813 had not been effective, and Daoguang now sought a more successful alternative.

By 1825, Daoguang was aware from censors' reports that so much Chinese silver was going to pay for Western opium that the national economy was being damaged. Although this phenomenon was still mainly restricted to the southeast coastal regions of China, its effects were being felt far inland. A scarcity of silver meant that its price rose in relation to copper; since peasants used copper currency in their everyday transactions but still had to pay their taxes to the state in silver, a rise in the value of silver meant that the peasants were in fact paying steadily higher taxes, and that unrest was sure to follow. The situation worsened in 1834 when the British Parliament ended the East India Company's monopoly of trade with Asia. The action threw open the China trade to all comers, with a predictable rise in opium sales and in the numbers of foreign traders from elsewhere in Europe and from the United States. The crisis for China was exacerbated by a worldwide silver shortage that caused foreigners to use specie less frequently when buying Chinese goods.[4] In the 1820s, about 2 million taels of silver were flowing out of China each year; by the early 1830s, the annual figure was 9 million taels. A string of 1,000 copper cash had been roughly equivalent to 1 tael of silver in Qianlong's reign; in Shandong province, 1,500 copper cash was needed per tael in Jiaqing's reign, and 2,700 in Daoguang's.

The 1834 arrival in Canton of Lord Napier, the British government's first superintendent of trade in China following the end of the East India Company monopoly, led to new misunderstandings. Napier refused to conduct relations through the Cohong merchants, but wished to deal directly with the governor-general of the region. After the Qing pointed out to him that "the great ministers of the Celestial Empire are not permitted to have private intercourse by letter with outside barbarians,"[5] Napier forced his fleet up the Bogue to Canton; only his death from malarial fever prevented the outbreak of serious fighting. Opium imports meanwhile continued to rise, passing 30,000 chests in 1835 and 40,000 in 1838.

In 1836 the emperor Daoguang asked his senior officials to advise him on the opium issue. The advice was split. Those who advocated legalization

of the opium trade pointed out that it would end the corruption and blackmailing of officials and bring in a steady revenue through tariffs. It would also allow domestically grown Chinese opium—believed to be of better quality than Indian opium and cheaper to market—gradually to squeeze out that of the foreigners. Many officials, however, considered this view pernicious. They argued that foreigners were cruel and greedy, and that the Chinese did not need opium, domestic or foreign. They thought the prohibitions made by Emperor Jiaqing, far from being abandoned, should be pursued with even greater rigor.

In 1838, after evaluating the evidence, Emperor Daoguang made his decision. The opium trade must be stopped. To enforce this decree he chose a Fujian scholar-official of fifty-four named Lin Zexu, and ordered Lin to proceed to Canton as a specially appointed imperial commissioner to end the practice of the opium trade. On paper, the choice was a fine one. Lin was a *jinshi* degree holder of 1811 who had served in the Hanlin Academy—the prestigious government center for Confucian studies in Peking—and in a wide range of posts in Yunnan, Jiangsu, Shaanxi, and Shandong provinces. As governor-general of Hubei and Hunan, he had launched vigorous campaigns against opium smokers. One of his confidants was the outspoken scholar Gong Zizhen, who wrote in a letter to Lin that he believed all smokers of opium should be strangled, while pushers and producers should be beheaded. When Lin reached Canton in early March 1839, he took as his base not the Xuehai academy, which Ruan Yuan's successors had made a center for debating the merits of opium legalization, but a rival academy whose members were in favor of harsh repression of the opium trade.

To stamp out opium, Commissioner Lin (as the English came to call him) tried to mobilize all the traditional forces and values of the Confucian state. In public proclamations, he emphasized the health dangers of opium consumption and ordered all smokers to hand over their opium and pipes to his staff within two months. Educational officials were ordered to double-check whether any degree holders were opium smokers; all those who smoked were to be punished, and the rest were to be organized into five-man mutual-responsibility teams—like miniature *baojia* units—pledged to guarantee that no one in the group would smoke. In an ingenious adaptation of the traditional examination system, Lin summoned over 600 local students to a special assembly. There, in addition to being asked conventional questions on the Confucian classics, they were asked to name—anonymously, if they so chose—the major opium distributors and to suggest means of stopping their trade. Similar groups were formed among military and naval personnel. Lin also mobilized the local Confucian gentry, who

formed an expanded version of the *baojia* system to spot addicts in the community. By mid-May 1839, over 1,600 Chinese had been arrested and about 35,000 pounds of opium and 43,000 opium pipes had been confiscated; in the following two months, Lin's forces seized a further 15,000 pounds of the drug and another 27,500 pipes.

With the foreigners, Lin used a similar combination of reason, moral suasion, and coercion, and we know from numerous statements of his that he did not wish his policies to lead to armed conflict. He moved first against the Chinese Cohong merchants, interviewing them personally in March. Lin scolded them for posting false bonds in which they stated that certain prominent British merchants—such as William Jardine and James Innes—were not opium traders, when everyone knew they were. He ordered the merchants to pass on a command to the foreigners to hand over the thousands of chests of opium they had stored in the hulks at Lintin Island and elsewhere, and to sign pledges that they would cease all further trade in opium. Foreign residents in Canton were also told to state in writing the number of weapons they owned. Lin did not wish to move rashly against foreign ships with the weak navy at his disposal, but felt he could bring enough pressure to bear on the local foreign community to force them to yield. He did not offer compensation for the opium they were to hand over.

Lin also tried to reason with the foreigners, urging them to stick to their legitimate trade in tea, silk, and rhubarb (he believed this last to be essential to the health of foreigners) and to desist from harming the Chinese people. The Guangxi-Guangdong governor-general, with whom Lin cooperated closely, had already optimistically told the Westerners that "the smokers have all quit the habit and the dealers have dispersed. There is no more demand for the drug and henceforth no profit can be derived from the traffic." In a carefully phrased letter to Queen Victoria, Lin tried to appeal to her moral sense of responsibility. "We have heard that in your honorable nation, too," wrote Lin, "the people are not permitted to smoke the drug, and that offenders in this particular expose themselves to sure punishment. . . . In order to remove the source of the evil thoroughly, would it not be better to prohibit its sale and manufacture rather than merely prohibit its consumption?"[6] Opium in fact was *not* prohibited in Britain and was taken—often in the form of laudanum—by several well-known figures, Samuel Taylor Coleridge among them. Many Englishmen regarded opium as less harmful than alcohol, and Lin's moral exhortations fell on deaf ears.

Although they were begged to yield by the panic-stricken Hong merchants, the foreign traders first explained that they handled opium on consignment for others and so were not empowered to hand it over, and then offered to give up a token 1,000 chests. Lin, furious, ordered the arrest of

Lancelot Dent, one of the leading British opium traders. When the foreign community refused to yield up Dent for trial, on March 24, 1839, Lin ordered the Hoppo to stop foreign trade completely. All Chinese staff and servants were ordered to leave foreign employ; and the 350 foreigners in Canton, including the senior British official, Superintendent Elliot, were blockaded in their factories. Although food and water were available to the foreigners, and some extra goods and messages were smuggled in, it was a nerve-wracking time for them, made worse by the din of gongs and horns that Chinese troops kept up throughout the nights. After six weeks, when the foreigners had agreed to give up over 20,000 chests of opium and Commissioner Lin had taken delivery, the blockade was lifted and all but sixteen foreigners were allowed to leave.

Lin had carefully supervised the transfer of the foreign opium to Chinese hands, even living on a boat in April and May to be near the action and to prevent cheating and theft. He was now faced with the remarkable challenge of destroying close to 3 million pounds of raw opium. His solution was to order the digging of three huge trenches, 7 feet deep and 150 feet long. Thereafter, five hundred laborers, supervised by sixty officials, broke up the large balls of raw opium and mixed them with water, salt, and lime until the opium dissolved. Then, as large crowds of Chinese and foreigners looked on, the murky mixture was flushed out into a neighboring creek, and so reached the sea.

In a special prayer to the spirit of the Southern Sea, "you who wash away all stains and cleanse all impurities," Lin brooded over the fact that "poison has been allowed to creep in unchecked till at last barbarian smoke fills the market." He apologized to the spirit for filling its domain with this noxious mixture and, he wrote in his diary, advised it "to tell the creatures of the water to move away for a time, to avoid being contaminated." As to the foreigners who had lived through the blockade and now watched the solemn proceedings, Lin wrote in a memorial to Emperor Daoguang, they "do not dare show any disrespect, and indeed I should judge from their attitudes that they have the decency to feel heartily ashamed."[7]

Britain's Military Response

Commissioner Lin Zexu and Emperor Daoguang were conscientious, hard-working men who had fully internalized the Confucian structures of hierarchy and control. They seem to have believed that the citizens of Canton and the foreign traders there had simple, childlike natures that would respond to firm guidance and statements of moral principles set out in simple, clear

terms. The reality was unfortunately more complex, as plenty of their contemporaries saw. Even before the opium had been washed out to sea, one Chinese official had dared to point out that Lin had not really solved the opium problem, just one of its immediate manifestations. And a British opium trader, reflecting on his experiences during the blockade, noted dryly to a friend that the blockade "is even fortunate as adding to the account for which we have to claim redress."[8]

The buildup toward war between China and Britain was now gaining momentum. Some of the broader causes have been noted already: the social dislocations that began to appear in the Qing world, the spread of addiction, the growth of a hard-line mentality toward foreigners, foreign refusal to accept Chinese legal norms, changes in international trade structures, and the ending of Western intellectuals' admiration for China. Other elements were more precisely tied to the background of Lin's negotiations and had ramifications that he did not understand. One of these was the fact that the foreign dealers, having followed the Qing debates at court between 1836 and 1838, had grown convinced that opium consumption was about to be legalized in China. As a result, they had stockpiled large amounts and had placed additional orders with Indian growers. When the tough prohibitions of 1838 began to take effect, the market diminished and dealers found themselves dangerously oversupplied.

A second contributing factor was that the new British post of superintendent of foreign trade in China was held by a deputy of the British crown, not by an employee of the East India Company. If the Chinese crossed the superintendent, they would be insulting the British nation rather than a business corporation, a distinction they did not fully see. The superintendent, in turn, lacked clear legal powers over the British traders and had no control over nationals from other European nations or from the United States. He could, however, call directly on the aid of British armed forces and the Royal Navy in times of serious trouble.

The third element in the picture on the British side was a crucial combination of these previous two: British opium dealers, suffering from a glut of the unsold drug, had handed their supply over to Charles Elliot, Napier's successor as the superintendent of foreign trade, and Elliot, in turn, had handed it over to Lin Zexu. Thus, far from being properly "ashamed" as their opium drifted out to sea, the merchants could anticipate putting pressure on the British government to make sure that they got financial recompense.

The unfolding events in China were monitored as closely in England as time and distance allowed. In the early summer of 1839, Elliot had sent messages to London asking for assistance, and the foreign secretary, Lord

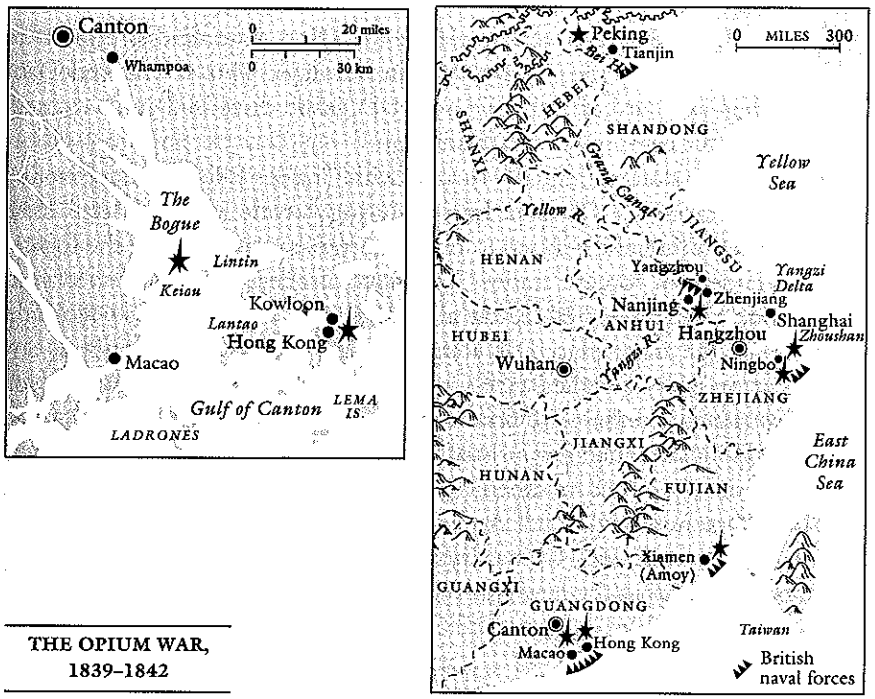
Palmerston, initially unsympathetic to British merchants who would not abide by Chinese laws, now swung in their favor. As Palmerston wrote in a letter addressed to "The Minister of the Emperor of China," he had heard "with extreme surprise" that Chinese officers had "committed violent outrages against the British Residents at Canton, who were living peaceably in that city, trusting to the good faith of the Chinese Government." Although the queen did not condone opium selling, she "cannot permit that her subjects residing abroad be treated with violence, and be exposed to insult and injustice."[9]

After news of the blockade and opium seizures reached England, China trade interests and chambers of commerce in the larger manufacturing areas launched intensive lobbying efforts to pressure Parliament into taking retaliatory action. The wealthy opium merchant William Jardine even traveled back to England from China to add his voice to the chorus, and to ensure that the moral objections to the opium traffic being raised by various Protestant missionary societies did not gain too wide an influence. China merchants had raised $20,000 for his lobbying expenses, and he was promised more if necessary, "as the magnitude of the object can well bear any amount of expense that may be considered necessary or desirable." He was also told "to secure, at a high price, the services of some leading newspaper to advocate the cause." Parliament did not, however, declare war on China. It merely authorized the dispatch of a fleet and the mobilization of further troops in India in order to obtain "satisfaction and reparation" and, if necessary, to "hold in custody the ships of the Chinese and their cargoes."[10] The total force, under the command of Charles Elliot's cousin, Admiral George Elliot, consisted of 16 warships carrying 540 guns, 4 newly designed armed steamers, 28 transports, and 4,000 troops, along with 3,000 tons of coal for the steamers and 16,000 gallons of rum for the men.

Lin Zexu, meanwhile, continued his cleansing of Guangdong province. Arrests and investigations of addicts and dealers went on apace, with opium now commanding "famine prices" of up to $3,000 a chest instead of the usual $500. When the British merchants refused to sign bonds pledging that they would not indulge in any opium traffic under penalty of Chinese law, Lin had them ousted from Macao as they had been from Canton. It was in response to this expulsion order that Charles Elliot inaugurated a new phase in east Asian history by settling his group on the almost deserted rocky island of Hong Kong. Trade in Canton by no means came to a standstill, since the Americans especially were delighted to profit from the new opportunity to operate as middlemen for the British. The American vice-consul Warren Delano let his countrymen sign bonds promising not to violate Chinese regulations. As one American merchant explained, "We

Yankees had no Queen to guarantee our losses"; and even if the Chinese closed other ports of access, he would continue "retreating step by step, but buying and selling just as long as I found parties to operate with."[11]

But even as the trade continued, Lin was fortifying the waterways into Canton, buying new cannon for the forts and immense chains to block the channel, and commencing the training and drilling of his forces. The British who had retreated to Hong Kong were harried by the local Chinese, who poisoned many wells and refused to sell the foreigners food. Armed clashes between British and Chinese war junks in Hong Kong harbor and in the Bogue outside Canton occurred in September and October 1839, with casualties on both sides. Chinese ships were sunk, and the possibilities of further negotiation faded. In a surprising gesture for Qing officials usually so wary of popular manifestations, Lin even encouraged mobilization of local "braves" against the British, who had grown even more unpopular since a group of drunken seamen had killed a Chinese villager on Kowloon, across from Hong Kong island, and Elliot had refused to hand the accused over to the Chinese courts. "Assemble yourselves together for consideration," ran one proclamation; "Purchase arms and weapons; join together



THE OPIUM WAR, 1839–1842

the stoutest of your villagers and thus be prepared to defend yourselves."[12]

The full British fleet under George Elliot arrived off Canton in June 1840. To Lin's chagrin they did not try to storm his new defenses, but contented themselves with leaving four ships to blockade the entrance to the harbor and sailing north with the bulk of their force. In July, the British blockaded Ningbo with two ships and seized the main town on the island of Zhoushan (Chusan) off the Zhejiang coast, from which they could interdict sea traffic to the Yangzi delta region. Leaving a garrison force on Zhoushan with a missionary-interpreter standing in for the Qing magistrate who had committed suicide, the fleet sailed on unopposed to the mouth of the Bei He (North River), near the Dagu forts that guarded the approaches to the city of Tianjin. Here, in August and September 1840, serious negotiations began with Qishan, the governor-general of the region, a senior Manchu, and a grand secretary trusted by Emperor Daoguang. Qishan persuaded the British to leave north China and return to Canton to complete the negotiations, for which he was lavishly praised by the emperor and named governor-general of Guangxi and Guangdong. Lin Zexu, who had been named to that post earlier in the year, was now dismissed for his inadequate policies and banished to Ili.

In January 1841 Qishan reached an agreement with the British in which he ceded up Hong Kong, agreed to pay $6 million* in indemnities, allowed the British direct official contacts with the Qing state, and promised to reopen the Canton trade to them within ten days. This so enraged Daoguang when he heard of it that he ordered Qishan dismissed and executed, a sentence later commuted to banishment.

Lord Palmerston was equally furious with Charles Elliot for not exacting *better* terms from the Chinese. In a blistering private letter of April 1841, he dismissed Elliot and refused to ratify the agreement, scolding the former superintendent of foreign trade: "You have disobeyed and neglected your instructions; you have deliberately abstained from employing, as you might have done, the force placed at your disposal; and you have without any sufficient necessity accepted terms which fall far short of those which you were instructed to obtain." Palmerston was especially angry that Elliot had given up Zhoushan, had not insisted on repayment for the opium destroyed, and had merely gotten modified rights over Hong Kong, "a barren island with hardly a house upon it." A new plenipotentiary, Sir Henry Pottinger, was named to deal with China. In his final instructions to Pottinger, Palmerston insisted that the new agreement must be with the emperor himself.

*The Mexican silver dollar was now so widely circulated that it was accepted as standard silver currency in China. The Chinese themselves used silver ingots, not coins.

"Her Majesty's Government cannot allow that, in a transaction between Great Britain and China, the unreasonable practice of the Chinese should supersede the reasonable practice of all the rest of mankind."[13]

With these new instructions, Pottinger reached China in August 1841 to find the situation even more volatile. There had been renewed fighting in the countryside around Canton, much of it by aroused bands of Chinese militia under local gentry leaders, and British troops had been killed and wounded. The British had responded by destroying the Bogue forts, sinking Chinese junks, razing part of the waterfront, and occupying sections of Canton. Although the British occupying troops subsequently withdrew from the city after Canton officials had paid them $6 million, there was no agreement about whether this sum was a "ransom" to save the city from sack, a response to the sum named in Elliot's earlier convention with Qishan, or recompense for the opium destroyed two years before.

In late August 1841, Pottinger proceeded north with the British fleet, seizing Xiamen (Amoy) and Ningbo, and recapturing Zhoushan. When reinforcements reached him from India in late spring 1842, he launched a campaign to force Qing capitulation by cutting China's main river and canal communications routes. The British captured Shanghai in June and took Zhenjiang in July, even though the Manchus fought with savage desperation. Scores of Qing officers committed suicide with their families when defeat was certain. The traffic on the Grand Canal and lower Yangzi was now blocked. Pottinger, ignoring Qing requests for a parley, pushed on to the great city and former Ming dynasty capital of Nanjing, taking up attack positions outside the walls on August 5. The Qing quickly sued for peace, and on August 29 the terms of the Treaty of Nanjing, translated into Chinese, were signed by the Manchu commissioners and the governor-general of Liangjiang.* Daoguang accepted the treaty in September, and Queen Victoria ratified it at the end of December.

Before turning to the precise stipulations of this treaty and its supplements, it is worth re-emphasizing that in military terms the Opium War of 1839–1842 marked an important historical moment. It was not only the most decisive reversal the Manchus had ever received, it also saw innovations in Western military technology and tactics. The emergence of the steam-driven vessel as a considerable force in naval battles was perhaps the most important of these, as shown by the campaign record of the British ship *Nemesis*. The *Nemesis* was an uncoppered paddle-wheel iron ship that used sails in favorable winds and six boilers fired by wood or coal for making seven to eight knots even in heavy seas. Drawing only five feet, the ship

*The name of the administrative unit comprising the three provinces of Jiangsu, Anhui, and Jiangxi.

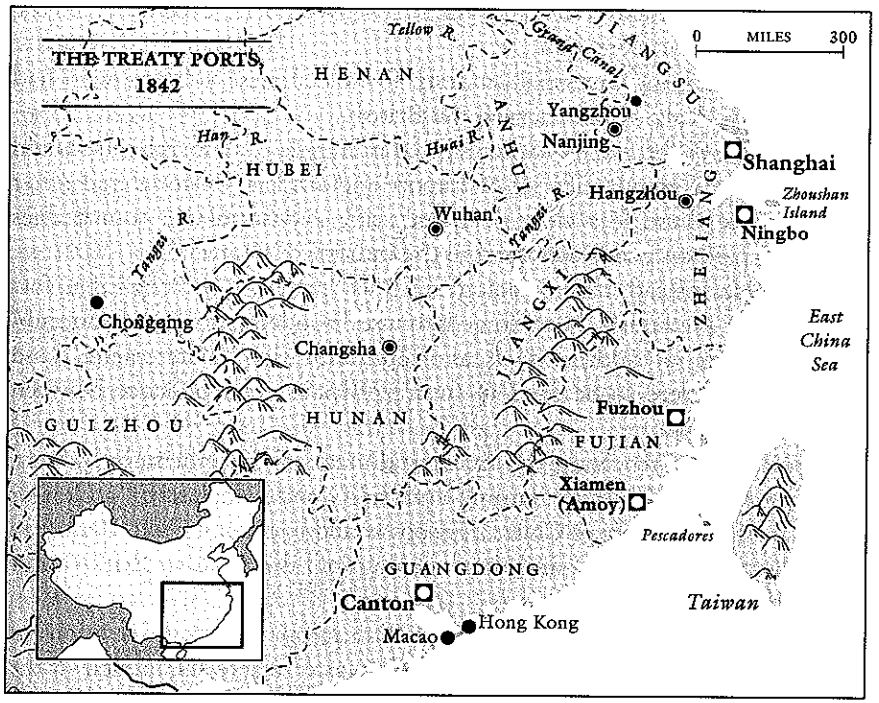
could operate in shallow coastal waters in virtually any wind or tidal condition. In the Canton Bogue campaigns, the *Nemesis* roamed the shallows firing grapeshot, heavy shells, and explosive rockets, grappling and towing junks, ferrying troops, and towing the sailing vessels on calm days. In the Shanghai campaign, the ship towed the men-of-war with their heavy guns into firing range on the city and served as a transport that could unload the British directly onto the docks. Well before the war's end, new steamers of similar design were being sent to China's waters; if the British could only keep enough fuel stockpiled, they had discovered a formidable supplement to their powers.

The Qing, however, were not merely passive targets of Western technology and fire power. While still in Canton, Commissioner Lin had deputed a special task force of scholars to furnish him with all the information they could on Western nations, culled mainly from foreign publications in Canton and Singapore. He had also asked an American missionary to translate some brief passages of international law for him. Moreover, as the British proceeded with their campaigns in 1842, they found much evidence of the speed with which the Qing officials were trying to respond to the West's new technology. In Xiamen, for instance, they found a nearly completed replica of a British two-decker man-of-war with thirty guns; it was almost ready to sail, and work on several other similar vessels was well under way. In Wusong, they discovered five new Chinese paddle-wheel boats armed with newly cast brass guns. In Shanghai, they seized sixteen new, beautifully made eighteen-pound ship's guns, perfect in detail down to the sights cast on the barrels and the pierced vents for flintlocks. All were mounted on sturdy wooden trucks with iron axles.[14] At least some people in China had clearly found the barbarian challenge to be a stimulus as well as an outrage.

The New Treaty System

The Treaty of Nanjing was signed on August 29, 1842, aboard Her Majesty's ship *Cornwallis* moored in the Yangzi River, and ratified in Hong Kong ten months later after formal approval by Queen Victoria and Emperor Daoguang. It was the most important treaty settlement in China's modern history. The treaty contained twelve main articles that cumulatively had significant ramifications for China's ideas of commerce and society:

Article 1. Stipulated peace and friendship between Britain and China, and "full security and protection for their persons and property within the dominions of the other."



Article 2. Determined the opening of five Chinese cities—Canton, Fuzhou, Xiamen, Ningbo, and Shanghai—to residence by British subjects and their families "for the purpose of carrying on their mercantile pursuits, without molestation or restraint." It also permitted the establishment of consulates in each of those cities.

Article 3. "The Island of Hong Kong to be possessed in perpetuity" by Victoria and her successors, and ruled as they "shall see fit."

Article 4. Payment of $6 million by the Qing "as the value of the opium which was delivered up in Canton."

Article 5. Abolition of the Canton Cohong monopoly system and permission at the five above-named ports for British merchants "to carry on their mercantile transactions with whatever persons they please." The Qing were to pay $3 million in settlement of outstanding Cohong debts.

Article 6. Payment to the British of a further $12 million "on account of the expenses incurred" in the recent fighting, minus any sums already received "as ransom for cities and towns in China" since August 1, 1841.

Article 7. The $21 million stipulated in Articles 4 through 6 were to be paid in four installments before the end of 1845, with a 5 percent interest charge per annum on late payments.

Article 8. Immediate release of any prisoners who were British subjects, whether Indian or European.

Article 9. An unconditional amnesty for all Chinese subjects who had resided with, dealt with, or served the British.

Article 10. At the five treaty ports listed in Article 2, all merchants should pay "a fair and regular Tariff of Export and Import Customs and other Dues." Once those fees were paid, only fair and stipulated transit dues should be paid on goods conveyed to the interior of China.

Article 11. Instead of terminology such as "petition" or "beg" that foreigners had previously been forced to use, nonderogatory and nonsubordinate terms of address such as "communication," "statement," and "declaration" were to be used in future official correspondence between Britain and China.

Article 12. On receiving the first installment of the indemnity money, British forces would leave Nanjing and the Grand Canal, and "no longer molest or stop the trade of China." Troops would continue to hold Zhoushan until all money was paid and the "opening [of] the Ports to British merchants be completed."[15]

Apart from the stipulation of a $6 million payment as compensation for the opium destroyed in 1839, the narcotic was nowhere mentioned in the treaty, nor was it discussed in the supplementary tariff treaty of 1843, which fixed the rates for tea, silk, cotton, woolens, ivory, metals, and spirits. Opium was again ignored in the complicated procedures agreed to for conducting, supervising, and protecting foreign trade in the five ports. In private talks with the chief Manchu negotiator Qiying, Pottinger mentioned the British hope that the Qing would allow a legalized opium on a barter basis—to end the outflow of silver. When Qiying replied that he dared not raise the question, Pottinger said that he, too, had been ordered not to press the matter.

The clauses of the Treaty of Nanjing and its supplements were studied carefully by other powers. In 1843, President John Tyler acted on behalf of the United States and its considerable China-trade interests by dispatching Caleb Cushing—a congressman from coastal Massachusetts, where many of America's wealthiest China merchants lived—to China as minister plenipotentiary. Arriving at Macao in February 1844, Cushing at once began negotiations with Qiying, who had been promoted to governor-general of Guangxi and Guangdong. Despite tensions caused by the death of a Chinese who had tried to assault a group of Americans (the jurisdictional issue raised brought back unhappy memories of the *Emily* and Terranova), Qiying and Cushing moved rapidly to the signing of a treaty between the two countries, called the Treaty of Wanghia after the small village near Macao where it was concluded.

The American treaty followed the same lines as the British, but was much longer and had a number of important additions. Article 17, for instance, was of great potential importance to American Protestant missionaries eager to work in China, for it gave Americans in the five treaty ports rights to hire sites for the construction of "hospitals, churches, and cemeteries." Article 18 ended a long-standing attempt by Chinese rulers to prevent foreigners from learning the Chinese language fluently; it allowed United States citizens "to employ scholars and people of any part of China . . . to teach any of the languages of the Empire." The jurisdictional question was settled by the statement in Article 21 that Americans committing crimes in China could be tried and punished only by the consuls or other duly empowered American officials "according to the laws of the United States." Rejecting Britain's evasions, Article 33 stated that any Americans "who shall trade in opium or any other contraband" would be "dealt with" by the Chinese, without being entitled to protection from the United States government. Finally, Article 34 stated that in matters of "commerce and navigation," the treaty should be reviewed in twelve years' time.[16]

In October 1844, the French followed with their own treaty, modeled closely on the American agreement. Their main additions were to stipulate that if, in times of trouble, no French consul were present, French nationals might appeal to the consuls of any friendly power; and to re-emphasize the principle of extraterritoriality—the right to be judged by one's own national law in criminal cases on Chinese soil—with even greater force than had Caleb Cushing. Yielding to French pressure, Qiying obtained an imperial rescript granting full toleration to the Catholics and reversing Yongzheng's edicts against missionaries; in a supplementary proclamation of 1845, Qiying extended the same rights to Protestants.

So within six years of Lin Zexu's appointment as imperial commissioner, the Qing, instead of defending their integrity against all comers, had lost control of vital elements of China's commercial, social, and foreign policies. A host of other nations followed where Britain, the United States, and France had shown the way. The British did not have to worry about these other negotiations, because any new concessions offered up by the Chinese came also to them. In an ingenious article—number 8—to their own supplementary treaty of 1843, they had stipulated a "most-favored nation" clause: "Should the Emperor hereafter, from any cause whatever, be pleased to grant additional privileges or immunities to any of the subjects or citizens of such foreign countries, the same privileges or immunities will be extended

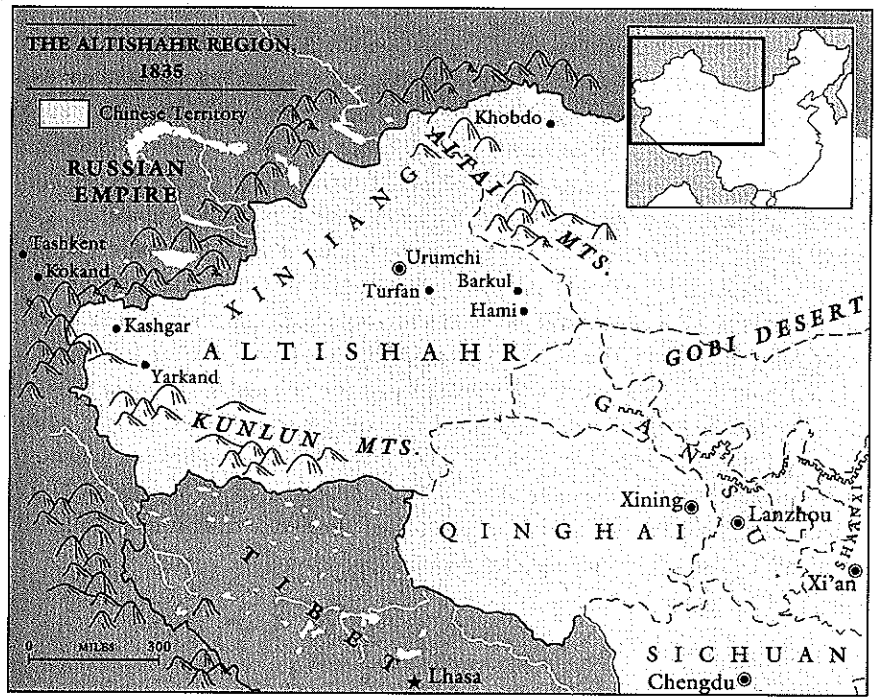
to and enjoyed by British subjects." The Qing had agreed to this clause in the belief that it would limit foreign pressures. But in fact this clause prevented the Qing from forming alliances or playing off one foreign power against another, seriously hampering China's foreign-policy initiatives.

Surprisingly, however, the short-term commercial results of the Opium War turned out to be disappointing for the British and most other foreign merchants. Although the five treaty port cities had been carefully chosen, trade at Fuzhou and Ningbo grew so slowly that there was talk of trying to swap them for other cities with better prospects. By 1850 only nineteen adult foreigners were living in Ningbo; at Fuzhou the total was ten, of whom seven were missionaries. Prospects were not much better in Xiamen, where trade had traditionally been conducted with Taiwan or the Philippines and was difficult to integrate with European or American needs. Only traffic in human labor brought some prosperity when British ships began to transport coolie laborers to work in the sugar plantations of Cuba.

Canton had held the promise of enormous profits once the Cohong monopoly was abolished and trade was thrown open to all, but so strong was the local antipathy to the British and other foreigners that the Westerners found it impossible to establish residence and to conduct business or open their consulates in the city. The 1840s and early 1850s were marked by constant rioting and a bitter cycle of anti-British attacks by rural militias and urban mobs that were met by British reprisals and reciprocal atrocities. The Qing court condoned the anti-British violence since it could not afford to alienate Cantonese sensibilities any further.

Of the five new treaty ports, only Shanghai became a boom town when extensive "concession" areas of marshy and largely uninhabited countryside were made available for British, French, and other foreign settlements. By 1850, with the land drained and the river banks shored up, there were over one hundred merchants in residence there, supported by consular staffs, five physicians, and seventeen missionaries, many of whom were married. Whereas 44 foreign ships had entered the port in 1844, the number for 1849 was 133, and by 1855 it was 437. The silk trade expanded prodigiously, reaching a value of over $20 million by the mid-1850s. Opium, still illegal, was coming in at a rate of at least 20,000 chests a year.

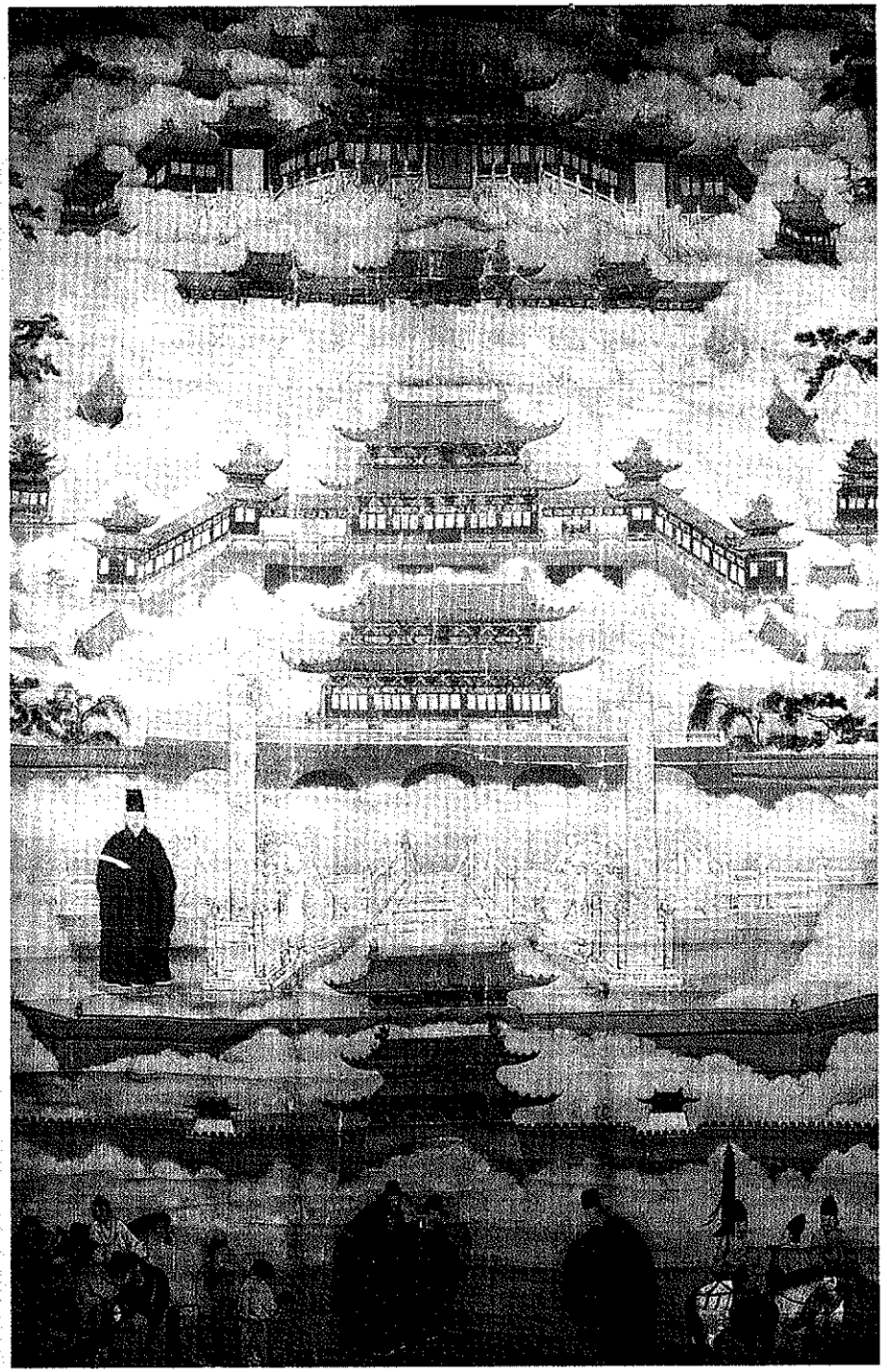
The Qing attitude to the new treaty-port structure was ambiguous. Qiying's view, shared by many at court, was that the Westerners' prior motivation was commercial greed and that they could probably be stalled on most other demands if their trade kept moving. In their confidence about this and their feeling that even concessions such as extraterritoriality were insignificant, both Qiying and his emperor were probably drawing on the only near precedent they possessed—namely, the Qing handling of foreign



policy in central Asia during the 1830s. In 1835, for example, the Qing had allowed the aggressive khanate of Kokand the right to station a political resident in Kashgar and commercial residents in Yarkand and other key trading cities. This political resident had both consular and judicial powers over other foreigners in the Altishahr region, and the right to collect customs dues on goods that other foreigners brought into the area. Furthermore, the Qing agreed that Muslims would pay only half the rate paid by non-Muslims in tariffs (2½ percent instead of 5 percent) and that goods exported to Kokand from Altishahr were to be tax-free. The Qing apparently found that making such concessions, far from being an abandonment of sovereignty, was in fact a cheap and simple way of solving the Kokand khans' endless, bellicose demands for further trading privileges. Several of the senior Qing officials who took part in these negotiations—or were heroes of the wars that preceded them—were posted to the southeast coast in the late 1830s or early 1840s, suggesting that the Qing were indeed seeking continuities in policy making between China's far western and its southeastern frontiers.[17]

As he might have done with unruly potentates in central Asia, Qiying

continued to woo Sir Henry Pottinger well after the Nanjing treaty and its supplements had been signed: he bestowed the status of honorary adoption on Pottinger's son, exchanged keepsakes (including pictures of their wives), fed sugarplums with his own hands into the astonished plenipotentiary's mouth, and created a new word—*yin-di-mi-te* in Chinese—to express his insistence that Pottinger was his "intimate" friend. But to the emperor Daoguang, Qiying confided that this was his personal way of "subduing and conciliating" the British. He was not going to "fight with them over empty names"; instead, he would "pass over these small matters and achieve our larger scheme."[18] The trouble with this analysis was that to the British and other foreign powers, the hard-won treaty stipulations were far from being "empty names." They were the very stuff of international and commercial life. The fact that neither Qiying nor his emperor could accept this is, with hindsight, not surprising. For to the Manchus the "larger scheme" was now nothing less than the survival of the Qing dynasty itself. To those holding power in China, the mounting pressures of domestic discontent made all problems of foreign policy appear, indeed, peripheral.

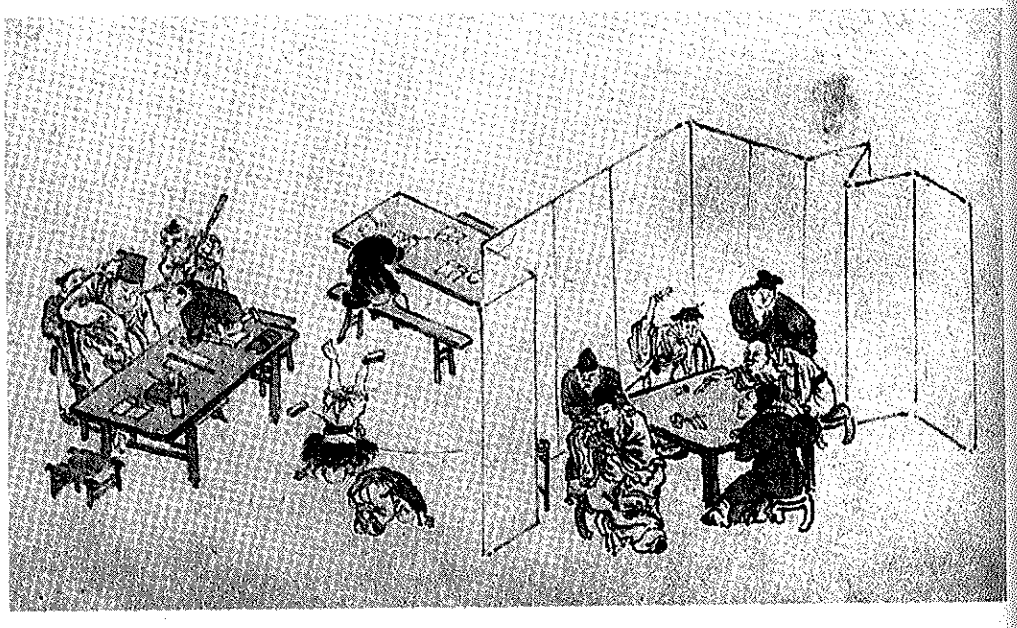


Zhu Bang, *Portrait of an Official in Front of the Forbidden City* (c. 1500)

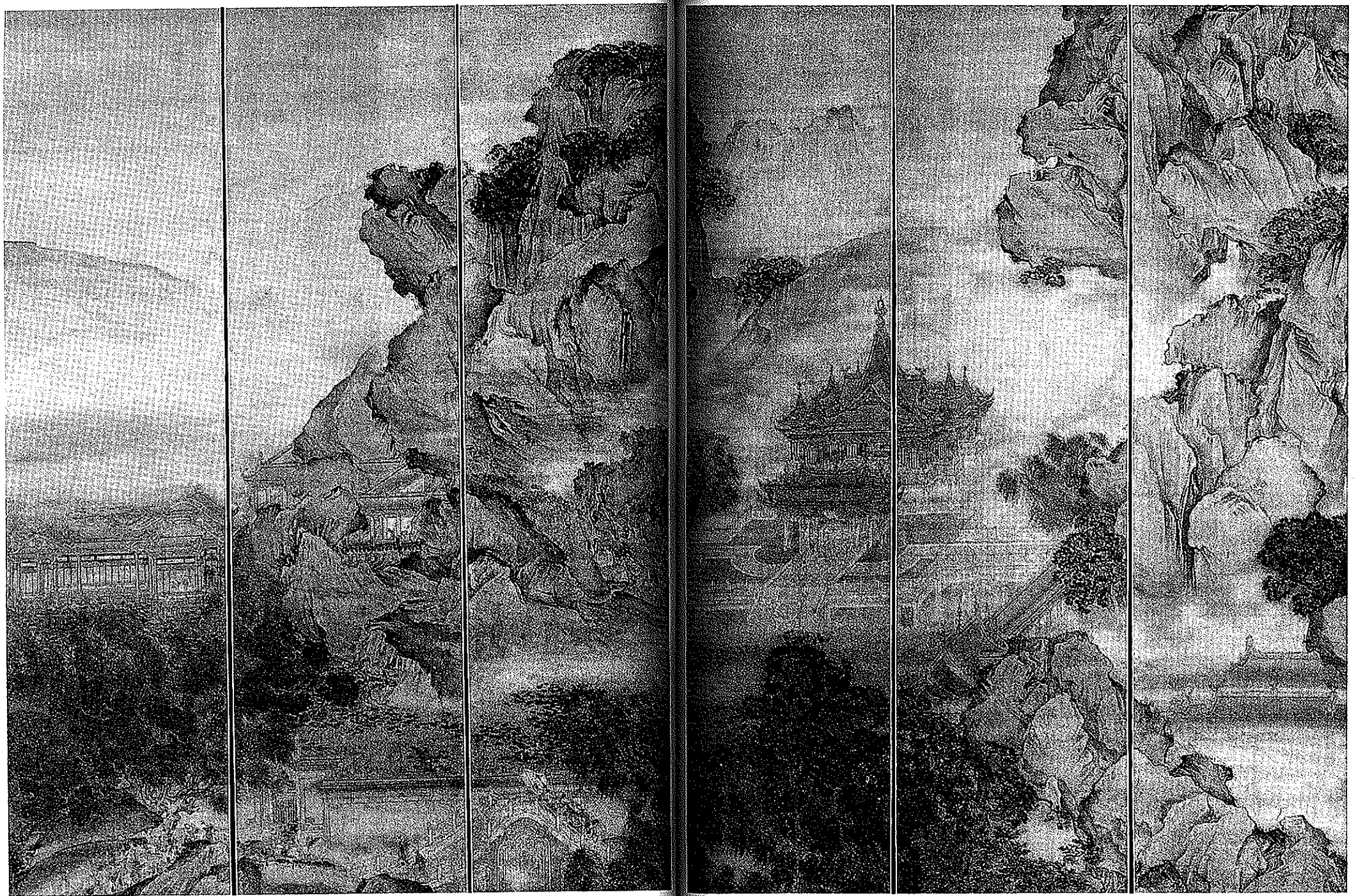
Xie Shichen (1487–c. 1561),
The Yueyang Tower

Xu Wei (1521–1593),
Flowers of the Four Seasons

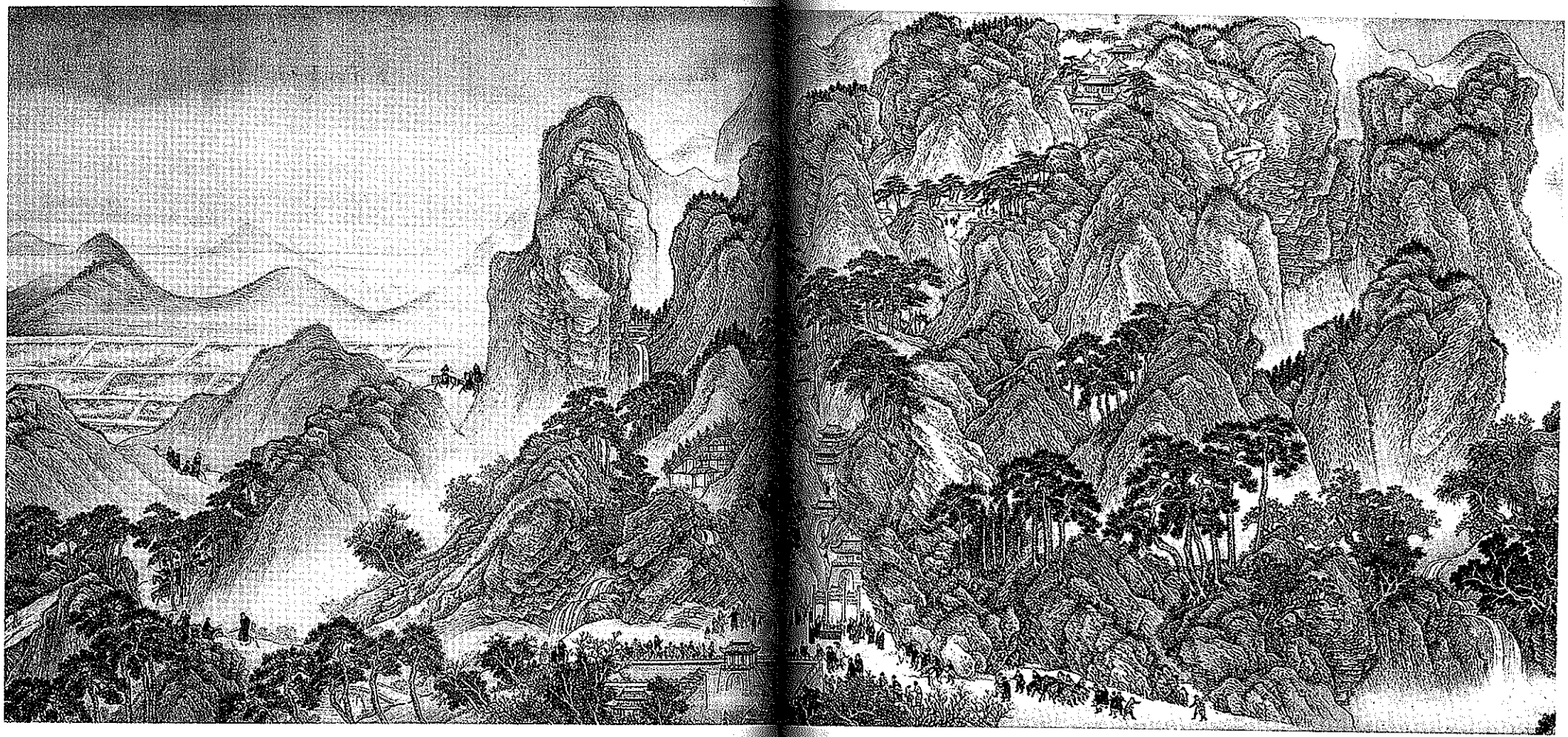
Zhang Hong,
Various Entertainments (1638)



Xiao Yuncong, *Reading in Snowy Mountains* (1652)

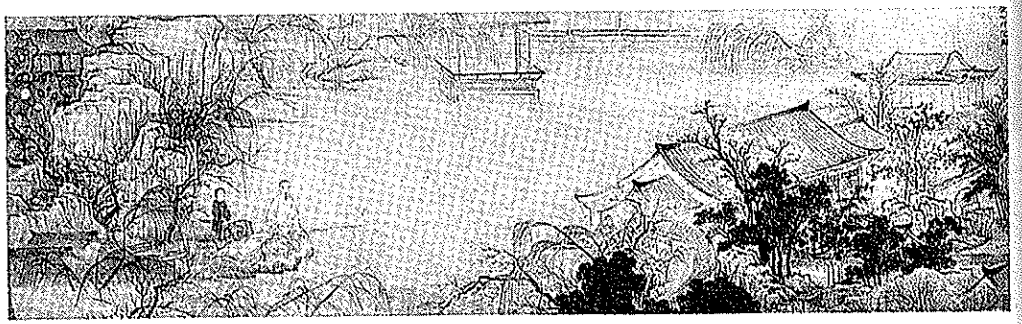


Yuan Jiang, *The Jiucheng Palace* (1691)



Wang Hui (1632–1717) and assistants,
The Kangxi Emperor's Second Tour of the South (1691–1695)

Shitao (1642–1707),
The Peach-Blossom Spring

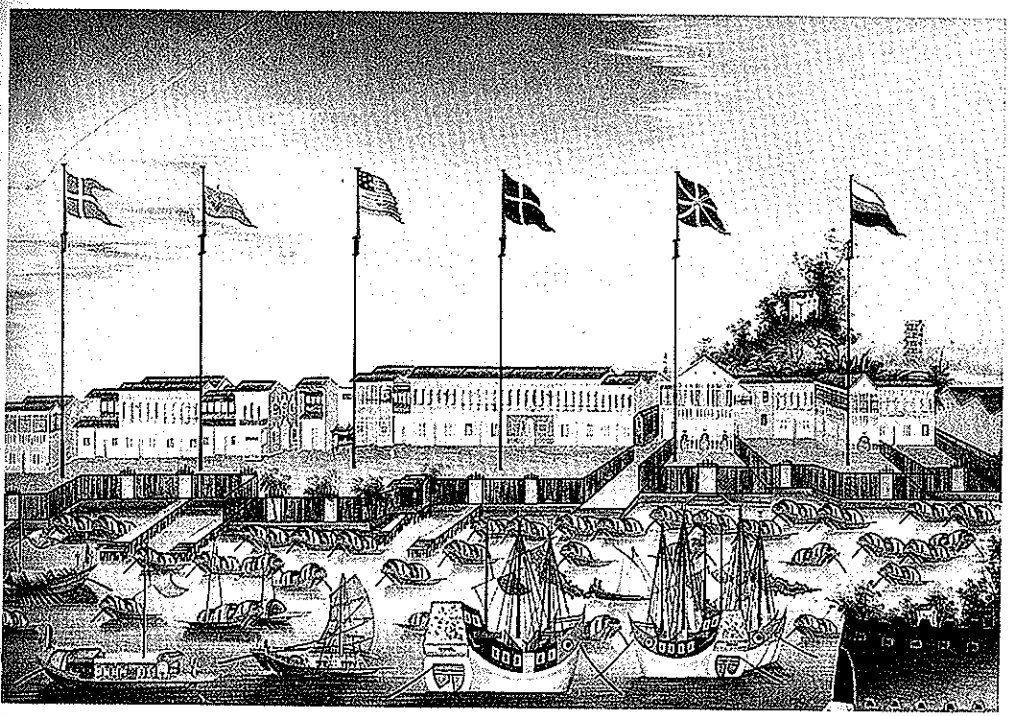


Yu Zhiding (1647–c. 1713),
Thatched House at Huangshan

Giuseppe Castiglione (Lang Shining, 1688–1766) and collaborators, *Mulan I: The Emperor Qianlong, Followed by His Troops, Enters a Town*

Giuseppe Castiglione (Lang Shining) and collaborators, *Mulan II: The Camp*

Giuseppe Castiglione (Lang Shining), *In My Heart There Is the Power to Reign Peaceably,* detail of Emperor Qianlong (1736)



Anonymous, *Canton Factories* (c. 1780)

Ren Xiong (1820–1857),
Self-Portrait

CHAPTER 8

The Crisis Within

Social Dislocation North and South

The damaging defeats inflicted on China by the British during the first half of the nineteenth century were part cause and part consequence of China's own growing domestic instability. Many of the elements of that instability have been discussed above: the growing population that put new pressures on the land, the outflow of silver, the difficulty the educated elite found in gaining official employment, the mounting incidences of opium addiction, the waning abilities of the regular banner armies, the demoralization in the bureaucracy caused by Heshen and his faction, the wide-scale suffering that accompanied the spread and eventual suppression of the White Lotus rebellion.

Other abuses, already apparent in the late eighteenth century, became more serious in the early nineteenth century. The enormous bureaucracies that allegedly managed the Yellow River dike works and the Grand Canal grew ineffective, swelling their own ranks with sinecure appointments and using for their own private purposes the government money allotted to them. The consequent silting up of stretches of the Grand Canal, and the failure to regulate water levels on the Yellow and Huai rivers at the points where they were crossed by the Grand Canal, crucially weakened the system of government rice transport from the south. That disruption, in turn, led to trouble with the workers along the canal who pulled the government barges for a living; many of these workers now banded into their own secret associations, both to protect their jobs and to tyrannize the local farming communities among whom they lived.

The massive government system of salt distribution also became ineffective. Salt sales were, in theory, a government monopoly in which the Qing supervised salt production, either by seashore evaporation or from inland brine wells and salt mines, and then sold the produce to a small group of licensed merchants, each of whom transported the salt for sale to certain designated areas. By the early nineteenth century, inefficiencies and corruption in this system had led to a phenomenal rise in salt smuggling, which threatened to wreck the complex system. These economic and organizational problems spurred the growth of competing factions within the post-Heshen bureaucracy, as vested interests contended for profits and sought to recruit supporters into their own ranks. Many senior officials began to form their own bureaucratic subnetworks of clients and assistants, whose salaries they paid by further exploiting their own public sources of income.

During these same years of the early nineteenth century, there was also a great increase in local paramilitary or formally organized militia units led by local scholars or landlords who sought to protect their communities from marauding groups, whether of White Lotus rebels, of the jobless and the desperate, or of coastal or riverine pirates. In other areas, local leaders formed secret societies to spread esoteric religious doctrines and to defend themselves when the state proved incapable.

In much of China, one can say, private interests were encroaching on formerly governmental spheres, and the imperial system seemed incapable of reasserting its former powers. Emperor Jiaqing, who ruled China from 1799 to 1820, relied on rhetoric more than specific policies to cleanse his empire. His pleas for frugality on the part of his bureaucracy were poignant but did little to cut costs. And even though Heshen's cronies were effectively purged, other courtiers emerged and formed their own factions. Jiaqing and his son Daoguang (reigned 1821–1850) both promoted senior ministers who presented a purist view of the fundamental Confucian virtues, even if those ministers had nothing substantive to say about the many problems—domestic and foreign—that plagued the dynasty. By the end of Daoguang's reign, a series of popular uprisings began that were to last for twenty-three years and were almost to bring about the fall of the Qing dynasty.

But just as those uprisings must be seen in the context of China's foreign-policy crises, so must they be seen as the culminating stage in a pattern of protest that began with the White Lotus and continued through less dramatic but still significant crises in both north and south China. One such early nineteenth-century uprising in the north was led by Lin Qing in 1813. Lin was born in 1770, and his early life suggests a case study of the rootlessness endemic to that portion of Qing society that hovered just above the urban poverty line. His father was a clerk in Peking, and Lin Qing grew up in a village only a few miles from the capital. Lin, who had learned to read and write, took an apprenticeship in an herbal-medicine shop, but he worked at this trade for only a short period before being fired and becoming a night watchman. When his father died, Lin managed to get himself appointed clerk in his father's place; thereupon he embezzled some Grand Canal repair funds stored in his new office and used the money to open a tea shop. Gambling away the shop's profits, he moved north to Manchuria, where he held a construction job for a time. Still restless, he traveled south across China to visit a brother-in-law in the rich Yangzi delta city of Suzhou, where he worked first as attendant to a local grain official, then on the junior staff of a magistrate's office. He returned north, earning money as a coolie pulling grain boats up the Grand Canal. Back home near Peking, he ran a business selling songbirds.

Now equipped with some knowledge of the world, Lin Qing joined a religious sect that drew its beliefs from millenarian Buddhism, and he learned a number of mystical slogans. "Every day at dawn we pay respects to the sun and recite the sacred words," he told one of his early followers, a waiter at a local inn. "By doing this we can escape the dangers of fire, flood, and war, and if there should come a time of calamity and disorder, then we can use this opportunity to plan and organize the Great Undertaking."[1] The spirit he invoked with eight "sacred" characters was "The Eternal Progenitor in Our Original Home in the World of True Emptiness."

Local officials did not take such folk practices with great seriousness, and although Lin Qing was beaten in 1808 for too vociferously teaching his new views, in general he was left free to preach his doctrines as he chose. He slowly built a cell network of sect members and took over leadership of neighboring branch sects. Appearing to others as an adaptable, shrewd, well-traveled man who knew medicine and bureaucratic practice, Lin was able to inspire confidence in hundreds of local villagers and—more surprisingly—in a number of poverty-stricken Chinese bannermen and bondservants as well as eunuchs in Peking palace service. "He was very convincing," his nephew later told Qing officials. "He said that making contributions was the same as sowing seeds for future blessings and that in the future such gifts would be multiplied tenfold. So people believed and gave him money. I never saw him give any back."[2] Some of the promises were dramatic: 100 copper cash given to Lin brought a promise of 100 *mou* of land in the future, when the sect would triumph (100 *mou,* around 16 acres, represented a munificent estate to any poor north China peasant).

Growing more grandiose as he allied with other powerful leaders, Lin began to term himself the future Buddha, or Maitreya, sent by the Eternal

Mother to prepare his followers to survive the catastrophes of the coming *kalpa,* the new great cycle of human history. Rhymes recited by his followers seemed to suggest that an anti-Manchu element was also becoming stronger: "We wait only for the northern region to be returned to a Han emperor / Then all-that-is will again be under a single line."[3] By 1813, Lin Qing had laid plans to move on Peking and kill Emperor Jiaqing.

At this point the plot began to unravel: officials were warned of trouble by a suspicious lower degree holder from Shandong and by two fathers worried about their sons' involvement in the illegal sect. Arrests of some sectarians, interrogations under torture, and a number of sporadic but bitter clashes followed during that summer; late in 1813, the planned attack on the palace was launched by a handful of Lin's disciples, but it was a disastrous failure. Oddly fatalistic, Lin Qing stayed at home in his village during his "uprising," and it was there that local police officials arrested him. Lin was taken to the Ministry of Punishments in Peking, where his interrogators pummeled him with moral exhortations and shocked questions: "Our emperor loves the people as if they were his own children. . . . How could you organize people and charge into the Forbidden City armed with knives? Even brutes and beasts could not go this far!" Lin Qing replied, "It is my fate to die. It is not my fate to be a peaceful commoner. I sought this end myself. What else is there to say?"[4] Emperor Jiaqing was so curious about this unknown man who had sought to kill him that he summoned him to a private interrogation. Lin refused to give any further explanations and was executed by slicing. His severed head was displayed in Henan as a warning to his followers who were still holding out in rebellion there.

Lin Qing's life and rebellion are well documented because the action was so near Peking and the emperor himself was a target. But Lin's casual accumulation of followers and money, the generalized grievances, and the broad religious claims were typical of many other such groups formed in north China over subsequent decades. These groups constituted a kind of latent potential for rebellion, but one that could often stay on peaceful, semilegal tracks if not galvanized by a particularly effective leader or a natural disaster of unusual proportions.

In south China there was also a simmering discontent, but its focus was different. Here the dominant force was the Triads, also called the Heaven and Earth Society, comprising groups with their own blood oaths, religious rituals, and brotherhoods. The Triads developed in Taiwan and Fujian in the later eighteenth century and then gathered strength in Guangdong and Guangxi. Many early Triad members seem to have been sailors on ocean junks or on the myriad river craft of the interlacing southern waterways; others were poor city dwellers. They often engaged in criminal activities—

extortion, robbery, and kidnapings—all the while protecting themselves through society members in the magistrates' own yamens (offices). By the 1830s, Triad lodges were also attracting numerous peasant recruits, perhaps because in south China, where powerful lineages often controlled entire villages, the Triads offered an alternative form of protection and an organizational focus to those living on the edge of destitution. Women were often recruited into Triad ranks, as they were into the White Lotus, giving them a prestige and function in society otherwise largely denied to them. According to some accounts, women who joined Triad lodges in advance of their husbands might claim precedence within the household over their own spouses. Others were members without their husbands' knowledge.

The Triads also claimed it as their cause to oust the Qing and restore the Ming. Their anti-Manchu stance was probably fueled by the inability of the Qing to control the foreigners in Canton, and the repeated occupations of that city by foreign troops. These pressures in turn made it hard for the court to mobilize for drastic action against potential rebels among its own people. And since the more dangerous rebel groups tended to assemble in rugged, hard-to-control border regions such as that between Guangxi and Guangdong, local officials could not easily coordinate their suppression activities. Tensions here were exacerbated by the presence in the highlands of Yao and Zhuang aboriginal peoples, who continued to resist Qing attempts at local organization. Also the former Jiangxi farmers who had slowly drifted south over the previous century and were known in Guangdong as the Hakkas, or "guest peoples," were now pushing southwest into Guangxi province, where they clashed with the local, settled populations in a struggle for land and employment.

The Triad lodges, and their affiliates and contacts in the local bureaucracy, enhanced their power through involvement in local militia organizations. Lin Zexu had encouraged the formation of such groups to defend Canton against the British, just as gentry in the late Ming had done to protect their bases against peasant rebels or Manchus. The Canton militia groups became complicated mixtures of gentry leaders, local thugs, bona fide peasant volunteers, members of other martial-arts organizations, and groups of men from common trades. In May 1841, such a mélange of forces had confronted a British patrol outside Canton at the village of Sanyuanli. Armed with spears and hoes—some even with guns—they had forced the British to retreat, killing one British soldier and wounding fifteen others. The Chinese made the encounter a symbol for the possibility of a united resistance to foreign pressures.

For the Qing state, as for the Ming, such assemblages were a two-edged sword. Some gentry developed regular, well-organized militia groups that

could effectively keep order in the countryside or patrol the city; other groups saw militiamen melt away, perhaps with arms and some rudimentary training, to return to their original bandit gangs or bring new skills to their Triad comrades. The groups of irregulars gradually grew after 1842 as the Treaty of Nanjing began to have its effect, swelling the trade of Shanghai and drawing resources away from the intransigent region of Canton. Out-of-work boatmen and coolies, poverty-stricken artisans, destitute peasants—all swelled the groups of disaffected who sought some kind of mooring in baffling times.

Emperor Daoguang tried to think this through when responding to the xenophobic attacks on the British in the Canton region, which reached a pinnacle during 1848: "The only important thing is to appease the people's emotions. If the people's loyalties are not lost, then the foreign bandits can be handled."[5] The trouble was that appeasing popular violence was a dangerous gamble for the Qing.

The Taiping

It was in a poor rural area of eastern Guangxi that one of the most deadly and protracted rebellions in Chinese history had its inception in the 1840s. All the contributing social and economic developments alluded to above played their part in the uprising, but one individual's personal life story and state of mind gave the movement its particular shape. This was Hong Xiuquan, one of those who in this period had such a difficult time trying to push their way onto the lowest rung of the ladder of Qing gentility. Hong was born in 1814, the fourth of five children in a hard-working rural family of Guangdong. His parents were from the Hakka minority (the so-called "guest peoples" who had migrated southward from central China), and they sacrificed to get Hong a decent education that would win him a place in the local elite. But even though he passed the initial examinations permitting him to qualify for the licentiate's *shengyuan* degree, in the early 1830s he failed at his first two attempts to obtain the degree, which would have given him the right to wear the scholars' robes, to be exempt from physical punishment, and to receive a small stipend from the state.

For any ambitious young Chinese, such failure was humiliating, but for Hong it seems to have been unusually so. He took solace only in the chance to travel and study in Canton itself. In 1836 Hong came in contact with a Protestant missionary, almost certainly Edwin Stevens, who had recently come to China from the United States and begun preaching in Whampoa

at the behest of the Seaman's Friends Society. Early Protestant missionaries like Stevens, even if still inexpert at speaking Chinese and prevented from living in Canton first by Qing residence rules and after 1842 by local hostility, were beginning to make some converts among the poor. With the aid of Chinese Christian converts, they also composed simple tracts in Chinese outlining the basic elements of Christian doctrine. It was a Chinese convert working with Stevens who pressed a collection of translated passages from the Bible called "Good Words for Exhorting the Age" into Hong's hands, perhaps murmuring some words of greeting or explanation.

Hong Xiuquan neither studied the tracts nor threw them away. Instead he seems to have glanced at them quickly and then kept them at home. He initially made no connection between these tracts and a strange dream and delirium he experienced after a third examination failure in 1837. In those visions, Hong conversed with a bearded, golden-haired man who gave him a sword, and a younger man who instructed him on how to slay evil spirits and whom Hong addressed as "Elder Brother." For six years after his visions, Hong worked as a village schoolteacher, and tried once again to pass the examinations. But after he failed the *shengyuan* examinations for the fourth time, he opened the Christian tracts and read them fully. In a sudden shock of realization, Hong saw that the two men in his vision must have been the God and Jesus of the tracts, and that therefore he, Hong, must also be the Son of God, younger brother to Jesus Christ.

Like Lin Qing in north China thirty years before, Hong was able to persuade people of his spiritual powers through a charismatic manner and a strong religious conviction. But unlike Lin, Hong did not work secretly through a network of local sectarian cells. Instead he began to preach his message publicly, baptize converts, and openly destroy Confucian and ancestral shrines. Although these activities prompted local anger, which caused Hong to flee his village temporarily for Guangxi, they did not provoke the local authorities, and he continued to teach. In 1847 he returned to Canton and studied the Bible—most of which had now been translated into Chinese—with Isaacher Roberts, an American southern Baptist. Late that year Hong left Canton and joined a close friend, one of his first converts, who had formed a Society of God Worshipers in the rugged area of eastern Guangxi province called Thistle Mountain.

In this isolated region—far from a county seat—Hong's movement spread, drawing converts from Hakkas and from Zhuang and Yao mountain tribesmen. By 1849 he had attracted around 10,000 followers. Perhaps influenced by members of Triad organizations who joined him, Hong's ideology came to embrace both the creation of a new Christian community and the destruction of the Manchus, against whose wickedness and deceit he cried

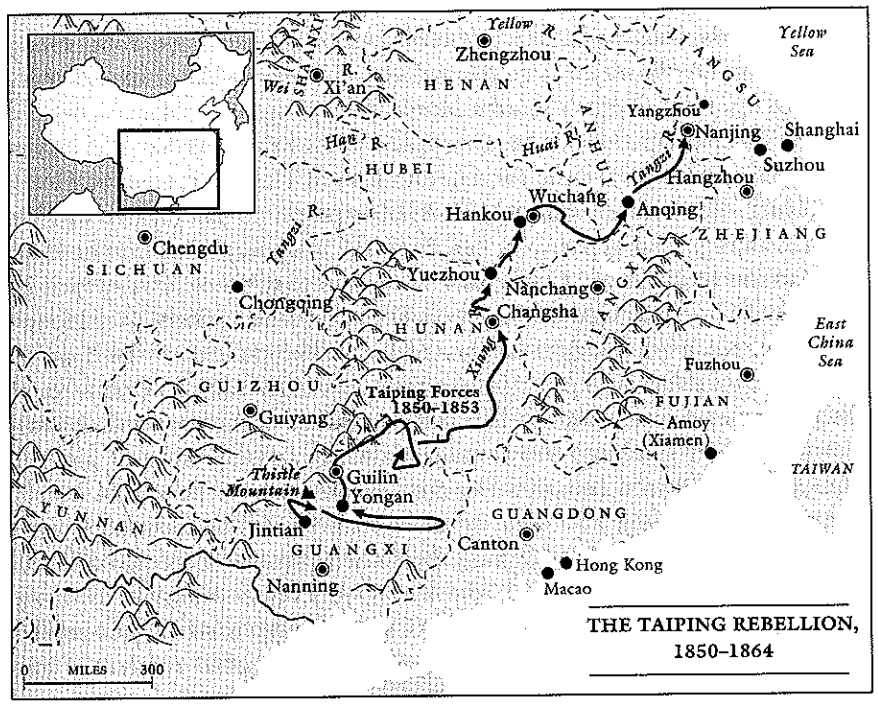
out in moving and powerful terms. When one recalls Lu Liuliang's posthumous fate after daring to attack the ruling dynasty with much milder language, Hong's courage and recklessness can be appreciated. But for Hong, the ruling dynasty represented a special challenge: to him the Manchus were demons fighting against the true God, a God whose purity and presence had existed in China until the forces of Confucian belief swayed the Chinese away from the true path of righteousness.

Hong's rhetorical passion drew a devoted following. Among Hong's closest advisers were an illiterate, orphaned charcoal maker from the Thistle Mountain area named Yang Xiuqing, who proved to be an intuitively brilliant military tactician, and a nineteen year old named Shi Dakai, a member of a wealthy local landlord lineage. Shi persuaded most members of his lineage to throw in their lot with Hong, bringing an estimated 100,000 taels into Hong's treasury. Another important group of converts was the local miners whose skills with explosives and tunneling, developed in the mountains of eastern Guangxi, were later to be used in the demolition of city walls. With the miners came many others who contributed a variety of forms of expertise: pawnbrokers (who ran the treasury), legal clerks (who developed bureaucratic structures), ex-soldiers of the Qing forces or local militias, as well as at least two well-known women bandit leaders and several gangs of river pirates.

By 1850 Hong's recruits and converts had passed the 20,000 mark. His movement was now sufficiently organized to drill troops, manufacture arms, and assemble military tables of organization; it could enforce rigorous instructions against corruption, sensuality, and opium smoking, conduct ceremonies of Christian worship, pool all money and valuables in a central treasury, convince its men to abandon their queues and wear their flowing hair long, and segregate the women—mothers, wives, daughters—into a separate camp run by female officers. Through these actions, the God worshipers finally attracted enough notice to be singled out from the scores of other bandit groups that roamed different parts of China. When Emperor Daoguang died in 1850, his successor, Emperor Xianfeng (reigned 1851–1861), appointed the former anti-opium commissioner Lin Zexu, who had been recalled from his northwestern exile in 1845, special deputy to suppress the movement. But Lin died before he could reach Thistle Mountain.

In December 1850, Qing government forces sent to oust Hong from the Thistle Mountain area were badly defeated, and their Manchu commander killed. On January 11, 1851, Hong Xiuquan assembled his God worshipers and declared himself the Heavenly King of the Taiping Tianguo (太平天國), "Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace"(commonly abbreviated to Taiping). Forced out of their base by larger government armies, the Taiping campaigned on the Guangxi-Guangdong border until autumn 1851, when they swung north and seized the city of Yongan along with great stores of cash, food, and new recruits, who swelled their numbers to 60,000 or more.

Guiding their destinies now by a newly created Christian solar calendar with a seven-day week (although an initial error in calculation caused the Taiping "Sunday" in fact to fall on the Christian Saturday), the Taiping advanced again in the spring of 1852. They attacked the Guangxi capital of Guilin, which they failed to capture despite the heroic exploits of their new regiments of Hakka women, who fought with exemplary courage. (Used to the life of hard farming in the mountains, the Hakka women had never bound their feet as other Chinese females did.) In the summer they crossed into Hunan, but were frustrated in their two-month attempt to take Changsha. Here the Taiping proclamations became more fiery in an attempt to win fresh recruits: "Can the Chinese still consider themselves men? Ever since the Manchus poisoned China, the flame of oppression has risen up to heaven, the poison of corruption has defiled the emperor's throne, the offensive odor has spread over the four seas, and the influence of demons has distressed the empire while the Chinese with bowed heads and dejected spirits willingly became subjects and servants."[6]



A breakthrough came in December 1852, when almost unopposed the Taiping army entered Yuezhou on the east side of Dongting Lake. Yuezhou was a wealthy, long-settled town, unlike the poorer areas through which the Taiping had hitherto ranged, and here they seized vast amounts of booty, 5,000 boats, and stockpiles of arms and gunpowder. (Some of the guns had been abandoned there by Wu Sangui after the failure of his Three Feudatories rebellion almost two centuries before, but were still serviceable.) Thereafter an incredible string of successes followed: Hankou fell in December and Wuchang in January 1853, bringing Hong a further large fleet of boats and 1.6 million taels from the provincial treasury. Anqing fell almost without opposition in February 1853, bringing 300,000 taels more, 100 large cannon, and huge stores of food. In March the great center of Nanjing, defended by only a small force, its walls undermined by explosive charges, its center bombarded by artillery, its streets infiltrated by Taiping soldiers disguised as Buddhist or Daoist priests, fell to the rebels.

Nanjing's Manchu population of some 40,000, of whom about 5,000 were combat troops, retreated into the city's inner citadel, but were overwhelmed by the charges of wave after wave of Taiping troops. All Manchus who did not die in the battle—men, women, and children—were rounded up and systematically killed by burning, stabbing, or drowning. It was Hong's way of showing that the devils would be driven from the face of China. At the end of March, wearing a crown and an embroidered dragon robe, Hong was carried into the city in a golden palanquin on the backs of sixteen men, and took up residence in a former Ming dynasty imperial palace.

The Taiping ruled their Nanjing-based Heavenly Kingdom for eleven years (1853–1864) under the formal authority of Hong Xiuquan as Heavenly King. But Hong soon yielded *de facto* power to his former disciple Yang Xiuqing, who apparently convinced the Taiping forces that he himself was the Holy Ghost, God's own voice, and that his orders—which he received directly from God during frequent trances—had priority over Hong's dictates as the mere younger brother of Jesus. The policies of the Taiping remained, on paper and often in practice, startlingly radical. One facet of their rule was an asceticism that required segregation of the sexes and absolute bans on opium smoking, prostitution, dancing, and drinking of alcohol. Money was held in a common treasury, theoretically to be shared by all; and since the Taiping had acquired more than 18 million taels along their route of march and within Nanjing itself, their prosperity seemed assured. Examinations were reinstituted, based now on Chinese translations of the Bible and on the transcribed versions of Hong Xiuquan's religious revelations and literary works. Women, organized into special residential and

administrative units, were allowed to hold supervisory offices in the bureaucracy and to sit for their own special examinations.

Most remarkable was the Taiping land law, which, linked to a local system of military recruitment, constituted perhaps the most utopian, comprehensive, and authoritarian scheme for human organization ever seen in China up to that time. All land was to be divided among all families of the Taiping and their supporters according to family size, with men and women receiving equal shares. After keeping the produce they needed for their own sustenance, each family would place the rest in great common granaries. Every twenty-five families were supervised by a "sergeant" who kept records of production, adjudicated squabbles, oversaw education of the young in the Bible and Taiping doctrines, and held Christian services every Sabbath. The sergeants selected men from the families under their care for service with local military units. Men selected for service were subject to rigid drill and training, taught to use signals, weapons, and booby traps, and succored in combat by medical squads for the wounded and the sick. From their Nanjing base, huge armies foraged forth, either to extend the Taiping dominions to the east and north or to bring fresh supplies and recruits back to sustain the garrison armies. The results would surely be, ran a Taiping proclamation, "that nowhere will inequality exist, and no one not be well fed and clothed."[7]

Yet for all their military and ideological passion, and their utopian dreams of perfect governance, the Taiping failed to overthrow the Qing and were ultimately eliminated, with terrible slaughter. Why did the Taiping not succeed, after achieving so many triumphs with such speed in the name of such a utopian ideology?

One reason was the failure of Taiping collective leadership. From the original brotherhood, Hong Xiuquan had gone on to name some key Taiping followers as "kings," who ruled jointly under his supervision. But two of the most talented leaders were killed in the campaigns of 1852, and the most brilliant survivors—especially Yang Xiuqing and Shi Dakai, who had been among Hong's earliest followers during the Thistle Mountain days—ultimately lost faith in him. Yang, who had arrogated enormous powers to himself, was assassinated in a murderous palace coup in 1856—on Hong's orders. Shi, who lived up to his early promise and became the Taiping's greatest general, left Nanjing the same year, after his wife and mother were killed by feuding Taiping generals. He tried to set up an independent kingdom in Sichuan but was trapped and killed there by Qing troops in 1863.

Shorn of his most talented advisers, Hong faltered as a leader once he had won a measure of power. He demonstrated a dangerous inefficiency

and lack of clear goals. Just as in Wuchang he had missed a chance to strike north to Peking, so did he fail to push the initiative after his seizure of Nanjing. Instead he withdrew into a palace world of sensual pleasures and religious mysticism, surrounding himself with concubines and perusing the Bible for all references to himself and his "mission," which he found underlined everywhere from the Book of Genesis to Luke's Gospel. He failed to exploit the potentially popular issue of an anti-Manchu crusade and squandered his reputation as a serious religious leader.

Hong's failure to appeal to anti-Manchu sentiment was symptomatic of the Taiping's isolation, even when they were holding power in Nanjing. If they had maintained the city as a thriving metropolitan center, and had Hong enshrined himself there on a firm base of popular support, the Taiping might have been unbeatable. But the Chinese residents of Nanjing found the Taiping occupiers—many of whom were Hakkas, with their strange dress and accents, and their large-footed women—as bizarre as any foreigners or Manchus. The residents resented the Taiping for their alterations of economic life, their attempt to establish a common treasury and regulate markets, their segregation of the civil population by sex and occupation, and their attempt to enforce a strict code of conduct. Passive resistance to the Taiping was endemic, and flight, spying, and defections to the Qing common.[8] Dorgon's more flexible policies in the early Qing, by contrast, had been far more successful in winning general popular acceptance.

Beyond Nanjing, the Taiping failed in the countryside, where their dreams of a common treasury for all believers and an equitable system of landholding remained largely unrealized. Even though they controlled large areas of Jiangsu, Anhui, and Zhejiang for years, and areas farther north and west intermittently, they lacked the commitment or personnel to push through their dramatic land reforms, and ended up as yet another tax-collection agency on the backs of a despondent peasantry. Their constant need for food and supplies to maintain their huge armies meant that Taiping foraging squads scoured the country for hundreds of miles. These logistical demands, when coupled with the constant fighting with Qing forces—who also needed food and lodging—left huge areas of what had once been China's most prosperous region as barren wastes.

The Taiping failed as well to coordinate their uprising with two other upheavals occurring at the same time: the revolt of the Nian to the north and the Red Turbans to the south. Had some kind of concerted action been arranged—as the anti-Ming rebels Li Zicheng and Zhang Xianzhong had tried to do with other bandit leaders in the 1630s—the Qing could not have survived, especially when suffering a series of damaging blows from the Western powers at the same time. But Taiping asceticism and the extreme

nature of their religious claims made constructive alliance with other rebels difficult.

Nor did the Taiping manage to enlist Western sympathy in their cause. Foreigners, especially missionaries, had been initially excited by the prospect of a Christian revolutionary force that promised social reforms and the defeat of the moribund and intransigent Manchus. But the eccentricities of Hong Xiuquan's Christianity eventually became apparent to the missionaries, and traders came to fear the Taiping's zealous hatred of opium. Finally, the Western powers decided to back the Qing in order to prevent a Taiping seizure of Shanghai, which might threaten the West's newly won treaty gains. With members of Triad secret societies controlling the Chinese areas of the city from 1853 to early 1855, a Taiping seizure seemed likely. In the closing years of the rebellion, a foreign-officered mercenary army supported by steam-driven, shallow-draft gunboats fought alongside Qing forces against the Taiping. This was the so-called "Ever-Victorious Army," led first by the American adventurer from Massachusetts, Frederick Townsend Ward, and after his death by the deeply religious British artillery officer, Charles "Chinese" Gordon.

The Qing cause was also bolstered by the loyalty, tenacity, and courage of senior Chinese officials who fought on against the Taiping even though the regular Manchu-led banner armies seemed unable to defeat the enemy. These Confucian-educated scholars were alarmed by the Taiping threat to their ancestral homes and distraught at the Taiping's use of Christianity to attack the whole structure of Chinese values. The greatest of these leaders was the Hunanese official Zeng Guofan, who had first raised local troops to defend his own estates when he was on mourning leave from the court in 1852. Zeng went on with his brothers to raise and equip an efficient and honestly administered army of tough Hunanese peasant conscripts officered by local Confucian gentry. Given the weakness of the Qing banner forces in the region and the proven ineptitude of the local bureaucrats in maintaining militia forces, Zeng's troops formed a crucial addition to the state's defensive resources. Named the Xiang Army, after the river that cuts through Hunan, this army became one of the Taiping's deadliest enemies and played a critical part in the eventual recapture of Nanjing.

The formation of the Xiang Army suggests more broadly the surprising flexibility and effectiveness of local forces in resisting the Taiping. Failing to attract many gentry to their cause, the Taiping encountered opposition all over central and eastern China from the hundreds of local militia forces organized by the gentry to defend their homes and fields. Accepted as essential by the Qing even if they seemed to underline the ineffectiveness of the state, these militia brought new levels of power to the gentry landlords. When

the *likin* tax—a supplement on the transit dues—was permitted so that these militia leaders could finance their military ventures, it enabled them to continue their success in the long war of attrition. The Taiping found it harder and harder to obtain supplies or new recruits as whole communities solidified in resistance against them.

The fatal inflexibility of Hong's regime is evident in the failure of a bold attempt by the Taiping to alter and "Westernize" their rule. The author of this venture was Hong Ren'gan, a younger relation of Hong Xiuquan who had also studied with missionaries in Canton and been a member of the first God worshipers. During the early years of the Taiping rebellion, Hong Ren'gan lived and worked in Hong Kong, and became familiar with Britain's colonial government there. Finally in 1859 he made his way overland to Nanjing, disguised as a physician, and was enthusiastically received by the Heavenly King, who named him prime minister. Hong Ren'gan prepared an elaborate document entitled "A New Treatise on Aids to Administration," which he presented to the Heavenly King in late 1859. His program called for the development of legal and banking systems in the Taiping domains; the construction of highways, railways, and steam-driven freight ships; the introduction of a postal service; the publication of newspapers; and the abandonment of geomancy and infanticide. Hong Xiuquan endorsed all these proposals as "correct," except for those suggesting the spread of information through newspapers, on which he noted: "It will not be too late to carry out this proposal after the remnant demons are annihilated."[9] But in the event, no concrete steps were taken to initiate these reforms. And once Hong Ren'gan's attempt to develop a new grand strategy to regain the upper Yangzi for the Taiping failed, and a massive counterattack he ordered against Suzhou and Hangzhou was beaten back, the last elements of popular support for the Taiping were dashed.

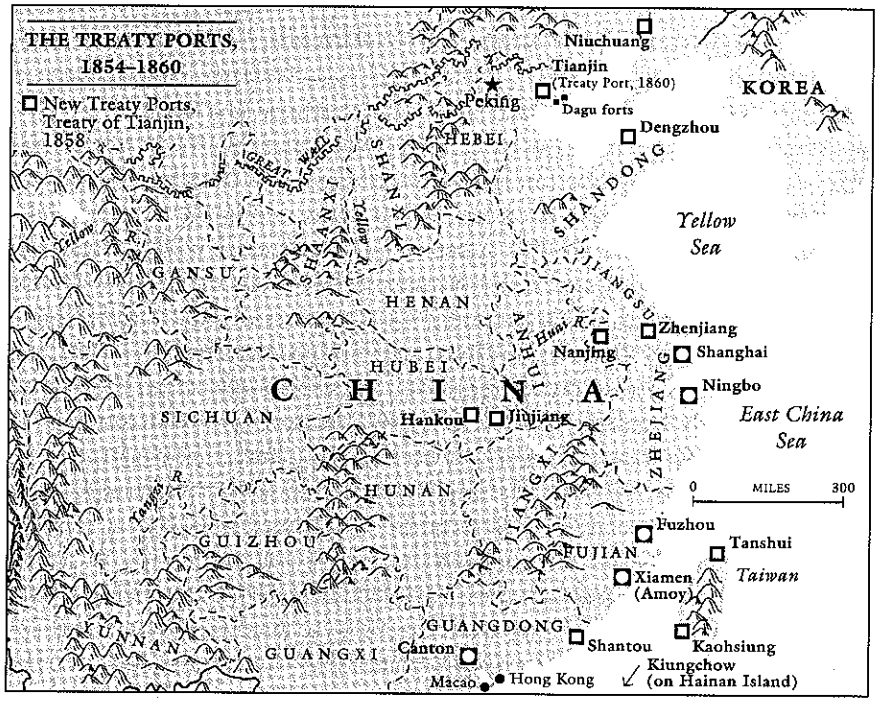
As Zeng Guofan complacently told the Qing emperor, "Now when the people hear of the rebels, pain and regret pierce their hearts, men as well as women flee, and kitchen fires no longer burn. The tillers do not have harvests of a single grain, and one after another they abandon their occupations. When the rebels travel through a territory without people, it is like fish trying to swim in a place without water." Yet when the end came in July 1864, after Hong Xiuquan's death—either by suicide or from illness, it was never made clear—and Qing troops stormed into Nanjing, Zeng wrote to the emperor in some awe: "Not one of the 100,000 rebels in Nanjing surrendered themselves when the city was taken but in many cases gathered together and burned themselves and passed away without repentance. Such a formidable band of rebels has been rarely known from ancient times to the present."[10]

Foreign Pressures and Marx's Views

One of many factors that helped the Qing overthrow the Taiping was the assistance of foreigners in the early 1860s, whether in the form of customs dues collected through the foreign-managed Shanghai Inspectorate of Customs or in the form of the Ever-Victorious Army, led in the field by Western officers. The reasons for that support had mainly to do with international affairs, in which, once again, the primary actors were the British. Disappointed at the results of the Nanjing treaty and frustrated by continued Qing intransigence, the British reacted with scant sympathy when the Qing were threatened by the spread of the Taiping rebellion. Instead the British made the highly legalistic decision to apply the most-favored-nation clause to the American treaty of 1844, which had stipulated that that treaty be renegotiated in twelve years. By applying that renewal stipulation to their own Nanjing treaty of 1842, British authorities forced the Chinese to renegotiate in 1854.

The British foreign secretary saw the speciousness of this argument, writing to the governor of Hong Kong that "the Chinese Authorities may perhaps and with some degree of plausibility object that the circumstances of the time are unsuitable for the commencement of such a work."[11] But he nevertheless suggested that the Qing be presented with the following formidable list of requests: access for the British to the entire interior of China or, failing that, to all of coastal Zhejiang and the lower Yangzi up to Nanjing; legalization of the opium trade; cancellation of internal transit dues on foreign imports; suppression of piracy; regulation of Chinese labor emigration; residence in Peking for a British ambassador; and reliance on the English version rather than the Chinese in all disputed interpretations of the revised treaty.

Despite some caution because of their involvement in the Crimean War against Russia, the British moved jointly with the Americans and French to press for treaty revision, which the beleaguered Qing continued to oppose. The British finally took advantage of an allegedly illegal Qing search of a ship formerly of Hong Kong registry, the *Arrow,* to recommence military actions at Canton in late 1856. After some delays in getting reinforcements—the Indian mutiny was now raging, and the idea of a war in east Asia was not popular with the British people—the British seized Canton in December 1857 and exiled the consistently hostile governor-general of the region to Calcutta. Sailing north in a near repeat of the 1840 campaign, they took the strategic Dagu forts in May 1858 and threatened to seize Tianjin. In June, with the way to Peking now open to the British forces,



the Qing capitulated and agreed to sign a new treaty. By the terms of the most-favored-nation clause, all British gains would also be shared by the other major foreign powers.

This "Treaty of Tianjin" of 1858 imposed extraordinarily strict terms on China. A British ambassador was henceforth to reside in Peking, accompanied by family and staff, and housed in a fitting residence. The open preaching of Christianity was protected. Travel anywhere inside China was permitted to those with valid passports, and within thirty miles of treaty ports without passports. Once the rebellions currently raging in China were suppressed, trade was to be allowed up the Yangzi as far as Hankou, and four new Yangzi treaty ports (Hankou, Jiujiang, Nanjing, and Zhenjiang) would be opened. An additional six treaty ports were to be opened immediately: one in Manchuria, one in Shandong, two on Taiwan, one in Guangdong, and one on Hainan Island in the far south.

The Tianjin treaty also stipulated that all further interior transit taxes on foreign imports be dropped upon payment of a flat fee of 2.5 percent. Standard weights and measures would be employed at all ports and customshouses. Official communications were to be in English. The character

for *barbarian* (*yi*, 夷) must no longer be used in Chinese documents describing the British. And British ships hunting pirates would be free to enter any Chinese port. A supplementary clause accompanying the various commercial agreements stated explicitly: "Opium will henceforth pay thirty taels per picul [approximately 130 pounds] Import Duty. The importer will sell it only at the port. It will be carried into the interior by Chinese only, and only as Chinese property; the foreign trader will not be allowed to accompany it." This condition was imposed despite the prohibition in the Chinese penal code on the sale and consumption of opium. Virtually the only British concession was to pull back from Tianjin and return the Dagu forts to Qing control.

The British evidently expected China's rulers to abandon the struggle at this point, but the Qing would not, and showed no intention of following the treaty clause that permitted foreign ambassadors to live in Peking. In June 1859, to enforce the new treaty terms, the British once more attacked the Dagu forts, now strengthened and reinforced by Qing troops. Fighting was heavy and the British were beaten back, even though the American naval commodore Josiah Tattnall, despite his country's declared neutrality, came to the aid of wounded British Admiral Hope with the ringing cry "Blood is thicker than water."[12] Repulsed from the Dagu forts, the British sent a team of negotiators to Peking by a different route in 1860, but they were arrested by the Qing and some were executed. Determined now to teach the Qing a lesson they could not ignore, Lord Elgin, Britain's chief treaty negotiator, ordered his troops to march on Peking. On October 18, 1860, following Elgin's orders, the British burnt to the ground the Yuan Ming Yuan—the exquisite summer palace in the Peking suburbs built for Qianlong's pleasure using the plans of Jesuit architects. The British, however, spared the Forbidden City palaces within Peking, calculating that destruction of those hallowed buildings would be a disgrace so profound that the Qing dynasty would inevitably fall.

The emperor had already fled the city for Manchuria and named his younger brother, Prince Gong, to act as negotiator. But there was nothing left to negotiate, and on the very day the summer palace burned, Prince Gong reaffirmed the terms of the 1858 Tianjin treaty. In an additional "Convention of Peking," the emperor was stated to express his "deep regret" at the harassment of the British queen's representatives. He also promised a further 8 million taels in indemnity, permitted Chinese emigration on British ships, made Tianjin itself a treaty port, and ceded part of the mainland Kowloon peninsula to Hong Kong. Thus did the "treaty system" reach its fruition.

With these spectacular new gains firmly embedded in treaty form, and confident that Prince Gong would see to their enforcement, the British now swung to strong support for the Qing. The logic seemed clear: if the Qing beat back the Taiping, the foreigners would keep their new gains; if the Taiping defeated the Qing, even under the semi-Westernized aegis of Hong Ren'gan, then the West would have to start the tiresome process of negotiation—and perhaps wage fresh wars—all over again. A sardonic observer of these international shifts was Karl Marx, who had been following the progress of the Taiping rebellion and of British foreign policy with great interest. Marx, born in 1818 in Germany, had written the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* in 1848 with his friend Friedrich Engels. Expelled from both Germany and France for his radical views, he settled in London in 1849 and thereafter made England his home. By 1853, the revolutionary surge for which Marx had hoped in Europe had faded in the face of sustained opposition from reactionary government forces, and he turned to China to find reassurance for his belief that revolutionary change might still be possible.

That same year, as the Taiping seized Nanjing, Marx wrote that he now believed all of China's various dissident forces were at last "gathered together in one formidable revolution." Although he could not tell what "religious, dynastic, or national shape" the Taiping would take, he was confident in ascribing the rise of the Taiping movement to the British opium trade, reinforced by British cannon. Together, these had ended China's self-imposed isolation, wrecked the myth of Manchu authority, and involved China's once venerated mandarins in a cycle of smuggling and corruption. The upshot could only be that Qing "dissolution must follow as surely as that of any mummy carefully preserved in a hermetically sealed coffin, whenever it is brought into contact with the open air."[13]

The result of China's collapse would be spectacular, thought Marx, since the Western powers had become so strongly committed to the balance of their Chinese trade with Indian opium production, and the taxation of that trade to maintain their own domestic revenues, that they could not do without it. Accordingly, Marx wrote, "it may safely be augured that the Chinese revolution will throw the spark into the overloaded mine of the present industrial system and cause the explosion of the long-prepared general crisis, which, spreading abroad, will be closely followed by political revolutions on the continent."[14] It was an apocalyptic version of that dragging of China into the modern world that Hegel had speculated about thirty years before.

By the later 1850s, however, events in China had not had this kind of direct impact on European society. Still, Marx found his attention drawn to

the new phase of British imperialism in China, which was represented by the "*Arrow* war" and the fighting that led first to the Treaty of Tianjin, and finally to the ratification of the Convention of Peking in 1860. He compared the British actions in bombarding Canton to the filibustering activities of "General" William Walker in California, Mexico, and Nicaragua, and wondered if it were possible that "the civilized nations of the world will approve this mode of invading a peaceful country, without previous declaration of war, for an alleged infringement of the fanciful code of diplomatic etiquette." Marx was intrigued when Parliament censured Lord Palmerston in March 1857 for initiating the war, leading to a dissolution of Parliament, a general election, and what Marx saw as the end of "Palmerston's dictatorship."[15]

When Palmerston was vindicated in the elections and England returned to the fray in China, Marx could only reiterate his sense of the injustice of the entire enterprise and the dangers that it implied for constitutional government. But Marx shrewdly added that the China trade was not going to expand as much as the ever-hopeful British merchants expected, because the Chinese could not possibly afford *both* large imports of opium and large imports of British manufacturers' goods. He observed too that the nation with the most to gain in the protracted Chinese negotiations was Russia. Despite setbacks in the Crimean War, Russia had now expanded its railway network into east Asia, was strengthening its hold over the coastline north of Korea, and had seized for itself immense areas of territory along the Amur River, where it had been excluded ever since the Treaties of Nerchinsk and Kiakhta, negotiated by Emperors Kangxi and Yongzheng.

Following up on ideas suggested by Hegel thirty years before, Marx divided world history into four stages of the "modes of production"—namely, "Asiatic, ancient, feudal, and modern bourgeois." One might observe that the sequence of ancient-feudal-bourgeois has both chronological and analytical meaning in the European world. It provides, indeed, a way of summarizing the movement from Greco-Roman slave-owning empires, through the feudal epoch of medieval Europe, to the development of merchant guilds and municipal urban governments that spelled the start of bourgeois society. But the "Asiatic" mode is a geographical one; it lies outside the time sequence of the other three. And although Marx wrote that the four modes represented "progressive epochs in the economic formation of society," in reality he followed Hegel in placing China (and India) outside the development of world history. Asiatic modes had in no way been subsumed into later development—they had merely limped on alongside them.

One of Marx's powerful formulations in the *Critique of Political Economy,* which he wrote in 1859, was this: "No social order ever perishes before

all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed; and new, higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society itself."[16] Marx might have followed Adam Smith in seeing China as having exhausted its "room" for fresh productive forces, but he was also suggesting that Westerners had the power to implant the seeds of "new, higher relations of production," since China had (as Marx wrote elsewhere) "a fossil form of social life."[17] Thus, in a sense, the destructive march of foreign imperialism had a constructive effect: in weakening China's traditional structures, it would speed the day of successful proletarian revolution.

Here Marx's speculations on China stop. By 1862 he was growing weary and sarcastic about continuing news of Taiping horrors. Nor did he draw solace from the rapid rise of a completely new rebellion, that of the Nian, which had begun raging in north China well before the Taiping had been suppressed. As he and Engels had written so vividly in the *Communist Manifesto:* although "the 'dangerous class,' the social scum, that passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of the old society," might be briefly swept up in revolutionary movements, it would inevitably revert to its logical role as the "bribed tool of reactionary intrigue."[18] Yet one haunting and powerful idea continued to hang over Marx's various writings on China. Sometime in the future, he reflected, as the reactionaries fled Europe in the face of an enraged proletariat, seeking shelter in what they regarded as a last bastion of conservative power, they might find to their astonishment, written in bold letters upon the Great Wall, the words "Chinese Republic: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity."[19]

The Nian Rebellion

The outbreak of the Nian rebellion is usually dated to 1851, the same year as the formal declaration of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. But the origins of the Nian can be traced back to the 1790s among roving groups of bandits who operated north of the Huai River, especially in the border-region area that comprised southwest Shandong, northwest Jiangsu, east-central Henan, and northern Anhui. The name *Nian* (捻) probably referred simply to the rebels' status as mobile bands, although the ambiguity of the term in Chinese is such that it can also refer to the martial disguises they sometimes adopted, or to the twisted paper torches by whose light they robbed houses at night.

Unlike the Taiping, the Nian had no clear-cut religious affiliation, political ideology, strategic goals, or unified leadership. Yet for the first fifty

years of the nineteenth century, they steadily grew in numbers and strength. Some Nian had connections with White Lotus groups, Eight Trigrams followers, or Triad societies, while others were connected with the smugglers who made money by evading the government monopoly on salt sales. But most were poor peasants or ex-peasants struggling to survive in a bleak environment of worked-out soil, harsh winters, and unstable river systems subject to appalling floods. The prevalence of female infanticide in the area also meant that there was a profound imbalance in the region's sex ratios. As many as 20 percent of the men were unable to find wives and start families, making of them a rootless and volatile group capable of swinging into action with a raiding party at any time. The settled local communities tried to guarantee some security by establishing small protective militias, walled villages, and crop-watching associations, but the Nian nevertheless launched raids to seize crops from nearby villages, to rob the transport vehicles of government salt merchants, to kidnap wealthy landlords for ransom, or even to attack a local jail where a fellow Nian gang member was being held.

After 1851, when serious floods in northern Jiangsu brought fresh hardship, affiliation with Nian groups rose dramatically, and the Qing officially took note of them as rebels. In 1855, two years after the Taiping seized Nanjing, the Yellow River climaxed a long series of floods by breaking out of its main restraining dikes east of Kaifeng and carving a new channel into the gulf north of the Shandong peninsula; the ensuing misery brought ever more recruits to the Nian gangs. At the same time, Nian organization tightened: in 1852 leaders of eighteen separate Nian groups had proclaimed as their head Zhang Luoxing, a northern Anhui landlord who had supported sheep stealers and had run the local salt smugglers' protection racket. In 1856 Zhang was elected "Lord of the Alliance," with the honorific title "Great Han Prince with the Heavenly Mandate." The Nian forces organized themselves into five main banners, named for different colors, each of which grouped together rebels of common surnames from neighboring communities.

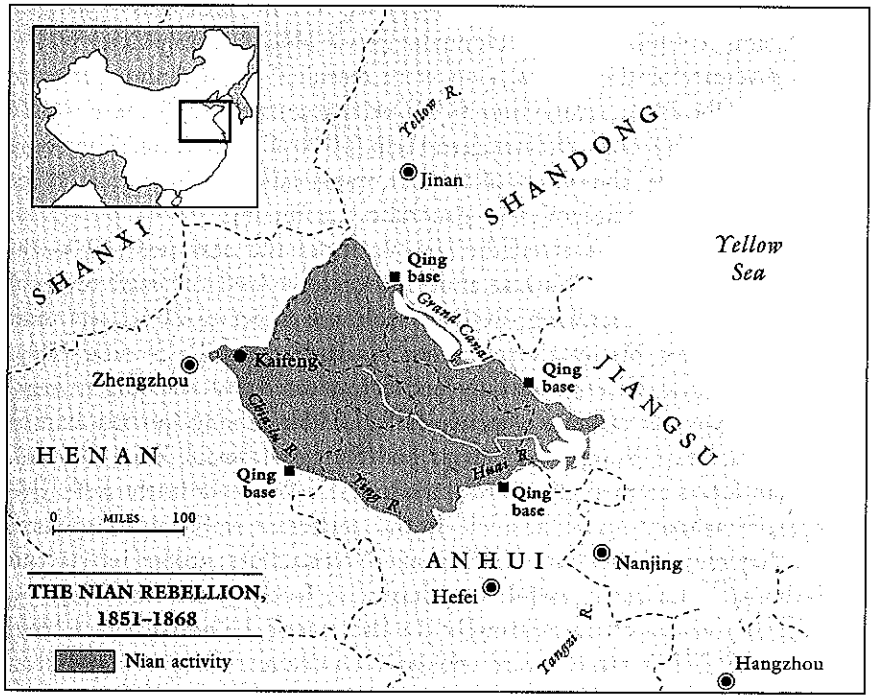
The veteran forces of Nian warriors may only have numbered 30,000 to 50,000 troops, but their effect was disproportionate to their size. Many of them were cavalrymen, many had firearms, and they could cut at will across the lines of communication between the Qing capital of Peking and the government forces besieging Nanjing. By developing strongly walled or moated communities, often armed with cannon, in the area north of the river Huai, they established dozens of secure bases to which their troops could retire after their forays across the countryside. Other villages and market towns also fortified themselves to keep the rebels *out,* so that much

of the area north of the Huai became crisscrossed with defensive communities. Sometimes "peace treaties" were signed between defensive villages and neighboring Nian fortresses in which each agreed not to attack the other. In other cases, stipends in cash or opium were paid as "protection money."

The extent of rural misery in the region cannot be assessed precisely, but it must have been great. In one proclamation, Zhang Luoxing explained that the local people made their lives worse by fleeing the Nian. "Wherever our troops go, you grab your treasures and run away in terror. Ruffians then take advantage of the situation to plunder freely. Left unattended, your houses are burned to the ground and nothing is left standing when you return. Although your actions are intended to protect, in reality they bring nothing but disaster."[20] Although the Nian leaders issued numerous proclamations banning looting and rape, these had little effect on the rank and file. For them it was common practice to scavenge for vegetables and roots in deserted farms, hunt down wild animals, kidnap members of rich families, and seize local trade convoys. Sometimes on their return to their home base, the Nian sold cheaply the food they had looted elsewhere, to increase their popularity locally.

The Nian's first effective Qing opponent was General Senggelinqin, a man from a princely Mongol family who had been made chamberlain of the imperial bodyguard in Peking. Senggelinqin had achieved fame in 1853 by defeating a northward-probing Taiping army that had pushed to within twenty-five miles of Tianjin, and it was because of his expertise with fortifications that the British were repulsed from Dagu in 1859. Penalized for allowing the British to enter Peking in 1860, Senggelinqin later that same year was ordered to suppress the Nian. He proved a fearsome commander, leading a crack force of Manchu and Mongol cavalry in repeated attacks on the Nian forces, and finally cornering and killing Zhang Luoxing in northwest Anhui. Senggelinqin struck fear in the local Chinese as well: he gave his troops free rein over the civilian population and allegedly demanded bribes from local communities before he would come to their aid. As one Qing officer of the time wrote: "Who would have expected that the atrocities of the imperial army would be so much worse than the rebels themselves?"[21]

Other able Nian leaders soon emerged to replace Zhang. They developed an intensely successful form of guerrilla strategy in which Nian forces would retreat steadily from the Qing troops until those troops were tired and forced by terrain into smaller and smaller units. The Nian, regrouping, would then attack these scattered units with an overwhelming force of long-speared infantry and sword-bearing cavalry. Often the Nian con-



ducted a grim scorched-earth policy, luring Qing forces into areas where all the crops had been rooted up, houses and boats burned, and wells filled with stones. It was by such methods in 1865, after leading Senggelinqin's army on an exhausting chase through Jiangsu, Henan, and Shandong provinces, that the Nian finally tricked the Mongol general into a deadly ambush, killing him and most of his troops and obtaining over 5,000 horses.

The Qing court's response was to appoint Zeng Guofan, hailed as a great victor after the fall of Nanjing, as supreme commander of military affairs for Nian suppression. But Zeng could not finish off the Nian, despite a careful plan that involved the formation of four provincial military bases—one each in the provinces of Jiangsu, Anhui, Henan, and Shandong, and each on a major river or canal to assist in moving supplies. The plan also entailed the digging of canals and trenches to curb the mobility of the Nian cavalry, and a systematic attempt to win local villages back to Qing allegiance by means of conciliatory policies and the selection of new headmen. The strategy failed in part because the governors of the four provinces could not cooperate fully, and because Zeng had disbanded many of his best Xiang Army troops after the fall of Nanjing. Accordingly he was dependent on troops from the army of his protégé Li Hongzhang, who had

been appointed governor-general of Liangjiang (i.e., the provinces of Jiangsu, Jiangxi, and Anhui). While Li Hongzhang was able to supply Zeng with a steady revenue for the troops, who were recruited from Anhui province and named the Huai Army after the river that cuts through the north of the province, the troops did not give their full loyalty to Zeng. The court thereupon switched the offices of the two men, making Li commander of the campaign and Zeng governor-general of Liangjiang.

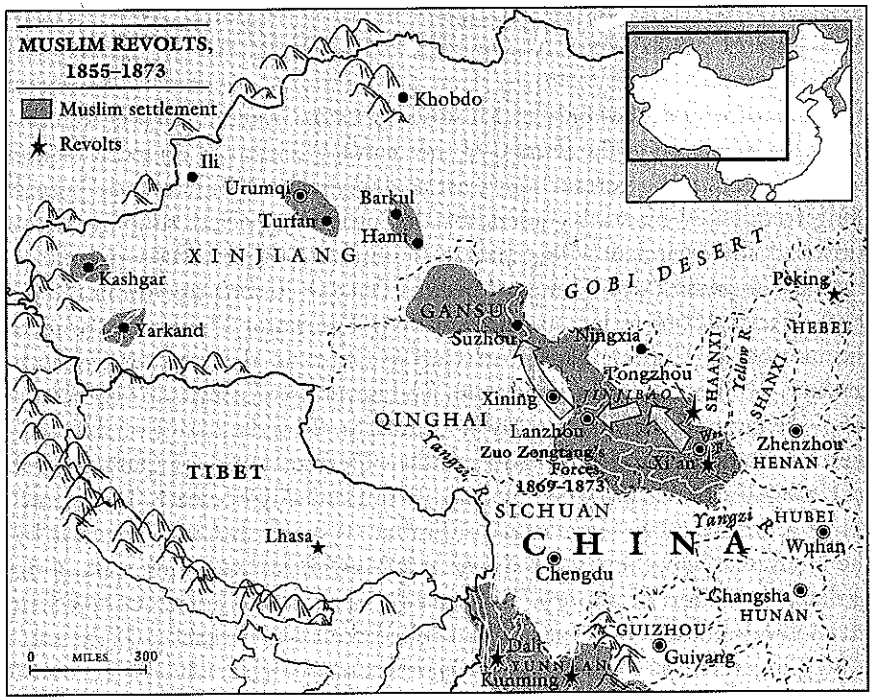
These switches emphasized the complexity of the new political world that was emerging in China as more power devolved on local regional commanders. Li Hongzhang owed his political career to Zeng, who had recruited him for his own semiprivate bureaucracy while Li was still a young man. Li and Zeng not only had complicated, interlocking careers, they ran their own military systems. Still, Li Hongzhang initially had as hard a time suppressing the Nian as had Senggelinqin or Zeng Guofan. The Nian forces seemed always to elude him, breaking across the defensive barriers, even roaming as far afield in the northwest as Shaanxi province, where they entered the cities of Xi'an and Yan'an. "Our troops had to run after them," as Li put it, "while they moved as freely as mercury."[22] But a slow, steady war of attrition brought the collapse of the now divided Nian forces by 1868. Li's armies were well paid by Chinese standards and generally loyal to him and their personal commanders. They used rifles and artillery they had purchased from the foreigners, and began the systematic use of gunboats on the northern waterways. Foreign armored ships—two of them aptly named the *Confucius* and the *Plato*—patrolled the coastal waters off Shandong to prevent a Nian breakaway that might threaten foreign trade, now flourishing under the terms of the Tianjin treaty and the Convention of Peking.

In August 1868, after heavy fighting brought final Qing victories in Shandong and the execution of the cornered Nian survivors, the court offered sacrifices of thanks to heaven in the temple of their ancestors and the temple of the god of war. Li Hongzhang was ennobled and given the honorific title Grand Guardian of the Heir Apparent. Like Zeng Guofan, who had been named to the highest possible honorific rank after recapturing Nanjing, Li Hongzhang had consolidated his career on the backs of defeated rebels. Zeng died in 1872 and hence did not have much time to enjoy his fame and prestige, but Li Hongzhang was granted a long life. For the next thirty-three years he was to be one of the most powerful officials in China.

Muslim Revolts

There had been settlements of Muslims in China since the Tang dynasty (A.D. 618–907), both at the termini of the central Asian trade routes in Gansu and Shaanxi, and in certain southeast coastal towns of Fujian and Guangdong frequented by Arab traders. By the late Ming period, so many Muslims had intermarried with Chinese families that there were now large settled communities of Chinese Muslims (known as *hui*) providing a new level of complexity to local administration. The Jesuit Matteo Ricci noted the number of Chinese Muslims living in China in the early seventeenth century. Chinese Muslims had launched several uprisings during Qianlong's reign; and the jihads (holy wars) declared by the khans of Kokand, west of Chinese Turkistan, had kept the outermost areas of Qing control in Kashgar and Yarkand in constant turmoil during the early nineteenth century. In the more settled agricultural areas of north China ravaged by the Nian rebellion, there were also sizable Muslim communities, containing perhaps 1 million or more of the faithful: prosperous mosques stood in Henan and Anhui, and Muslims controlled their own branches of the salt-smuggling rackets. Discriminatory legislation protected Chinese involved in violence with Muslims, and religious riots and feuds were commonplace.

But the areas of greatest Muslim concentration, besides Gansu-Shaanxi, were in China's southwest, particularly the province of Yunnan. The Muslim settlements here dated back to the time of the Mongol conquest of China in the thirteenth century, and friction with other Chinese settlers pushing into the region had been endemic. It was in Yunnan in 1855, as the Taiping strengthened their hold on Nanjing and the Nian began to organize their grand alliance, that a third major rebellion erupted against the Qing. The triggers for this rebellion were the heavy land taxes and extra levies imposed by Peking on the Yunnanese Muslims, whose plight was exacerbated by disputes over the gold and silver mines that gave the province much of its scarce wealth. The Chinese, having exhausted their own mines, tried to oust the Muslims from theirs. Violence and rioting led to a large-scale Chinese attack on the Muslims, who fought back, seizing the important city of Dali in the west of the province and besieging Kunming, the capital. Kunming was in rebel Muslim hands only for a brief period in 1863 before being recaptured by the Qing. In Dali, however, the Muslim rebel Du Wenxiu, taking the name "Sultan Suleiman," created a new state named *Pingnan guo,* "Kingdom of the Pacified South," his variation of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom's title.



The Qing officials in the area were inept, and the terrain made campaigning difficult, especially after fighting by Miao tribesmen, religious sectarians, and Muslims spread to the mountainous border area where Yunnan, Sichuan, and Guizhou provinces meet. But the Qing managed to turn the tide by splitting the Muslim forces and rewarding the turncoats, developing local defense groups, and relying on a handful of talented local Chinese generals. In 1873 Dali fell after heavy fighting, and Du Wenxiu, failing in his attempt at suicide, was captured and executed.

Difficulties of terrain and the huge distances involved made it difficult for the Yunnan Muslims to coordinate their struggle with another Muslim rebellion that broke out far to the north—in Shaanxi and Gansu. This rebellion, commencing in 1862, had been encouraged by Taiping generals trying to deflect the Qing from their siege of Nanjing, and Nian troops marched to the region in the mid-1860s to see if some anti-Qing alliance could be forged. Several areas of Gansu and southern Shaanxi province had sizable Muslim populations, many of them followers of the "New Teachings" derived from the central Asian mystical school of Sufism. The Qing had attempted to ban these New Teachings following a series of Muslim uprisings between 1781 and 1783, but had only deepened local bitterness.

The northwest Muslim revolt of 1862, however, seems to have arisen from local tensions between Chinese and Muslims rather than from any particular religious or anti-Qing focus. A volatile situation of rioting and harassment was intensified by the Taiping foray into the area. Following the pattern now long established in east and north China, the local population responded to the threat by forming militia units to defend their homes; in doing so, it was natural for Muslim militia groups to form in some areas and Chinese ones in others. Since most banner troops had been drafted away to fight the Taiping and the Nian, and since many of the local garrison Green Standard troops were themselves Muslim, Qing authority in the region was weak, leaving the situation ripe for trouble. The revolt began with a tiny incident—a quarrel between a group of Muslims and a Chinese merchant over the price of some bamboo poles. Arguments led to blows, Chinese crowds gathered and, with gentry leadership, attacked and burned Muslim villages along the Wei River, killing innocent Muslim families. The Muslims in turn formed armed bands, retaliated against the Chinese (and against their coreligionists who refused to take up arms), and in late June besieged the two most prosperous cities in southern Shaanxi—Tongzhou and Xi'an.

The Qing forces in the area were initially plagued with inadequate leadership, but even when more efficient generals were appointed, their troops suffered from low morale, disease, and wages constantly in arrears. There were many desertions. Although Qing troops were able to hold Xi'an and Tongzhou, they lost control of much of the surrounding countryside. And when, in late 1862, Qing forces began to achieve some victories, the Muslims simply retreated west into Gansu, where they formed new armed bands whose rallying cry was that the Qing were planning to exterminate all Muslims in China.

The few banner garrisons, based mainly in Ningxia and Lanzhou, were powerless to pacify the rebels, and the only hope of the Qing seemed to be to spread dissension *within* the Muslim ranks. As a senior Manchu official pointed out to the court in words that seemed to justify a Muslim fear of total extermination: "Among the Muslims, there are certainly evil ones, but doubtless there are also numerous peaceful, law-abiding people. If we decide to destroy them all, we are driving the good ones to join the rebels, and create for ourselves an awesome, endless job of killing the Muslims." The overall problem was complex, he added, since in Gansu, "with a few rare exceptions, there are Muslims living in every city; [and] in the army, there are proportionately even more Muslims than Chinese among the rank and file." A murky sequence of negotiations, pitched battles, trickery, false surrenders, and reprisals followed throughout 1863 and 1864, while the only

advice the Qing court offered its officials was to "talk softly to them and be ready for any incident."[23] By 1866 gunpowder supplies had run out, rice was too expensive to buy, and even local wheat prices were scores of times their usual level. There was no fuel, and horses died for lack of fodder. Soldiers lived on "soup" of diluted flour, and many civilians starved or committed suicide.

In desperation, the Qing court turned to a scholar who had emerged as one of the most effective anti-Taiping leaders—Zuo Zongtang. Like Zeng Guofan, Zuo was born and raised in Hunan province. In 1830, when he was eighteen, his father died, and he spent some time studying with the powerful official and statecraft scholar He Changling; but although he was a conscientious scholar, Zuo failed the senior-level *jinshi* examinations three times in the 1830s and decided never to try for them again. Instead he worked as a tutor, studied geography and the history of China's western regions, and trained himself to be a successful experimental farmer, specializing in tea and silk production. During the Taiping uprising, he emerged as a talented military leader, fighting first in his native Hunan—where he raised, trained, and equipped his own volunteer army of five thousand men in emulation of Zeng Guofan's Xiang Army—and subsequently in Anhui, Zhejiang, and Fujian. As well as being a good general, Zuo proved to be an expert in the rehabilitation of reconquered areas, encouraging agriculture, grain storage, education, cotton growing, and the building of ships. In September 1866 Zuo was named governor-general of Shaanxi and Gansu, and ordered to suppress the Muslim uprisings there. He reached Shaanxi in the summer of 1867, only to be deflected by counterorders that he join the fight against the Nian, which he did with distinction. He finally settled in the Shaanxi capital of Xi'an in November 1868 to plan his campaign.

Zuo approached the task of defeating the northwest Muslims, which had baffled his predecessors, with a practical and patient mind. He took advantage of his own studies of the western regions of China and benefitted, too, from talks he had had long before with Commissioner Lin Zexu after Lin's return from post–Opium War exile in Ili. But of greatest benefit to Zuo, besides his experiences as army commander and practical farmer, were the long discussions and the exchanges of letters he had with a local scholar who had served as Lin Zexu's secretary and had long lived in Shaanxi. This man told Zuo Zongtang: "You must take your time. Advance only when you have plenty of food and well-trained soldiers. You may just as well plan your campaign on a three-year basis. . . . Once you are ready to strike, hit the meanest Muslim leader hard. Deal with him firmly, without mercy. When the others become quite frightened by the punishment he receives, then you can accept their surrender."[24]

From Zuo's subsequent actions, we can tell that he fastened on Ma Hualong as that "meanest Muslim leader" who had to be broken first. Ma had established a powerful base in the region of Jinjibao, south of Ningxia, protected by a network of ditches and over five hundred forts. Ma was revered as a leading exponent of the New Teachings and regarded by many of his followers as an incarnation of the holy spirit, equal in power to the prophet Muhammad himself. Accordingly, the Muslims fought with devoted tenacity. Even after Zuo had assembled and supplied adequate troops, the siege of Jinjibao took sixteen months and cost Zuo the life of his finest commander. Only when the Muslim defenders had been reduced to eating grasses, then hides, and finally the bodies of dead comrades did Ma Hualong surrender in March 1871. He and his family were executed by slicing; more than eighty of his "officials" were also killed; and thousands of Muslim merchants, women, and children were transported to other cities or exiled to northern Manchuria. Settlement in Jinjibao was forbidden to all Muslims.

Thereafter the campaign moved inexorably to its conclusion. Zuo was now subsidized with money that he persuaded the court to divert from other provinces to himself, by substantial loans he floated with foreign traders or with the customs service, and with soldiers' rations and horses' fodder supplied by the military farms he had insisted on founding. He marched his forces westward along the well-traveled caravan trade route to Lanzhou, where he established an arsenal and planted more crops to feed his armies. Still refusing the court's order that he hurry, Zuo prepared with meticulous calm for the final assault on the northwest Gansu city of Suzhou, which he took in November 1873, killing most of the defenders and burning large areas within the walls. Although some of the Muslim rebels fled even farther west to Hami and would take years more to conquer, the provinces of China proper were now pacified. For the first time since 1850, China could once again, with the ambiguous exception of the treaty ports, be considered unified under Qing rule.

CHAPTER 9

Restoration through Reform

Confucian Reform

Logic was entirely on Marx's side when he wrote in the late 1850s that the Qing dynasty must surely soon fall. What is surprising is that the dynasty did not collapse right away, but managed to survive for the whole of the nineteenth century and on until 1912.

Qing statesmen described this survival as a "restoration" (*zhongxing*, 中興), a venerable phrase frequently applied to other dynasties that had managed to weather waves of crises and restore moral and political order to the empire. The idea of restoration had both a nostalgic and a bittersweet ring to it: those past restorations, although significant, had been impermanent, for each of the "restored" dynasties had eventually passed away. Unlike those of the past, moreover, the Qing restoration took place without strong imperial leadership. Emperor Tongzhi, whose name is given to this restoration period, was only five years old at his accession to the throne in 1861, and died in 1875 before having had a chance to exercise personal power. His "reign" was presided over by his mother Cixi, acting as regent, by his uncle Prince Gong (who had been forced to negotiate with the Westerners in 1860 when the rest of the court fled Peking), by one or two influential grand councilors, but above all by an exceptional group of provincial officials who had risen to prominence fighting the Taiping, the Nian, or the Muslim rebels. Zeng Guofan, Li Hongzhang, and Zuo Zongtang were probably the best known of these, but there were scores of others of comparable skill. Acting sometimes in concert and sometimes independently, these officials managed to reinvest the Qing dynasty with a sense of purpose, shore up the economy, and develop significant new institutions. This

was a remarkable achievement in the context of what had appeared to be a disintegrating Chinese state.

Qing officials, as we have seen, had explored all varieties of military mobilization in order to crush the rebel regimes: they had used the Eight Banner and Green Standard armies, local gentry-led militia, and semiprivate regional armies like the Xiang and the Huai; they had also developed military-agricultural bases as well as defensive perimeters of waterways and forts, and had made selective use of Western officers and mercenary troops. But all that was mere preamble to what was considered the great central task: the Tongzhi Restoration statesmen sought nothing less than the re-establishment of the basic values of Confucian government.

The most important representative of this restoration attitude was the Hunanese scholar-general Zeng Guofan. Born in 1811 to a minor gentry family of modest means, Zeng studied the Chinese classical canon tenaciously and managed to obtain the *jinshi* degree in 1838. He was admitted to the Hanlin Academy in Peking and soon became known as an expert on problems of ritual and deportment. Zeng lived a simple life on a small salary, often having to borrow money from the wealthier Hunanese in the capital to pay for the expenses of his own household and to ensure the adequate education of his younger brothers. It was only when he was appointed to supervise the provincial examinations in Sichuan that he became financially well off: so many eager families gave him "gifts" that he was able to pay off all his debts.

The Confucian doctrine that Zeng espoused was an austere yet eclectic one that sought to reconcile three approaches to Confucian truth. One approach insisted on the primacy of moral principle and personal ethical values acquired through education; one espoused the methods of textual scrutiny and rigor that had come to dominate *kaozheng* thinking in Qianlong's reign; one believed in the "practical" learning of statecraft thinkers like He Changling, seeking a sturdy foundation on which to rebuild a sound and honest administrative structure.

Zeng's synthesis was arrived at after years of study and reflection during the dark days that followed China's defeat in the Opium War. Over these years, he engaged in prolonged periods of meditation and kept a meticulous diary in which he jotted notes on his readings along with reflections on his own behavior and attitudes. A sample passage shows the frankness of Zeng's Confucian self-assessments:

> Got up too late, and felt restless all day long. Read the *Book of Changes,* but could not concentrate. Then I decided to practice quiet sitting. But after a little while, I fell asleep. How could I have become so lazy? Some friends

came in the afternoon to show me some of their literary work. I praised them very highly, but deep in my heart I didn't think they were well written at all. I have done this many times lately. I must be sick. How can people value my words anymore if I praise them every day? I have not only deceived my friends but have also deceived myself. I must get rid of this bad habit. At night, read *The Book of Changes.* Wrote two poems before going to bed.[1]

The endless demands of the Taiping war destroyed the pattern of moral reflection and scholarship to which Zeng would have liked to devote his life, and he was now forced to think through his values in a new way. Convinced that a kind of spiritual collapse lay behind the mid-Qing crises, Zeng's approach to restoration was to rebuild schools and reinstitute a strict Confucian curriculum. He wished to encourage able students to take the conventional exams rather than purchase honorary degrees and titles from the Qing government, which had been selling them by the thousands in an attempt to raise more revenue to meet military costs. He compiled and published lists of those who had died righteously opposing the rebels, so that their example would live on for future generations. Like other provincial leaders of the time, he also tried to restore order to agricultural work. His plan was to return ousted landlords to their original holdings and reassess land taxes, while attempting to prevent exploitation of long-term tenants. He aimed also to resettle the millions of refugees whose lives had been wrecked over the years by counter-marching armies. So great had been the devastation in east and central China that for decades thereafter what had been the most densely populated and prosperous parts of China were drawing numerous emigrants from western and northern provinces.

These policies had the general support of the central government in Peking, but since revenues were short and many problems clamored for attention, Zeng and his colleagues in the provinces were left a free hand. Still there was an obvious coherence to their programs, since so many of these officials owed their careers to Zeng Guofan himself. He had originally hired some to help him manage his Xiang Army and others to assist in running local finances or rebuilding judicial systems and famine-relief services. Zeng had developed a careful system of interviews and rankings to help him choose these staff members: true to his principles, he tried to gauge their honesty, efficiency, and intellectual prowess before hiring them; he always rejected those who were opium addicts, boastful, shifty-eyed, or coarse in speech and manner. By the 1870s, dozens of Zeng's former staff had been promoted by the central government to substantive office. It was a tribute to Zeng's loyalty to the Qing that he did not try to exploit this situation and build up his own power base, or seize power in his own name.

Despite the weight Zeng placed on traditional scholarly and moral values, he was not a simple-minded conservative. For instance, he not only encouraged the use of the Western-officered Ever-Victorious Army, he was also quick to see the value of making selective use of Western technology. The first person to present Zeng with convincing arguments for such a policy was the scholar Feng Guifen. The two men had a good deal in common, since Feng was also a *jinshi* degree holder (class of 1840) who had served in the Hanlin Academy. Feng's experience of warfare had developed during the mid-1850s, when he led a volunteer corps against the Taiping in defense of his native Suzhou; in 1860 he had moved to Shanghai, where he was impressed by the fire power wielded by the Westerners.

In a series of essays written in 1860, which he presented to Zeng the following year, Feng argued that China must learn to "strengthen itself" (*ziqiang,* 自強) by including foreign languages, mathematics, and science in the curriculum: Chinese students excelling in these subjects should be granted the provincial examination degree. China was a hundred times larger than France and two hundred times larger than England, Feng wrote, so "why are they small and yet strong? Why are we large and yet weak?" The answer lay in the greater skills of foreigners in four main areas: utilizing all their manpower resources, exploiting their soil to the full, maintaining close bonds between ruler and subjects, and ensuring "the necessary accord of word with deed." In order to start building China's strength, Feng argued, "what we then have to learn from the barbarians is only one thing, solid ships and effective guns."[2] This could be achieved by establishing shipyards and arsenals in selected ports, and by hiring foreign advisers to train Chinese artisans to manufacture such wares in China. Since Feng felt that "the intelligence and wisdom of the Chinese are necessarily superior to those of the various barbarians," the conclusion was clear: China would first learn from foreigners, then equal them, and finally surpass them.

A year later, in a diary entry of June 1862, Zeng Guofan recorded that he had told his staff members: "If we wish to find a method of self-strengthening, we should begin by considering the reform of government service and the securing of men of ability as urgent tasks, and then regard learning to make explosive shells and steamships and other instruments as the work of first importance."[3] Later that year, Zeng directed the staff at his military camp at Anqing to experiment with building a small steamboat. Its performance was disappointing, but Zeng did not give up. Instead, making a remarkable mental leap for someone of his background, he ordered thirty-five-year-old Yung Wing* to travel to the United States and buy the

*This is the Cantonese romanization that Yung himself used during his life.

machinery necessary for establishing a small arsenal in China. The choice of Yung was a shrewd one, for this man, born to a poor family near Macao and educated at missionary schools there and in Hong Kong, had first traveled to the United States in 1847. After three years of preparatory school in Massachusetts, Yung had worked his way through Yale and received his B.A. in 1854, becoming the first Chinese to graduate from an American university.

True to his proven methods of assessing character, Zeng had begun his first interview with Yung by simply staring at him for minutes on end, in total silence, a slight smile on his face. But once he had decided to trust Yung, Zeng went all the way, giving him 68,000 taels in cash from the Canton and Shanghai treasuries to purchase the basic tools needed to establish a machine shop in China. After Yung Wing had traveled to Europe and made preliminary estimates and enquiries—en route he saw the Suez Canal being built and realized how much it would speed travel to China—he continued on to the United States, which he reached in the spring of 1864.

With the Civil War raging, it was hard to find an American firm that would fill the Chinese order, but at last the Putnam Machine Company in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, agreed to take on the work. Leaving an American engineer he had met in China to supervise the technical details, Yung attended his tenth class reunion and, as a naturalized American citizen, volunteered his services to the Union in the Civil War. His offer was courteously declined. He then arranged for the shipment of the machinery from New York directly to Shanghai, although he himself returned to China via San Francisco, Hawaii, and Yokohama. Yung's circumnavigation of the globe while on official business marked a new stage for an employee of the Qing.

Zeng Guofan, who had been appointed to suppress the Nian rebels after defeating the Taiping, came to inspect the new machine tools, which had been combined with other equipment purchased by his former staff members and installed at a new arsenal near Shanghai. According to Yung Wing, Zeng "stood and watched [the machine's] automatic movement with unabashed delight, for this was the first time he had seen machinery and how it worked."[4] The machines were first used to make guns and cannon; but by 1868, with the help of Western technicians and special grants from the foreign customs dues, a Chinese-built hull and boiler were successfully combined with a refurbished foreign steam engine, and the SS *Tianqi* ("The Auspicious") was launched. A second arsenal and shipyard was established at Fuzhou in Fujian province by Zuo Zongtang, shortly before he was transferred to the northwest to suppress the Muslim rebels. At both the

Shanghai and Fuzhou arsenals, schools for the study of mechanical skills and navigation were founded under the direction of foreign advisers, and translation projects for technical works were started on an ambitious scale.

An English visitor to the arsenals, despite a sarcastic note, could not conceal his surprise at the success of these ventures and their applicability to China's needs in both peace and war: "Already several transports carrying guns, and gunboats, have been successfully launched from the dockyard, and others are rapidly approaching completion. The former vessels have been employed in carrying the imperial grain to the north, and although they are manned and officered by natives, it is noteworthy that no accident has yet befallen any of them."[5] It seemed as if a methodical program of such self-strengthening might indeed combine with Confucian inner values to produce a revivified state and economy for the Qing.

Defining Foreign Policy

The events of the 1850s had forced China's leaders to acknowledge the existence of a wider world, and they slowly developed a number of devices to help them interact with it. The first of these had been the foreign-managed Inspectorate of Customs, created in 1854 as a response to the threat of Taiping attack on Shanghai, and designed to collect tariffs equitably and generate new revenues for the Qing from the import dues on foreign goods. The allied occupation of Peking in 1860 and the court's flight to Manchuria necessitated a second institution that would provide some more formal means of negotiating with foreigners. The Qing solution, after protracted debate, was to establish a special new agency in 1861: the Office for the Management of the Business of All Foreign Countries, usually known by its Chinese abbreviation, the Zongli Yamen (總理衙門). This was the first significant institutional innovation in the central Peking bureaucracy that the Qing had made since Emperor Yongzheng created the nucleus of the Grand Council in 1729.

The Zongli Yamen was supervised by a controlling board of five senior officials (initially all Manchus), among whom the emperor's uncle, Prince Gong, was the *de facto* leader. They were aided by twenty-four secretaries, sixteen of whom were drawn from the various ministries in Peking and eight from the Grand Council staff. In their discussions on establishing the new agency, Qing officials reiterated that it was only to be a temporary institution, maintained until the current foreign and domestic crises had passed. Prince Gong had also assured the emperor that he would keep the premises of the new agency modest, like a residence for the emissaries of

tributary states. So although foreigners would be conducting business there, the new Zongli Yamen would carry, in Gong's words, "the hidden meaning that it cannot have a standing equal to that of other traditional government offices, thus preserving the distinction between China and foreign countries."[6] In keeping with this decision, the building finally chosen was a dilapidated one, small and old, a former office of the Department of Iron Coins located in the eastern part of the imperial city. But with an imposing new front gate added to reassure foreigners that the Zongli Yamen would indeed perform important functions, the structure was opened for business on November 11, 1861.

Prince Gong, the most important Manchu to emerge as a reformer in the Tongzhi Restoration period, was only twenty-eight. Bitterly antiforeign as a youth, he had moved gradually to a position of patient wariness and eventually to open respect for the West. He was particularly impressed that Western troops had abandoned Peking after looting the Summer Palace and forcing him to sign the Convention of Peking. "This shows," he felt, "that they do not covet our territory and people. Hence we can still through faithfulness and justice tame and control them while we ourselves strive towards recovery."[7] As an uncle of the reigning boy emperor Tongzhi and a trusted adviser to the empress dowager and regent Cixi, he endowed the new Zongli Yamen with considerable prestige. The bulk of the brainwork, however, was probably carried out by his talented second-in-command, Wenxiang. Born in 1818, the son of a lowly clerk in the plain-red Manchu banner, Wenxiang had passed his *jinshi* exams in 1845, and been active in the defense of Peking against both the anticipated Taiping attack of 1853 and the disastrous British one of 1860. His prestige was also great, despite his humble beginnings, since he served concurrently as grand councilor and minister of war.

Two early examples of Prince Gong's and Wenxiang's work in the Zongli Yamen show different aspects of the new foreign-policy methods of the Qing, and how much things had changed since the era of the *Lady Hughes* and the *Emily:* one, the hiring of the Lay-Osborn Flotilla, was something of a disaster; the other, the adjudication of rights over Prussia, was a considerable triumph.

The Lay-Osborn Flotilla had its origins in 1862, when a series of Taiping victories in coastal Zhejiang made the Qing court fear they might lose control at sea to the rebels. Accordingly, the Zongli Yamen was ordered to purchase a fleet in England and to hire the officers and crew necessary to man it. As their intermediary, the Zongli Yamen chose the current head of the Inspectorate of Customs, Horatio Nelson Lay, and made available to him a sum of 1,295,000 taels. With this money Lay arranged the purchase

of seven steamers and one store ship, to be commanded by a captain in the Royal Navy, Sherard Osborn. Britain's Foreign Office was willing to allow its seamen to serve with the fleet only if they were under a specific foreign flag. Since the Qing, like all prior Chinese dynasties, had no national flag, Prince Gong informed the British that the Qing would create a flag—a triangular yellow one with a dragon at the center.

Captain Osborn reached Shanghai with his fleet in September 1863, but was confronted at once with a complex problem. Prince Gong instructed Osborn to serve as assistant commander in chief of the fleet, under the direction of a Chinese admiral. In tactical operations, Osborn would obey the orders of the Qing field commanders—who at this time were Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang—although Osborn himself would be in control of all foreigners within the fleet. The trouble here was that under the initial agreement with Lay, signed in England and assumed to coincide with Qing intentions, Osborn was "to have entire control over all vessels of European construction." He was also to draw his orders only from the emperor, as those were relayed via Lay, and undertook "not to attend to any orders conveyed through any other channel."[8]

The result was an impasse, since none of the parties would yield. Osborn was a man of high principles who felt he had been made a firm promise of command. Lay was a man of immense conceit and arrogance (one of his most famous remarks was that "the notion of a gentleman acting *under* an Asiatic barbarian is preposterous").[9] And the Zongli Yamen could not afford to be seen as weak toward foreigners. After weeks of inconclusive bargaining, the Zongli Yamen acknowledged the hopelessness of the situation by paying off Captain Osborn and his crews and sending them home. Both the Americans and the Qing shared fears that the ships might fall into the wrong hands—either to the Southern Confederacy or to the Taiping. Accordingly the British undertook to sell the ships to their own merchant companies. Lay was given a generous cash settlement and dismissed from his service with the Inspectorate of Customs.

The second experiment of the Zongli Yamen in the realm of international sovereignty was more successful. Since its publication in 1836, Henry Wheaton's *Elements of International Law* had become a standard text in the Western diplomatic community. In 1862 the Zongli Yamen had studied a translation of the section on foreign legations. One year later they were offered a draft of the entire work, translated into Chinese by W. A. P. Martin, a missionary from Indiana with long service in Ningbo and Shanghai. After some discussion, they accepted the translation, although Prince Gong ordered his staff to revise it stylistically into a more elegant literary form.

Prince Gong, discussing the translation with the court, observed that he had told the Westerners "that China had her own institutions and systems, and did not feel free to consult foreign books." He took this line, said Gong, "to forestall their demand that we act according to the said book."[10] But when a conflict from the other side of the world—the Prussian-Danish War of 1864—spread into Chinese territorial waters with the seizure by a Prussian warship of three Danish merchant ships at the Dagu anchorage, Prince Gong and his colleagues used Wheaton to good effect. By combining their new knowledge of the accepted definitions of a nation's territorial waters (which Martin had translated as "ocean area within the jurisdiction of a nation") with an examination of China's existing treaties with Prussia, they forced the Prussian minister not only to release the three Danish ships, but to pay China compensation of $1,500. Now noting that although "the said book on foreign laws and regulations is not basically in agreement with the Chinese systems, it nevertheless contains sporadic useful points,"[11] Prince Gong put up 500 taels to publish Wheaton and distributed three hundred copies to provincial officials. Perhaps from fear of conservative backlash, he still declined to write a preface to the volume in his own name.

In 1862 Wenxiang and Prince Gong also obtained the court's permission to open an interpreter's school in Peking. Its small body of students, aged fourteen or less, would be chosen from each of the eight banners and paid a stipend to learn English and French. (Russian had been taught for many years in Peking in a small separate school.) The decision to draw students from the eight banners reflected ongoing attempts to reassure the more conservative Manchus that the former conquerors of the Ming would continue to have a guiding hand over the dictates of foreign-policy work. But in fact the system spread rapidly and was not confined to Manchus. New government-sponsored language schools opened in Shanghai, Canton, and Fuzhou, and in 1867 Prince Gong and Wenxiang began a campaign to transform the Peking school for interpreters into a full-fledged college. They proposed adding to the curriculum such subjects as mathematics, chemistry, geology, mechanics, and international law, and hiring foreigners as instructors. Despite vigorous protests from conservative senior officials that the Chinese had no need for "barbarians as teachers" to instruct them in "trifling arts," and that even the great emperor Kangxi two hundred years before had "used their methods [but] actually hated them," the reformers carried the day. The college, with its new curriculum, was opened in February 1867 under the direction of one of China's pioneering geographers and historians, Xu Jiyu.

The choice of Xu was a good one, and again showed that a new kind of thinking was gaining some ground in China. Xu had learned about the West from American missionaries in Fujian province in the 1840s, and had been one of the earliest appointees to the Zongli Yamen staff. Xu had written glowingly about the West, especially the United States, with its curious kingless government: "The public organs are entrusted to public opinion. There has never been a system of this sort in ancient or modern times. This is really a wonder." Xu had also praised George Washington as "an extraordinary man," superior even to China's own cultural heroes in valor and strategic cunning: "Of all the famous Westerners of ancient and modern times," Xu asked rhetorically, "can Washington be placed in any position but first?"[12] Not surprisingly, the Americans in China were delighted at his appointment, which seemed an excellent omen for future diplomatic relations. The United States' minister to China, Anson Burlingame, gave Xu a copy of Gilbert Stuart's famous portrait of Washington, and Xu's praises of Washington were inscribed on a block of granite from Fujian province and placed at the three-hundred-foot level of the Washington Monument. When Xu retired for health reasons in 1869, he was succeeded by W. A. P. Martin, who, after finishing his translation of Wheaton, had earned a doctorate at Indiana University in international law and political economy to prepare for the new post.

Because it provided much needed funds, the parallel development of the Qing Imperial Maritime Customs was essential to these projects. Under the direction of the capable Robert Hart, who was born in Northern Ireland and had served in the British consulates at Ningbo and Canton before transferring his services to the Qing, the Imperial Maritime Customs was erected on the foundation of the small foreign Inspectorate of 1854, and in the 1860s became an internationally staffed bureaucracy with agencies in all the treaty ports. Hart was able to make huge sums of money available to the Peking government, some of which supported the college and other modernizing projects. Equally important, his staff accumulated accurate statistics on trade patterns and local conditions all over China.

After so many years of warfare and misunderstanding, the later 1860s seemed to be promising ones for cooperation between China and the foreign powers. With revision of the Tianjin treaty of 1858 stipulated to take place in 1868, the Zongli Yamen officials (with the court's cooperation) moved carefully and skillfully in their discussions with the British, who were represented by their articulate, intelligent minister Rutherford Alcock. Both Alcock and Hart submitted position papers to the Zongli Yamen on the types of change they thought China should undertake in administration, education, and budgetary planning. The ministers of the foreign diplomatic community moved peacefully into spacious quarters in Peking, and the question of audiences and kowtowing was shelved by the simple fact that

Tongzhi, because of his youth, gave no audiences. (Only in 1873 was the problem solved, without crisis, when the Qing allowed the foreigners to follow their own customs in paying homage to the emperor.) A group of senior Qing officials traveled to Europe with Hart to observe government systems there, and the Qing court assigned Anson Burlingame, the former U.S. minister to China, as the Chinese representative in treaty discussions in the United States and Europe.

Hosts of difficult questions remained, however, concerning missionary and trading rights, the building of railways and telegraphs, the control of opium sales, the exact status of foreign courts on Chinese soil, and the navigation of internal waterways. After the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, China was suddenly much nearer to Europe, and old greeds and antagonisms that had seemed to slumber appeared once again. To the anger and disappointment of both Alcock and the veteran Zongli Yamen official Wenxiang, their delicate compromises for treaty revision were rejected by a majority vote in the British House of Commons in 1870, wasting years of work. Hart was dismayed and Alcock depressed. Alcock went to call on Wenxiang, to whom he complained of the constant accusations by the British merchant community of being too pliable with the Chinese. With the Zongli Yamen's own plans also lying in ruins, Wenxiang responded: "Yes, no doubt; I see what your newspapers say sometimes. I, too, am accused of being a renegade and only wearing Chinese clothes."[13]

The Missionary Presence

Throughout the 1860s, as officials from the Zongli Yamen struggled to understand their new world and to adjust to it, violence by the Chinese against the Western missionaries formed a harsh accompaniment. In Sichuan and Guizhou and Guangdong, in the rich Grand Canal commercial city of Yangzhou and the barren hills of Shaanxi, missionaries and their converts were harassed, beaten, and occasionally killed, their property threatened or destroyed. Finally, in the summer of 1870 in Tianjin, the very city that had given its name to the 1858 treaties and where many foreign diplomats had made their homes during the protracted negotiations over residence in Peking, the violence burst into hideous prominence.

For months rumors had spread through the city that the Christians had been maiming and torturing children, and practicing every kind of sexual aberration. The Catholics, whose huge new Tianjin church had been built—despite public protest—on the site of a former imperial park and temple, came in for the worst abuse. Seeing himself as the Catholics' main protector, the French consul Henri Fontanier protested several times to the city officials: but they did little to calm the agitation, and large crowds of Chinese continued to menace the foreigners. Frustrated and angry, Fontanier, two pistols tucked into his belt and accompanied by an aide with a drawn sword, rushed into the magistrate's yamen. Furious at the Chinese magistrate's bland prevarication, Fontanier drew one pistol and fired; missing the magistrate, he killed a bystander. A crowd of hostile Chinese, already assembled outside the office, exploded with their own rage. Fontanier and his aide were killed along with several French traders and their wives. The church was burned. The convent of the Catholic Sisters of Mercy was broken into by a mob, and the ten sisters there were attacked, stripped, and killed. By day's end, sixteen French men and women were dead, along with three Russians whom the crowd had thought were French.

The French demand for vengeance came swiftly, and the Qing were forced to respond. Involved in the investigations were Prince Gong and officials of the Zongli Yamen, along with the ailing Zeng Guofan, who as governor-general of the Hebei region had titular jurisdiction over Tianjin, and Li Hongzhang, who was to succeed Zeng. After investigation under torture, sixteen Chinese were found guilty of the attacks and executed. The exact matching of the number of these "criminals" to the French dead was too neat, suggesting the concept of "an eye for an eye" rather than any thorough search for proof of guilt. The Chinese also agreed to pay reparations of 250,000 taels, the money to go in part to the rebuilding of the church and in part to the families of the dead civilians. The prefect and magistrate of the Tianjin region were condemned to exile for life on the Amur River, and the Qing agreed to send a mission of apology to France. It was generally felt that the French would have held out for harsher terms had they not, since that same summer of 1870, been wholly distracted from Asian events by the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War.

The Tianjin "massacre," as the foreigners soon came to call it, was but the bloodiest example of a series of clashes that continued throughout the century. These violent outbreaks revealed the deep fissures that lay between the Christian effort at conversion and the Chinese Confucian gentry's sense of their own worth and authority. It was often highly educated Chinese who wrote the scurrilous, provocative posters and pamphlets attacking the missionaries, and who assembled the crowds prior to many incidents. Behind Chinese exaggerations of Christian excesses lay a complex web of truths that made their exhortations effective: the Christian missionaries did preach a new doctrine at variance with Confucianism, they did seek to penetrate ever deeper into China's interior, they protected Chinese converts engaged in lawsuits with non-Christian Chinese, they developed their own educa-

tional system, and they often misrepresented real-estate deals in which they adapted private homes to churches. Furthermore, in their zeal to save souls, missionaries often accepted, or even sought out, fatally ill infants abandoned by their parents, so that they could baptize them before they died. When the burial grounds of these tiny corpses were dug up by hostile Chinese, it inevitably led to highly charged emotional responses.

Yet the story of the Christian mission movement in China was not just one of exploitation, misunderstanding, and hostility. The missionaries in China represented a wide range of nationalities and religious backgrounds. Besides the Jesuits, other Catholic priests, and members of the mendicant orders, there were a bewildering number of Protestant groupings—over thirty by 1865. These ranged from the original London Missionary Society of 1795 and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, founded in 1810, to separate organizations of Baptists, Southern Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Episcopalians, and Wesleyans. The home bases of these groups were established variously in England, the United States, Sweden, France, the German states, Switzerland, and Holland. Cumulatively, the Catholics and Protestants had deep and subtle effects on Chinese society, particularly in relation to education and in the efforts that they made to raise the status of Chinese women.

In education, the impact of the mission movement came through the spread of Christian texts, the publication of general historical or scientific works, the development of schools, and the introduction of new techniques of medicine. Christian texts spread swiftly in parts of China; we have seen how the future Taiping leader Hong Xiuquan received inspiration from the tracts handed out in and around Canton. Preliminary Chinese translations of the Bible had been finished as early as the 1820s. Careful revisions, supervised by groups of missionaries, were circulating widely in China by 1850, along with a full Manchu version of the New Testament. Special editions of the Bible, in romanization, were prepared for use in the Ningbo, Amoy, and Fuzhou dialect areas and among the Hakkas of the southeast. The development of Western-style printing presses (but using Chinese movable type) greatly aided the task of dissemination undertaken by both Catholics and Protestants.

The wide circulation of works on Western government and history began in the later 1830s, often by way of journals printed by missionary groups in Canton or Shanghai. These works systematically placed China in a world context and made it possible for Chinese scholars to view their country's history in a new way. From such works, introduced to him by the American missionary David Abeel in Amoy during the mid-1840s, the future

head of the Peking college, Xu Jiyu, received his first idea of the range of Western history.

The introduction of scientific and technical texts in translation was given extra impetus by the training schools that were developed along with the new arsenals opened during the first phase of the self-strengthening movement. In 1865 Zeng Guofan himself wrote an approving preface to Euclid's *Elements of Geometry,* translated by the British missionary Alexander Wylie. Zeng noted that Wylie's work completed the pioneering translation of Euclid's first six books done by the Jesuit Matteo Ricci over two hundred fifty years before. The completed translation, wrote Zeng, made a crucial supplement to pre-existing Chinese works on mathematics: although traditional Chinese mathematical learning could not be dispensed with, one could not deny that the student "sticking blindly" to it "after a lifetime spent in practical mathematics knows his rules indeed, but knows nothing of the reason for them, so that mathematics are thought by some an impossible study." Euclid, as presented by Ricci and Wylie, traced not methods but *principles,* "presented under the headings of point, line, surface and solid." A clear understanding of these elements, said Zeng, "will enable the student to solve the manifold problems of number."[14] During the 1860s, Wylie also wrote, or translated into Chinese, treatises on mechanics, algebra, differential calculus, astronomy, and logarithmic tables. By the late 1870s, other Western scholars had prepared Chinese texts on electricity, inorganic chemistry, the steam engine, photography, lathes, trigonometrical surveying, and navigation.

The number of mission schools in China increased steadily throughout the nineteenth century, spreading upcoast and inland with the opening of each new treaty port. Often run by individual missionaries or by a tiny handful of teachers, these schools not only prepared young Chinese for English-speaking jobs in the treaty ports, but were designed to lead Chinese children to an understanding of Christian principles and, if possible, to convert the youngsters and train them for later work alongside the Western missionaries. Although viewed with suspicion by traditional Chinese teachers, the great significance of these schools was that they offered some form of basic education to poor Chinese, both boys and girls, who otherwise would have received none.

Because the mission schools were unfamiliar and objects of local fears, the missionary-teachers often had to lure students with offers of free food and housing, medical care, and even clothing and cash subsidies. Such was the case at the mission school in the early treaty port of Ningbo, which admitted thirty boys in 1844 and managed to graduate a first class of eight

in 1850. Of these eight, one stayed to teach in the school, one went on to study medicine, and four were hired to work with the Presbyterian printing press. Qilu School in Shandong province opened with only eight pupils in 1864 and graduated its first three in 1877. Their studies had included a grounding in Chinese classics and Christian ethics, along with English, mathematics, music, and geography, and all three graduates went on to teach or become missionary assistants. Yung Wing, later to become Zeng's assistant in buying foreign machinery, had been tutored from the age of seven to twelve by a missionary's wife in a mixed primary school in Macao. He then enrolled in a Macao missionary school at the age of thirteen to study English, Chinese, geography, and arithmetic with five others. By 1847 Yung was well enough prepared to travel to the United States, with funds provided by local Western merchants and free passage on a tea clipper.

Like other young Chinese of his day, Yung Wing had been impressed by what he saw of Western medicine and initially hoped to become a doctor. Western missionaries were quick to note the impact of medical knowledge on the Chinese, and it was the "medical missionaries" who had the greatest early successes in gaining converts. It was not that China lacked medical sophistication of its own—there was a long tradition of diagnosis by study of the pulses, and of treatment through extracts of plants, animal derivatives, minerals, and acupuncture—but by the early nineteenth century the West had much greater knowledge of anatomy and more sophisticated skills in surgery. Although there were always some fatalities, which could cause local hostility or lawsuits, Western doctors proved especially successful in removing tumors and curing diseases of the eyes such as cataracts. By the 1860s, both missionary and unaffiliated doctors were beginning to build hospitals with money given by Western philanthropists or raised by subscription from local Chinese. Initially, these buildings were concentrated, of necessity, in the treaty ports, as were such accompanying centers as homes for the blind, for lepers, and for the insane. Other missionaries introduced new seed strains to Chinese farmers, and new varieties of fruits and plants; some also applied their energies to reforestation projects, attempting to halt the serious erosion that had been causing havoc on China's now barren hillsides.

Through their texts, their presses, their schools, and their hospitals, the efforts of missionaries affected Chinese thought and practice. The strength of that influence is impossible to calculate, but the missionaries did offer the Chinese a new range of options, a new way of looking at the world. The same was true in the broader world of family structures and the roles of women. Several of the early missionaries were women, and the wives of dozens of male missionaries also played an active role in their communities.

Yung Wing recalled his first teacher, a white woman whom he encountered in 1835, as having "prominent features which were strong and assertive; her eyes were of clear blue lustre, somewhat deep set. She had thin lips, supported by a square chin.... Her features taken collectively indicated great determination and will power. As she came forward to welcome me in her long and full flowing white dress (the interview took place in the summer), surmounted by two large globe sleeves which were fashionable at the time and which lent her an exaggerated appearance, I remember most vividly I was no less puzzled than stunned. I actually trembled all over with fear at her imposing proportions—having never in my life seen such a peculiar and odd fashion. I clung to my father in fear."[15]

Yet the fear could be transcended. Thousands of Chinese learned to study from, work with, be treated by, even become friends of Westerners. The Western women presented options of public work and careers that had seemed impossible to Chinese women. As the century progressed and mission families moved deep into the interior, they created their own versions of Western domestic worlds and values. They shared these with Chinese women, introducing them to new ideas of hygiene, cuisine, and child raising. They protested foot-binding, commiserated over opium addiction, offered religion and education as sources of solace and change. Some of the bolder ones offered a new perspective on social hierarchies and sexual subordination.

Robert Hart, later the revered inspector-general of the Imperial Maritime Customs, as a young man in the Ningbo and Canton of the 1850s had kept a Chinese mistress who bore him three children. It was "a common practice for unmarried Englishmen resident in China to keep a Chinese girl," he wrote later in a confidential legal deposition, "and I did as others did."[16] When it came time for him to wed a lady of good British family, he paid off the Chinese woman with $3,000 and shipped their children off to England so they would not embarrass him with their presence. Yet such double standards did not always prevail in personal relations between Westerners and Chinese. Yung Wing married an American woman from Hartford, who bore him two children, both of whom enrolled at Yale University. And in his memoirs Yung recalled vividly how his first formidable Western teacher had also been helping three blind Chinese girls to read in Braille, doing everything she could to save them from the bleak life that would have been their probable lot. By century's end, the options for some Chinese women had become broader than either Yung Wing or Robert Hart could have foreseen. In 1892 two young Chinese mission-school graduates, their names Westernized as Ida Kahn and Mary Stone, sailed to the United States and earned their medical degrees at the University of Michi-

gan. By 1896 they were back in China and had opened their own practices. The success of these women and the faith that inspired it were a startling tribute to the power of one side of the missionary dream.

Overseas Chinese

Tens of millions of Chinese were killed or left homeless in the waves of internal rebellions, and the accompanying famine and social dislocation, that marked the mid-nineteenth century. Yet the pressures on the land continued to be unrelenting. China's population had probably reached 430,000,000 by 1850, and even though it must have dipped sharply in the 1860s, it began to climb once more in the 1870s.

One response to the scarcity of arable land was internal migration, but the Chinese had no alternative as straightforward as that of the westward migrations to the Great Plains and the Pacific Coast that marked the same period in United States history. Chinese settlers moving west or northwest came either to the high, arid plateaus of Tibet or to the vast deserts of Xinjiang, which was finally incorporated as a province of the Qing in 1884 but remained forbidding territory. Those moving southwest encountered hostile mountain tribes or the settled borders of already established kingdoms in Vietnam and Burma. Millions chose to move northeast, first to the settled arable regions of Liaodong—the staging area long before for the Manchu conquest—and then, defying all bans by the Qing state, north again into the wooded mountains and bitter cold of what is now Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces. Others braved the short sea passage to swell the number of immigrants on Taiwan, which had become thoroughly opened to Chinese settlement and agriculture by the 1850s and was named a full province in 1885. And some chose to leave the countryside and try their luck in the expanding cities—such as Hankou, Shanghai, or Tianjin—where new industries and the need for transport workers offered chances for employment, even if at pitifully low wages.

The other main response to the demographic crisis was to move out of the known Chinese world altogether and to try one's fortunes elsewhere. Those who made this choice were mostly from southeast China, and used Canton or Macao as their points of debarkation. Some were destitute farmers, some fugitives from rebel regimes, some the ambitious children of large families who saw few opportunities for advancement in Qing society. Most were men who often married just before they left China and dreamed of returning someday to their native villages, loaded with riches, so they could buy more land and expand their families' waning fortunes. They tended to

focus their hopes initially on three main regions: Southeast Asia and Indonesia, the Caribbean and the northern countries of Latin America, and the western coast of the United States.

Emigration to Southeast Asia was cheapest and easiest, and many Chinese settled quickly into rice-farming or fishing communities, and into retail and commercial businesses. Even though the upper levels of economic life might be dominated by the British, the French, or the Dutch (according to the region chosen), Chinese emigrants found ample room for their entrepreneurial skills. They branched out successfully into tin mines and rubber plantations, and into shipping. Under Dutch rule in Indonesia, the Chinese served profitably as tax collectors, working under contract, and as managers of the Dutch-controlled opium monopoly.

Because so many of these new settlers came from Fujian or the Canton delta region, local community bondings and dialect groups remained important, and Chinese from similar neighborhoods tended to cluster together and support each other. Triads and other secret-society groups also flourished, setting up protection rackets, channeling opium sales, arranging cheap passages on credit, and running prostitution rings; as late as 1890, there were still few married Chinese women in the Southeast Asian communities. Despite their uneasiness about the extent of the emigration, the Qing set up a consulate in Singapore in 1873 so that they could keep closer watch on the half a million or more Chinese settlers in that area. They also tried to retain the loyalty of the richer emigrants by selling them honorary titles in the Qing hierarchy.

Latin America, too, drew large numbers of Chinese settlers, especially after 1840, when several countries in the region experienced rapid economic growth. Along with increasing opposition there to the use of slave labor, and the availability of cheap passages on steam vessels, this rapid development beckoned to the Chinese with the promise of jobs. Close to 100,000, for instance, had come to Peru by 1875, often lured by promoters and handbills promising them great riches. Instead of making great fortunes, most of these Chinese laid railway lines, toiled on the cotton plantations, and labored in the guano pits, where conditions were particularly vile. There, the Chinese worked in boiling heat to clear as much as 4 to 5 tons of the bird droppings in a single day, which often led to infections, lung disease, and premature death. Others worked as domestics, cigar makers, and millers. Many of the Chinese had signed labor contracts without understanding their full implications, and those who fled from the areas where they were contracted to work were, if caught, forced to work in chains. There were many suicides. In Cuba, where tens of thousands of Chinese were working on the sugar plantations by the 1860s, conditions were equally bad. The

Chinese were often treated more like slaves than free labor, forced to work inhuman hours on docked pay, and were similarly punished if they fled their workplaces or argued with their employers. Conditions were little better on the sugarcane and pineapple plantations of Hawaii, where thousands of Chinese had also settled.

In 1873 the Zongli Yamen initiated a new phase of foreign-policy activism by authorizing investigation commissions to report on the conditions of life and work for Chinese in both Peru and Cuba. (Yung Wing, who had just successfully concluded the purchase of $100,000 of Gatling repeating guns for the Tianjin arsenal, was a delegate on the Peruvian commission.) The two commission reports gave startling evidence of the abuses that existed not only in working conditions, but in the original procurement of the Chinese laborers. Thousands had clearly been tricked into signing up or cheated once they had done so. A great many had literally been kidnaped by procurers for the plantation owners, and held incommunicado in hulks at Macao or Canton before being shipped off. Conditions of passage were so bad—often amounting to less than 6 square feet of space per coolie "passenger"—that scores died on every voyage and Chinese "mutinies" were commonplace. From 1876 on, mainly in response to these reports, the worst abuses of the contract-labor practices were abolished and shipping procedures were more carefully regulated.

The first great impetus for Chinese emigration to the United States came with the gold rush of 1848–1849 in California; indeed, the first name in Chinese for San Francisco was *Jinshan* (金山), meaning "mountain of gold." But few Chinese arrived in time to make lucrative strikes, and most of them, after working over mines already abandoned by less tenacious forerunners, slowly drifted into other lines of work. They flourished as market gardeners, storekeepers, and laundrymen, spreading along the coast from Los Angeles to Seattle. Thousands worked on the final stages of the great railway-building boom that extended the lines from California to Utah in the 1860s. The gradual Chinese migration eastward across the United States subsequently coincided with the later stages of the American move west: startled travelers on the Oregon Trail reported in their diaries seeing their first Chinese eating with chopsticks. Portland had a large Chinese population by 1880, while other settlements arose in the mountains of Wyoming Territory and along the Snake River in Idaho. After the Civil War, southern plantation owners lured many Chinese to Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee and tried to induce them to work fields now abandoned by freed black slaves. By the later 1880s, there were Chinese working in shoe factories in Massachusetts, cutlery plants in Pennsylvania, and steam laundries in New Jersey, and there was a sizable group of Chinese merchants in Boston.

The process of Chinese settlement in the United States was not an easy one. From early on, hostility toward the Chinese settlers was complex and profound. Part of the trouble lay in the stated desire of many Chinese, echoing those who had gone to Southeast Asia and Peru, simply to work for a few years in the United States before returning home to their families. This led the Chinese to be regarded as "sojourners" rather than true immigrants. Part of the difficulty also lay in the industrious work habits of the Chinese, which caused them to be envied for making a profit where others had failed. There was a common belief among white workers that the Chinese would always work for lower wages than those of other races and, hence, would drag down pay scales across the board. Although there was little truth in that assertion, there were occasions when employers used the Chinese as strikebreakers. Knowing little or no English, the Chinese were often ignorant of the social and economic battles into which they had been projected.

The Chinese—or "Mongols," as many whites began to call them—were also disliked or feared by Westerners because of the relative strangeness of their social customs. The Qing queues that many of the men still wore looked bizarre in the United States. Americans noted the extremely high proportion of men over women in the Chinese communities—more than 100,000 male Chinese were living in the western United States in 1880, but only 3,000 women—and, without seeking to understand the reasons, condemned the Chinese as unnatural. The singsong sound of Chinese speech, the opium-smoking proclivities of some and the yearning for drink or gambling of others, their willingness to eat what appeared to be odd or unappetizing food—all combined to build a rumor-filled climate of opinion in which Chinese wickedness and depravity were given prominence.

Two unfortunate facts lent some appearance of validity to the wilder charges. First, like Chinese emigrants in other areas, the Chinese in the United States clung together according to dialect and locality groups. The majority of them came from within a hundred miles of Canton, and when they landed in San Francisco, most were at once incorporated into subgroups controlled by the "Six Companies." These companies had ties to Chinese secret societies and, like them, had overlapping functions as protection systems and as economic exploiters. Rival Chinese groups became involved in numerous "tong wars," battles between feuding gangs that gave the Chinese as a whole a reputation for lawlessness. Second, the crowding of Chinese into "Chinatowns" in the United States—whether in San Francisco, Los

Angeles, Portland, or later in New York—compounded by scarce housing and the loneliness of thousands of single males, led to an explosive social situation, sexual frustrations, and the prevalence of disease. The irony was that anti-Chinese discriminatory legislation concerning housing, schooling, work permits, and eating establishments tended all the more to force the Chinese into Chinatowns and keep them there. Redress was not easy to find. Chinese in many states were not allowed to testify against whites in court and were forbidden to hold public-service jobs. Most had to struggle for even basic educational opportunities.

Within a few years of the first settlements in 1849, underlying tensions burst into open violence, deliberately fanned by the racist rhetoric of white workers and their political supporters. The worst examples were in California and Wyoming. In October 1871, after two policemen had been killed trying to intervene in a tong battle, a crowd smashed through the Chinatown in Los Angeles, looting shops, burning houses, and beating up any Chinese they found. The crowd ultimately killed nineteen Chinese men, women, and children and injured hundreds before the civic authorities checked them. (By a macabre coincidence the Chinese fatalities in Los Angeles exactly matched in number the French and Russians killed in the "Tianjin massacre" of 1870.) Fourteen years later in Rock Springs, Wyoming Territory, groups of poorly-off white miners first beat a Chinese miner to death with a shovel, then burned the camps of Chinese migrant workers and killed at least twenty-eight. Scores of lesser incidents occurred in the same period, playing an integral, if unfortunate, part in the "opening of the West."

Unaccustomed to recognizing the rights of any Chinese who traveled overseas, the Qing reacted slowly, although officials in the Zongli Yamen were aware of the kinds of problems that existed. In 1867 they had obtained the services of the former American minister, Anson Burlingame, as ambassador-at-large. The next year Burlingame, in language echoing the most optimistic promises of the French philosophers of a century before, passionately pleaded the cause of the Chinese in his tour across the United States and Europe. "The present enlightened Government of China has advanced steadily along the path of progress," Burlingame told his audiences. "She says now: 'Send us your wheat, your lumber, your coal, your silver, your goods from everywhere—we will take as many of them as we can. We will give you back our tea, our silk, free labor which we have sent so largely out into the world.'" His power of persuasion led the United States to sign a treaty in 1868 guaranteeing continued Chinese rights of immigration. But Burlingame also muddled the issue by promising that the Qing state was ripe for conversion to Christianity: it would only be a short while, he cried, before China invited the Western missionaries "to plant the shining cross on every hill and in every valley, for she is hospitable to fair argument."[17] Following up on Burlingame's initiative, the Qing sent diplomatic representatives to France and England in 1871 and had a full ambassador in the United States by 1878.

But political pressures against the Chinese spread from California to Washington, D.C. In a series of closely contested electoral battles between Democrats and Republicans, there was growing preoccupation with the need to limit Chinese immigration before it became a flood. In 1879 President Rutherford B. Hayes stayed true to the sense of the 1868 treaty by vetoing a bill to limit Chinese emigrants to fifteen per ship. In 1880, however, the Qing were persuaded to agree to a new treaty that authorized the United States to "regulate, limit or suspend" the flow of Chinese laborers if the American government considered such restriction "reasonable." In 1882 President Chester A. Arthur, new to office after James Garfield's assassination, decided not to veto a bill that "suspended" the immigration of Chinese skilled and unskilled "laborers" for ten years, forced all Chinese then in the United States to obtain special registration certificates, and banned them from obtaining United States citizenship. In 1884 he accepted further legislation that broadened the term *laborers* to include "peddlers, hucksters and fishermen" and applied the restrictions to all those of the "Chinese race," whether they were Qing subjects or not.

So ended the dream of making the United States a haven for all the poor and oppressed of the world regardless of race, religion, or background. The passing of that dream was confirmed by successive presidents. Grover Cleveland in 1888 proclaimed the Chinese "an element ignorant of our constitution and laws, impossible of assimilation with our people, and dangerous to our peace and welfare," and endorsed new legislation that forbade re-entry to Chinese laborers who had returned to China on temporary visits.[18] Benjamin Harrison, accepting the Republican nomination in the same year, spoke of his "duty to defend our civilization by excluding alien races whose ultimate assimilation with our people is neither possible nor desirable." After his election, Harrison chose as secretary of state a man committed to the view that, far from helping to develop the U.S. economy, the Chinese had brought with them "the seeds of moral and physical disease, of destitution, and of death."[19] Americans were now choosing to make judgments about Chinese inferiority that were as harsh and comprehensive as any that Qing statesmen had made about the rest of the world in the days of Qing glory.

CHAPTER 10

New Tensions in the Late Qing

Self-strengthening and the Japanese War

The Confucian statesmen whose skill, integrity, and tenacity helped suppress the rebellions of the mid-nineteenth century showed how imaginatively the Chinese could respond to new challenges. Under the general banner of restoring order to the Qing Empire, they had managed to develop new structures to handle foreign relations and collect custom dues, to build modern ships and weapons, and to start teaching international law and the rudiments of modern science. "Self-strengthening" had not proved an empty slogan, but an apparently viable road to a more secure future. Progressive-minded Chinese and Manchus seemed able to work together in order to preserve the most cherished aspects of their traditional cultures by selectively adapting elements of Western learning and technology to China's needs. It was true that there remained complex problems of continuing rural militarization, new local autonomy over taxation, landlord abuses and bureaucratic corruption, and bellicose foreign powers with their military, diplomatic, and missionary encroachments. But with forceful imperial leadership and a resolute Grand Council, it appeared that the Qing dynasty might regain some of its former strength.

Unfortunately for the survival of the dynasty, forceful leadership was not forthcoming. Tongzhi, in the name of whose rule the Tongzhi Restoration of central and provincial government had been undertaken, died suddenly at the age of eighteen in January 1875, shortly after taking up power in person. The official cause of death was smallpox, but it was widely rumored that he had exhausted himself with wild living and overindulgence in the

pleasure quarters of Peking. His young empress was pregnant when he died, but seems to have been excluded from the crucial meetings called by Tongzhi's mother, the empress dowager Cixi, to decide on the imperial succession.

The only way for Cixi to preserve her own power was to continue in her role as regent; accordingly she appointed her three-year-old nephew, Guangxu, as emperor, thus assuring herself of years more activity as the power behind the throne. The success of this stratagem was assured when Tongzhi's pregnant wife died that spring, her baby still unborn.* The choice of Guangxu, however, violated a fundamental law of Qing succession: Guangxu was from the same generation as Tongzhi, not from a later one, and so could not properly perform the filial ancestral ceremonies in Tongzhi's memory. Cixi silenced any overt opposition on this point by promising that when a son was born to Guangxu, that son would be adopted as Tongzhi's heir and so would be able to perform the necessary rites. One upright Confucian official committed suicide outside Tongzhi's tomb to protest Cixi's decision, but no other scholars made as dramatic an issue of their discontent. Senior bureaucrats on the whole were silent, apparently resigned to another protracted period of indirect rule by the powerful female regent.

Cixi was a complex and able woman, though also tough-minded and ruthless when she considered it necessary. She was the only woman to attain a high level of political power in China during the Qing, and was consequently blamed for many of the dynasty's woes by men who thought she should not have been in power at all. Born in 1835—her father was descended from a distinguished Manchu lineage, but held only a minor official position in the bureaucracy—Cixi was named one of Emperor Xianfeng's consorts in 1851 and became his favorite in 1856, when she bore him a son. Xianfeng discussed policy matters with her and allowed her to read incoming memorials. She accompanied him to Rehe when he fled the advancing Allies in 1860, and had herself named coregent of China in a palace coup following Xianfeng's death in 1861. Cixi's political power thenceforth sprang from her position as coregent for her son Tongzhi from 1861 to 1873, and as coregent for her nephew Guangxu from 1875 to 1889. She also was the ultimate political authority while Guangxu languished in palace seclusion—on her orders—from 1898 to 1908. Highly literate and a competent painter, Cixi kept herself well informed on all affairs of state as she sat behind a screen (for propriety's sake) and listened to her male ministers' reports. Politically conservative and financially extravagant, she nevertheless approved

*It is almost certain that the pregnant widow of Tongzhi was driven to suicide by Cixi, but the evidence remains disputed.

many of the self-strengtheners' restoration ventures; at the same time, she tried jealously to guard the prerogatives of the ruling Manchu imperial line.

Since foreign-policy issues were going to be at the fore in all decision making, it was unfortunate that Cixi had clashed badly in 1869 with Prince Gong after he had caused the execution of one of her favorite eunuchs, who was convicted of grossly abusing his power. The growth of uncontrolled power in the hands of the eunuchs, and its attendant corruption, had traditionally been a hallmark of declining dynastic competence, and early Qing rulers had vowed never to repeat the late Ming mistake of allowing eunuchs to dominate the court. Prince Gong may have been trying to prevent the re-emergence of such a situation, but empress dowager Cixi took the killing personally and thereafter managed to block Prince Gong from holding positions of power.

Further diluting the strength of the Qing, the powerful provincial statesman Zeng Guofan died in 1872, the skillful Wenxiang died in 1876, and Zuo Zongtang remained preoccupied with the pacification of the Muslims in China's far northwest. The grand councilors in Peking, though worthy enough men with distinguished careers behind them, tended to be conservative and lacked the skill or initiative to direct China on a new course. Although self-strengthening programs continued to be implemented during the last decades of the nineteenth century, a disproportionate number of them were initiated by one man, Li Hongzhang. Li was trusted by the empress dowager Cixi; after the suppression of the Taiping and Nian rebellions, and the negotiations in the aftermath of the Tianjin massacre, he was posted to north China in the dual capacity of governor-general of the Hebei region and commissioner of trade for the northern ports. More than any person, he put his imprint on the closing years of the century in China.

Li Hongzhang's political endeavors fell largely into three broad areas: entrepreneurial, educational, and diplomatic. As an entrepreneur he built on the foundations laid during the earlier phase of the self-strengthening movement. He sought to diversify China's enterprise into areas that would have long-range effects on the country's overall development. These initiatives would involve the Qing government and individual merchant capitalists in joint operations under a formula called "government supervision and merchant management." One such project, founded by Li Hongzhang in 1872, was the China Merchant Steamship Navigation Company, which was designed to stop the domination of China's coastal shipping by foreign powers. The company, in which Li himself was a principle shareholder, drew much of its income from contracts to transship the government taxation grain from central China to the Peking region. After 1877 the Kaiping coal

mines near Tianjin were enormously expanded, on Li's orders, to give China more control over its own mineral resources and to provide fuel for China's expanding navy of steamships. Li also founded a sizable cotton mill at Shanghai in 1878 to cut into the rising imports of textiles.

In the 1880s Li went on to develop arsenals in Tianjin, which manufactured the bullets and shells for the Remington and Krupp guns that he now began to buy from abroad. A start was soon made on manufacturing the Remington rifles themselves with purchased American equipment. Li developed a national telegraph system by linking the international cables—which had terminated at Shanghai—first to Tianjin and then to Peking; branch wires were then extended to many large inland cities. He also directed the construction of new dock facilities in the south Manchurian city of Lüshun and a seven-mile stretch of railway line to carry coal from the Kaiping mines to a nearby canal, whence it could be shipped to Tianjin and used by the new fleet. Originally the cars were pulled down the tracks by mules, but in 1881 one of Li's assistants used Western scrap parts to build China's first steam engine, which was employed successfully on the line.

Li Hongzhang carried forward earlier efforts at educational reform as well. He originally threw his support behind the proposal for an educational mission in the United States, an idea first formulated by Yung Wing and backed by Zeng Guofan. The court gave its consent, and in 1872 the first group of Chinese boys aged twelve to fourteen—many of them the children of employees in China's new arsenals and shipyards at Fuzhou, Tianjin, and Shanghai—were sent to Hartford, Connecticut. There they lived with local American families and plunged into a busy round of English-language training, general education, and Chinese studies. By 1875 there were 120 in all. But in the school and social environments of this American city, it was hard for the Chinese students to maintain the traditional cultural values that Qing officials insisted on. The boys began to dress in Western style, abandoning their robes, and several of them cut off their queues under local pressure or mockery. Many were attracted to Christianity. Yung Wing's own marriage to one of the Hartford teachers was a further example of the strong attraction the West had on these students.

But the final blow to Li's mission was the belated discovery that the United States government would not permit a select group of the students, once having completed their high-school education, to enroll in the naval and military academies at Annapolis and West Point, as Li had hoped. So in 1881 he acquiesced in the decision made by conservative Qing officials to close the educational mission and bring the students home. They returned to China by sea from San Francisco in August 1881. Their final triumph

on American soil was their defeat of the local Oakland baseball team, which had expected a walkover but was routed by the wicked curveball of the Chinese pitcher. Upon their return to China, many of the students became influential in the armed services, engineering, and business; but Li Hongzhang henceforth dispatched his most promising students to France, Germany, or Great Britain, where the governments did not object to their receiving technically advanced military and naval training. He also established both a naval and a military academy in Tianjin itself.

The world of international diplomacy was even more inhospitable to the Qing. Here Li Hongzhang worked—sometimes on his own, sometimes in conjunction with Robert Hart, and sometimes with the Zongli Yamen—to try to handle a wide range of difficult problems. In the 1870s these included negotiations with the Japanese over the international status of the Ryukyu Islands and Korea. In neither of these cases were the Qing able to make a convincing claim for special Chinese rights, for the old system of "tributary relationships," designed so many centuries ago to show China's cultural superiority over these nearby territories, was now seriously weakened. The Qing court, indeed, was totally unprepared to respond to the extraordinary expansion of Japanese power in this period. It was only since 1854 that the American commodore Matthew C. Perry had forced the Japanese to end their isolation and to acknowledge the realities of international relations and foreign trade. Yet so effective had been the sweeping economic and institutional reforms of the Meiji Restoration beginning in 1868 that Japan could now bring superior military force to bear on China. In 1879 the Japanese annexed the Ryukyus, and Korea might well have suffered a similar fate in the 1880s had not Li persuaded the Korean king to sign treaties with the United States, Britain, France, and Germany (which, since 1871, had become a unified state).

In 1876 Li also had to conduct complex negotiations with the British after one of their consuls, Augustus Margary, was murdered by local tribesmen in Yunnan. Margary had been on assignment with a British survey team exploring the feasibility of road or railway routes from Burma into Yunnan. In the resulting convention, Li, representing the Qing, essentially acknowledged the dynasty's weakness by agreeing to pay an indemnity of 700,000 taels, to send a mission of apology to Queen Victoria, and to open four more treaty ports. More beneficial to China's interests were the negotiations with Russia conducted in the late 1870s by the Zongli Yamen and Zeng Guofan's son, now the Qing minister to Great Britain. By the Treaty of St. Petersburg of 1881, the Russians agreed to abrogate an earlier unequal treaty and to return to Qing rule the sections of Ili that had been under Russian occupation since the outbreak of the Muslim rebellions. Although

Russia still held huge areas of former Qing territory north of the Amur and Ussuri rivers, the St. Petersburg treaty assured China control of her far western borders, a sovereignty confirmed when Xinjiang was declared a province in 1884.

Success with Russia bred false confidence at court and among Qing scholar-officials. When the French expanded their colonial empire by occupying Hanoi and Haiphong in 1880—despite Chinese claims to special rights in the area—and began to pressure China for new concessions in Annam (now Vietnam), Li Hongzhang urged caution. But his pleas were swept aside by the excited urging of belligerent Chinese and Manchus, who insisted that the Qing take a strong stand on this matter of principle. While Li was attempting negotiations with France in 1884 to avoid the outbreak of hostilities, those in favor of strong measures continued to fight with the French in Annam and in neighboring Tonkin. The admiral in command of the French fleet in the region responded to these intermittent hostilities by moving his forces into the harbor at Fuzhou and anchoring near the Chinese fleet.

Li Hongzhang had urged a negotiated settlement with the French, however humiliating it might seem, because he knew how frail the newly developed Chinese navy was. When negotiations broke down in August 1884 and the French fleet in Fuzhou opened fire, Li was catastrophically proved correct, and the disparities between a developed industrial power and Qing China made once more clear to all. The French fleet consisted of 8 warships and 2 torpedo boats, carrying among them over 70 heavy guns and numerous machine guns. These French ships were interspersed in the harbor with the vessels of nonbelligerent nations, which made the French fleet hard to target. Moored nearby, the Chinese had the 11 ships of their new "self-strengthening" southern fleet—all but 2 made of wood—as well as some old war junks and armed rowboats. These ships together mounted 45 new guns, mainly of small caliber. At 1:56 P.M. on August 22, the French admiral ordered his fleet to open fire. The Chinese flagship was sunk by torpedoes in the first minute of battle; within seven minutes, most of the Chinese ships were hit; within one hour every ship was sunk or on fire and the arsenal and docks destroyed. The French counted 5 dead, the Chinese 521 dead and 51 missing. Although the Qing subsequently won some indecisive land battles in the southwest, French control over Indochina was now assured. A year later the British emulated French aggressiveness and declared Burma a protectorate.

Li Hongzhang could have sent the northern segment of the Qing navy to reinforce the southern segment in Fuzhou; instead he chose to conserve those forces and strengthen them further, as well as use them to bolster his

own bureaucratic and administrative power base. Besides bearing testimony to his power and prestige, the most important task of this fleet was to hold open the sea lanes to Korea. The Qing had created a new senior post, that of Chinese "resident" in Seoul, charged with the difficult task of maintaining warm relations with the Korean court, and making sure that Korean "independence" did not mean the weakening of China's privileged status in the country. The Qing wished to ensure that Japan did not gain a permanent foothold there. During the 1890s tensions heightened as Japanese designs on the peninsula became apparent. In 1894, when the outbreak of a domestic rebellion threatened the Korean king, both China and Japan seized the opportunity to send troops to protect the royal family. The Japanese, who were able to move more troops faster than the Chinese, seized the Korean palace on July 21 and appointed a "regent" loyal to their interests.

That same day the Qing commissioned a British transport to convey some 1,200 Chinese reinforcements to Korea. Intercepted by a Japanese cruiser and refusing to surrender, the transport was fired on by the Japanese and sunk; fewer than 200 men survived. By the end of the month, Japanese land troops had defeated the Chinese in a series of battles around

Seoul and Pyongyang; in October the Japanese crossed the Yalu River and entered Qing territory. The following month another Japanese army seized the strongly fortified harbor at Lüshun. Japan's land forces were now poised to enter China proper through Shanhaiguan, as Dorgon had done two and a half centuries before.

The north China navy, despite Li's efforts to conserve it, was now to suffer a fate similar to the southern navy's, with yet more damaging consequences to China's self-strengthening goals. This northern fleet, consisting of 2 battleships, 10 cruisers, and 2 torpedo boats, had already been badly damaged by the Japanese in a September battle off the mouth of the Yalu, and had retreated to the heavily defended port of Weihaiwei on the northern side of the Shandong peninsula. There the Chinese admiral retired his fleet behind a protective curtain of contact mines and took no further part in the fighting. But in a brilliant maneuver carried through in January 1895, a Japanese force of 20,000 troops and 10,000 field laborers marched across the Shandong promontory and seized the Weihaiwei defensive forts from the landward side. Turning the guns on the Chinese fleet and simultaneously penetrating the mine fields with torpedo boats, they destroyed one of the battleships and four cruisers. The two senior Chinese admirals and the senior Qing commandants of the forts all committed suicide.

Desperate, the court turned to the disgraced Prince Gong to help with negotiations, just as it had thirty-five years before when the summer palace had been burned during the disastrous Tianjin treaty negotiations. The prince sadly told a Western diplomat that he had been given the job of "piecing together the cup which the present ministers have smashed to the floor."[1] To assist Prince Gong the Qing chose the most visible of those ministers, Li Hongzhang, and it was he who was made to go to Japan in person and negotiate with the victors.

The terms of the ensuing Treaty of Shimonoseki, made final in April 1895, were disastrous for China. They would have been even worse had a Japanese assassin not fired at Li, wounding him in the face below the left eye and shaming the Japanese government before the world. China had to recognize "the full and complete independence and autonomy of Korea," which, under the circumstances, effectively made Korea a Japanese protectorate. The Qing also promised to pay Japan 200 million taels in war indemnities, added four more treaty ports—including Chongqing, far up the Yangzi in Sichuan province—and ceded to Japan "in perpetuity" all of Taiwan, the Pescadores, and the Liaodong region of southern Manchuria. The Japanese were also to be allowed to build factories and other industrial enterprises in any of the treaty port areas. Russian, German, and French protests forced the Japanese to relinquish the claim to Liaodong in exchange

for an additional indemnity of 30 million taels, but all the other treaty stipulations were confirmed. Many of China's brightest young scholars, assembled in Peking for the triennial *jinshi* examinations, braved the court's wrath by passionately denouncing the Treaty of Shimonoseki and calling for a new, bolder program of economic growth and governmental reform to offset China's tragic losses. But the Qing court seemed paralyzed. It was a dark conclusion to the brightest hopes of the era of self-strengthening.

The Reform Movement of 1898

During the closing decade of the nineteenth century, China was in a curious, ambiguous position. Elements of old and new existed side by side. At many levels the pace of change seemed overwhelming and irreversible. Steamboats plied the Yangzi, huge new banks lined the waterfront in Shanghai, military academies were training young officers in Western tactics, scientific textbooks were rolling off the presses, and memorials flashed by telegraph from the provinces to the Grand Council. Victorious in a series of wars, the Western powers had imposed their presence on China and were now beginning to invest heavily in the country, especially in mines, modern communications, and heavy industry. The impact of foreign imperialism was profound, intensifying tensions already generated by the self-strengthening movement.

Yet much of this apparent change was confined to the treaty port cities and within them to the Western concession areas. Penetration of the Chinese countryside by even the most aggressive foreign businesses was slow, and in nearly all cases the Westerners relied on their Chinese-merchant intermediaries—the so-called compradors—to open up markets for their products through the traditional trade and distribution routes. For most young Chinese men from well-to-do families, the patterns of education remained unchanged: they memorized the Confucian classics, and labored to obtain their local *shengyuan* degrees before proceeding to the provincial *juren* and national *jinshi* examinations. In town and country, girls still had little access to formal education, their feet were still bound, and their marriages arranged by their parents. In the fields, sowing and harvesting were done by hand, the produce laboriously carried to market. Foreigners, if seen at all, were regarded as exotic or menacing. Chinese diplomats, posted overseas, received little prestige from the appointments and were often humiliated on their return and forced into early retirement.

Where a true interpenetration of tradition and change occurred, it was often a long-term, almost invisible development. Chinese farmers, responding to new domestic demands for cash crops such as tobacco or cotton, could make much greater profits than before, but were also more vulnerable to local market swings. Those growing tea or producing silk were in fact responding to world market demands, and sudden unexplained swoops of prosperity and dearth were the effects of world price fluctuations. The refined technology of machine silk weaving in Japan and the United States required a greater evenness of thread, which meant that peasant families, who for generations had spun silk thread by hand from the cocoons, faced a shrinking market for their product. The technology of the printing press and the spread of a new urban readership spurred the growth of journals and newspapers. These began to introduce their readers to political commentary and to paid advertisements for health and beauty products, providing a new awareness of options for the individual. A growing sense that China was just one country among others began to lead to the view that it was, therefore, also a nation among nations, and that no nation could survive without involved citizens, both male and female. China's first regularly printed newspapers began to champion these views, which found a ready response among scholars shamed and disheartened by the Japanese war and the terms of the Shimonoseki treaty.

In the years after the Sino-Japanese War, a formulation became widespread that gave philosophical reassurance to those worried about the value of "self-strengthening": "Chinese learning should remain the essence, but Western learning be used for practical development." Generally abbreviated as the *ti-yong* idea (from the Chinese words—體用—for "essence" and "practical use"), this was a culturally reassuring position in a time of ambiguous, often painful, change. It affirmed that there was indeed a fundamental structure of Chinese moral and philosophical values that gave continuity and meaning to the civilization. Holding on to that belief, China could then afford to adopt quickly and dramatically all sorts of Western practices, and to hire Western advisers.

This was the favorite formulation of the Confucian scholar-official Zhang Zhidong, once a forceful voice among bellicose Chinese conservatives. Zhang capped a distinguished civil-service career by serving for almost eighteen consecutive years as the governor-general of Hunan and Hubei provinces. After Li Hongzhang, he was perhaps the most effective of the provincial reformers. Zhang pressed vigorously and successfully for the development of a railway line from Hankou to Peking—funded with foreign loans—and built up China's first great coal, iron, and steel complex at the Han-Ye-Ping mines in east Hubei. Yet he continued to ingratiate himself with

the empress dowager Cixi and her advisers by his conservative pronouncements on the need for gradual reform and his ringing declarations on the essential values of the traditional Confucian ethical system.

Echoing Zhang Zhidong's general *ti-yong* stance, many of the brightest and most successful of China's younger generation of Confucian scholars collaborated together in righteous indignation after learning the terms of the Treaty of Shimonoseki and presented a long memorial to the throne, urging continued resistance to Japan and requesting a wide range of economic, industrial, and administrative reforms. These men were assembled in Peking for the spring 1895 *jinshi* examinations, and were coordinated by two scholars of great intelligence and courage—Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao. Kang was a brilliant classical scholar of thirty-seven from the Canton region who had gained fame but also drawn criticism for his eccentric approach to Confucian scholarship. In earlier writings, Kang had drawn on his great classical learning to try to prove that Confucius had not resisted social change and that Confucianism did not negate the basic ideas of human development and progress. In this he was influenced by the ideas of Confucianism first made popular by Chinese scholars studying the Gongyang commentaries early in the nineteenth century. Liang Qichao, the second scholar, was twenty-two years old and had been a student of Kang's. He was already actively involved in provincial academies and newly formed national societies that advocated a speeded-up program of radical reform for China. Despite his radicalism, he, like Kang, was also seeking the *jinshi* degree, which remained the most prestigious route to elite status.

Influenced also by Buddhism, and of a highly emotional frame of mind, Kang Youwei saw himself as a new sage capable of saving the Chinese people. His visits to Hong Kong and Shanghai, where he examined manifestations of Western technical and urban development, when coupled with his readings on physics, electricity, and optics, convinced him of the possibilities of a true *ti-yong* synthesis. Liang shared that confidence and sense of excitement. They were overjoyed when the long reform memorial, after being shunted from bureau to bureau by worried senior bureaucrats, was at last read by the emperor Guangxu himself. Now aged twenty-four, Guangxu was just emerging from the shadow of his aunt Cixi, who had gone into semiretirement in the rebuilt summer palace. He had a strong interest in reform and was moved by the words of Kang, Liang, and the other candidates.

The *jinshi* candidates' reform memorial of 1895 raised many issues that were troubling China's more farsighted scholars. China needed a modernized army, they wrote, equipped with the most advanced Western firearms and artillery. To develop a national industrial base, the court should call on

the technical skills of the Chinese in Southeast Asia. It should raise taxes, develop a state banking system, establish a railway network, build a commercial fleet, and install a modern postal system. China should improve the quality of its agriculture through training schools and build centers to foster industrial innovation and encourage the kind of creative ingenuity that led inventors in the United States to apply for over 13,000 patents a year. Resettlement programs in poor and backward rural areas should be developed to lure back the thousands of productive Chinese emigrants who had been leaving every year. Previously it was only rebels like the Taiping leader Hong Ren'gan who had publicly espoused such far-reaching changes, but now the brightest Confucian youth in China were exploring the same ideas.

These would-be reformers had made their demands for change within the accepted traditional channels, but the effects were negligible. The young emperor Guangxu, even though he seemed interested, had no overt political power, and other conservative senior bureaucrats made sure that the proposals were safely filed away. But by the 1890s, demands for change could not be confined to these comparatively orthodox and polite channels. Other reformers, such as the young Sun Yat-sen,* took a different path. Sun, from a poor rural family in the Canton area, had none of the advantages of education and status held by the Kang family. Instead, like thousands of poor Chinese in the southeast, some of the Suns had emigrated during the nineteenth century. Two had died in the California gold rush; others had settled in Hawaii. There Sun Yat-sen joined an elder brother in the early 1880s and received an education in the mission schools, which introduced him to ideas about democracy and republican government as well as Christianity, before transferring to medical school in Hong Kong. A cultural hybrid with great ambitions and a deep sense of alarm over China's impending fate, Sun offered his services to Governor-General Li Hongzhang in 1894 as an adviser to help with China's defense and development. Distracted by the crises in Korea and elsewhere, Li ignored him.

Sun was disappointed and frustrated. The British did not consider his training good enough to allow him to practice medicine in their dominions, nor did the Chinese seem adequately to admire his new skills. Sun's response was to form a secret society in Hawaii in late 1894 that he named the Revive China Society, which pledged itself to the overthrow of the Manchus and to the establishment of a new Chinese ruler or even a republican form of government. Raising some money from his brother and other friends, he moved to Hong Kong and, in 1895, tried to combine with local secret societies near Canton to stage a military uprising that would spread and over-

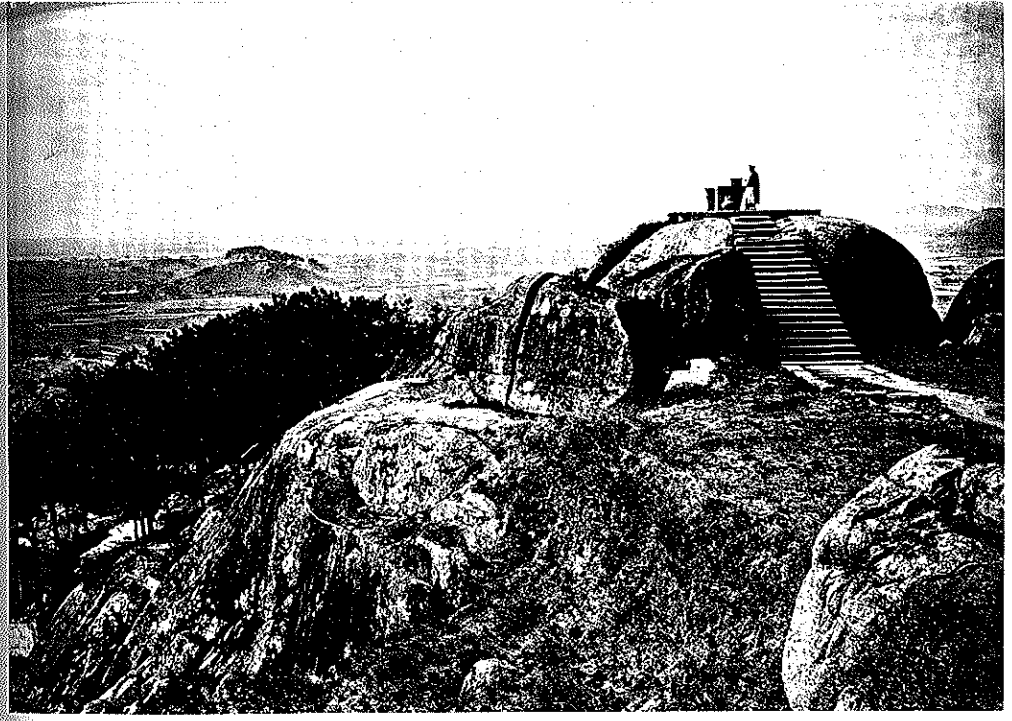
*This is the romanized style in which the Cantonese form of Sun's name was always written.

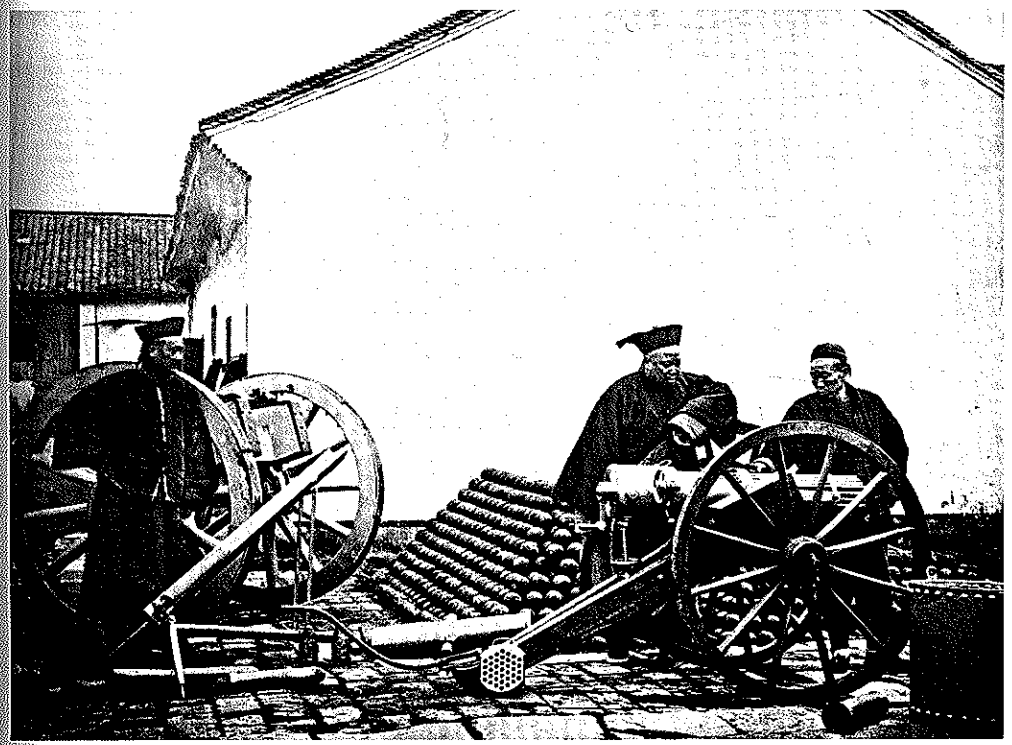
throw the dynasty. Badly organized, hampered by poor security and inadequate weapons and funds, the plan was discovered by Qing authorities and the local ringleaders executed.

Sun fled from Hong Kong to Japan, and eventually to San Francisco and London. In this last city he settled and began to read widely in Western political and economic theory. His studies were interrupted in 1896, when the staff of the Qing legation in London made a clumsy (but nearly successful) attempt to kidnap him and ship him back to China for trial and execution. Sun became a famous figure when this dramatic story was widely written up in the Western press. Returning to the East and setting up a series of bases in Southeast Asia and Japan, Sun continued to labor, through the secret societies and his own sworn brethren, to achieve a military coup against the Qing.

Sun Yat-sen found support among restless, adventurous Chinese who felt little allegiance to the Qing and had tasted some of the opportunities and risks of life overseas. One such backer was "Charlie" Soong, whose children were later to play significant roles in twentieth-century Chinese politics. Charlie Soong grew up in a fishing and trading family on the southern Chinese island of Hainan. Leaving Hainan to live with relatives in Java, Soong then shipped to Boston in 1878, where he apprenticed himself to a Chinese merchant family. Bored by his life there, Charlie Soong ran away to sea, enlisted as a crewman on a U.S. revenue-service cutter, and was finally passed on by the ship's captain to generous friends in North Carolina who put him through college and prepared him for life as a Christian missionary. Returning to China in 1886, he worked briefly as a preacher but in circumstances he found humiliating and badly paid. In 1892 he found a focus for his entrepreneurial energies and made a substantial fortune by printing Bibles for the Western missionaries to disseminate. Before long he branched out into the factory production of noodles, using advanced Western machinery, and moved into a comfortable foreign-style house in the suburbs of Shanghai. At this point, through shared secret-society contacts, he also began to funnel money to Sun Yat-sen's illegal organization.

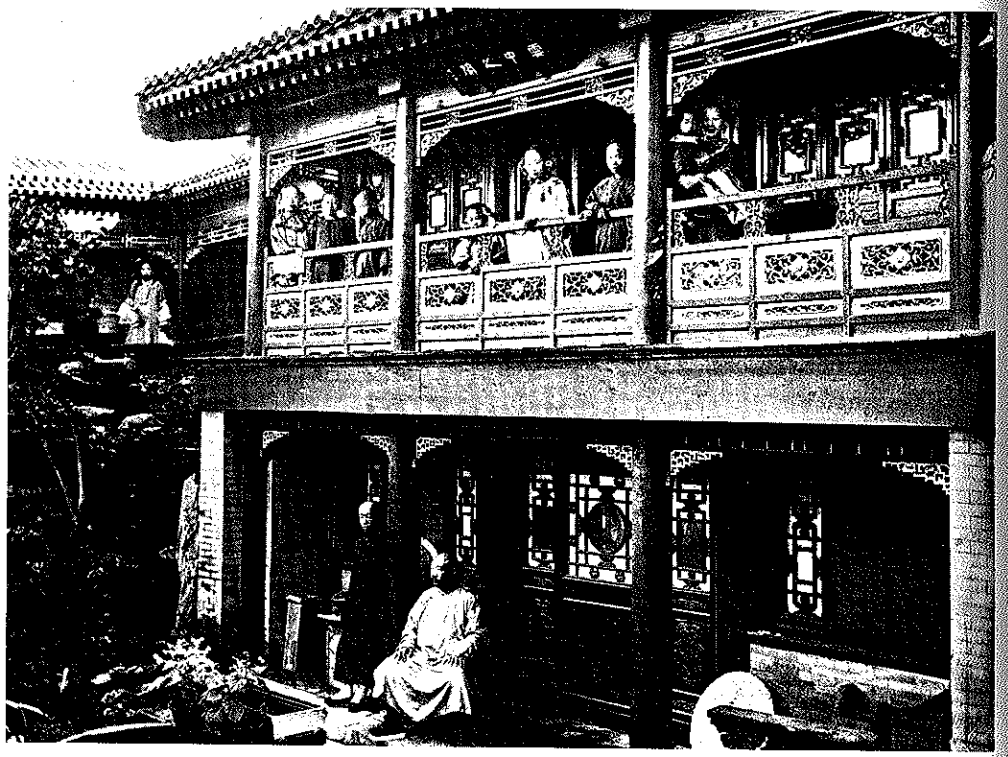
By the late 1890s, the Chinese, who were becoming more knowledgeable about foreigners, could seize on a whole range of potential models from Japanese Meiji reformers to George Washington, Napoléon Bonaparte, and Peter the Great. Reform journals and didactic histories proliferated, extolling various Western thinkers of the past and holding up as warning mirrors to China the examples of such countries as Poland, Turkey, and India, which had been respectively partitioned, economically ruined, and politically subjugated. Simultaneously, the Western powers renewed their demands for special economic and residence rights in China—often called





China entered a period of ambiguous change after the middle of the nineteenth century. These photographs by John Thomson (both c. 1868) suggest the tensions between practices old and new. Top: *Altar of Heaven outside Fuzhou*; bottom: *Nanjing arsenal*.

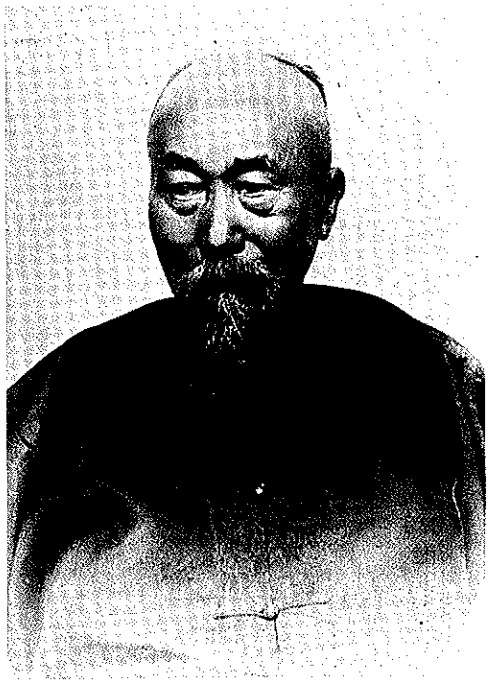
Peking, c. 1865

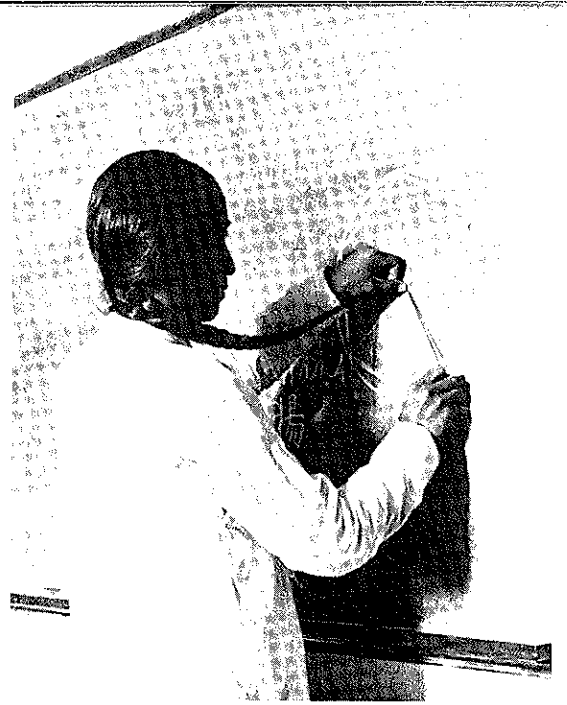


Interior courtyard of a mandarin's house, Peking, c. 1871–1872 (photograph by John Thomson)

Emperor Guangxu

Empress Dowager Cixi





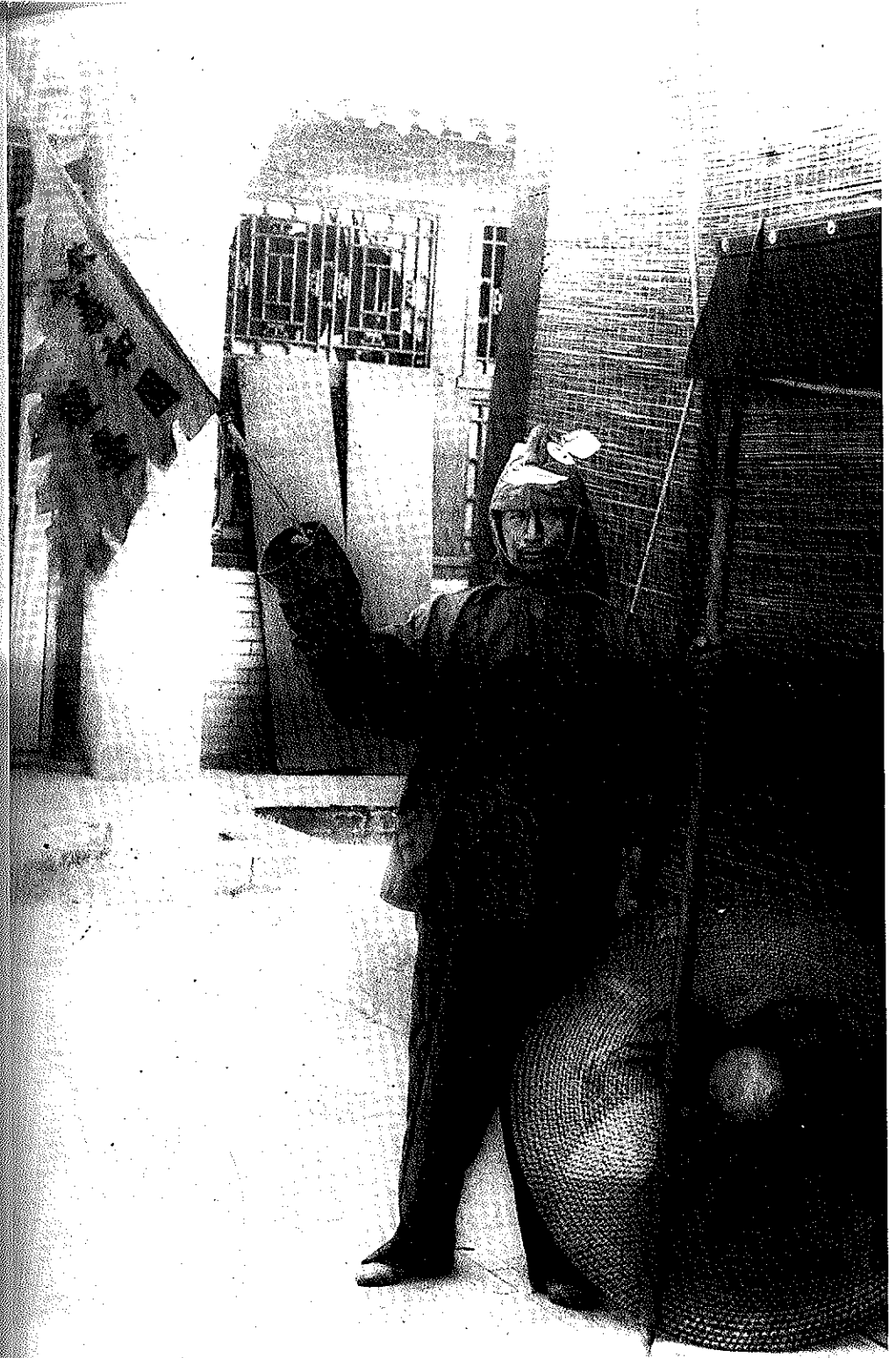
The story of the Christian mission movement in China is not just one of exploitation, misunderstanding, and hostility. Mission schools and publications opened new opportunities for Chinese. Top: a Chinese student at a mission school using his queue to measure the radius of a circle; bottom: Dr. Mary Stone performing an operation in a missionary hospital, Zhenjiang.

Zou Rong, author of "The Revolutionary Army" (1903)

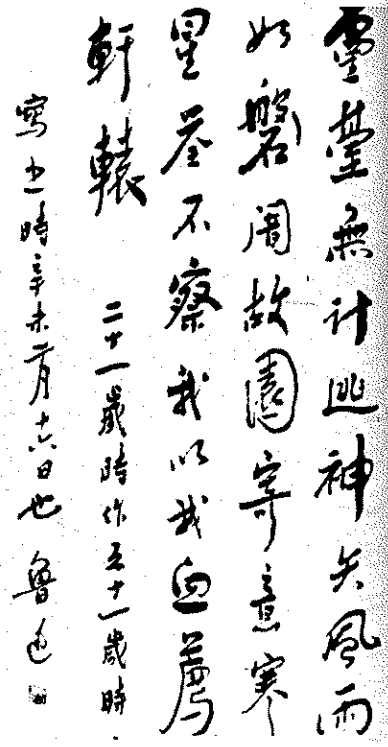
Qiu Jin, a spirited radical and early supporter of Sun's Revolutionary Alliance

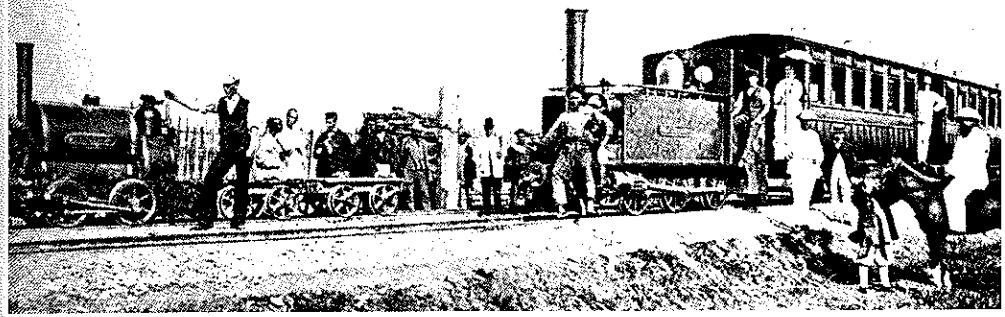
Chinese workers at a gold mine in California

A political appeal to anti-Chinese sentiment in California American hostility to immigrant Chinese laborers led, by 1884, to the passage of comprehensive laws restricting Chinese immigration.



Kang Youwei (left) and Liang Qichao (right) Kang and Liang were prominent scholars who coordinated the reform efforts of the *jinshi* candidates in Peking, spring 1895.





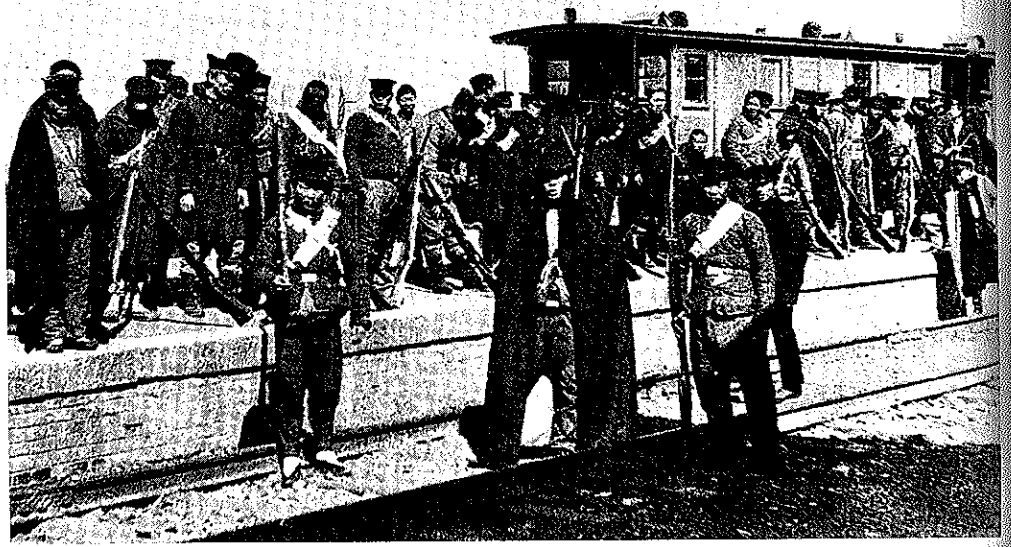
China's first railway, built near Shanghai in 1876, was bought by the provincial governor and torn out the following year. It was not until the Boxer Uprising demonstrated the railways' military value that the Qing came to support railway construction.

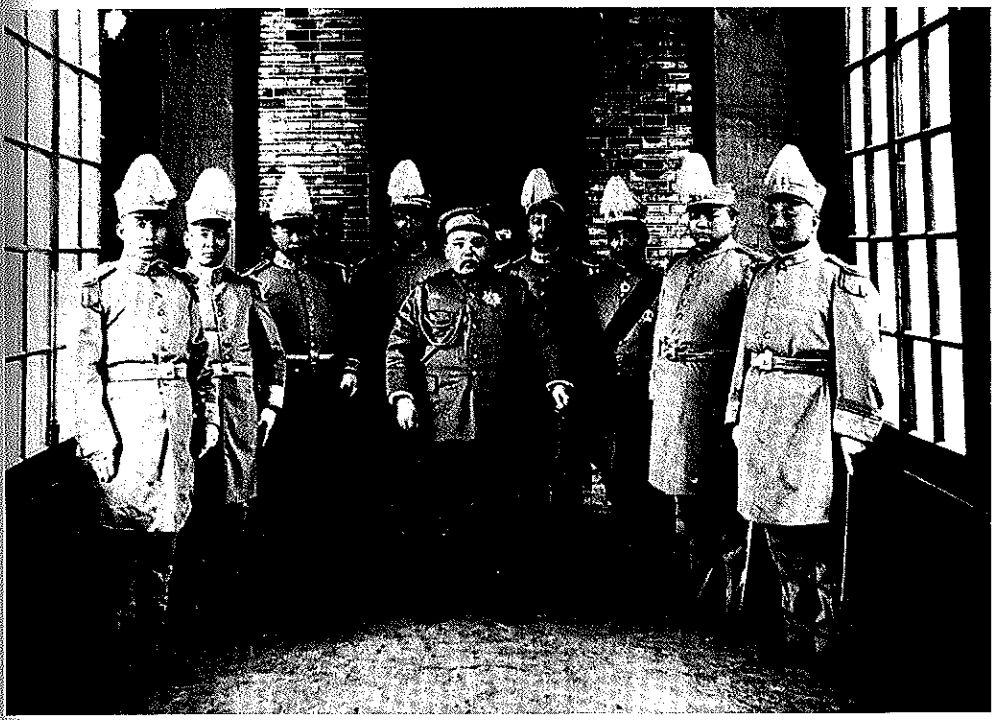
Workers at the Yangxi engineering factory, Hankou The Wuhan tricity complex—Wuchang, Hankou, and Hanyang—with its many industrial workers, modern schools, and New Army units, was a focus of revo-

A scene from the fighting in Hankou, October 1911

On February 12, 1912, the Qing court announced the abdication of the six-year-old Puyi, China's last emperor.

Sun Yat-sen assumed office as provisional president of the Chinese republic on January 1, 1912.



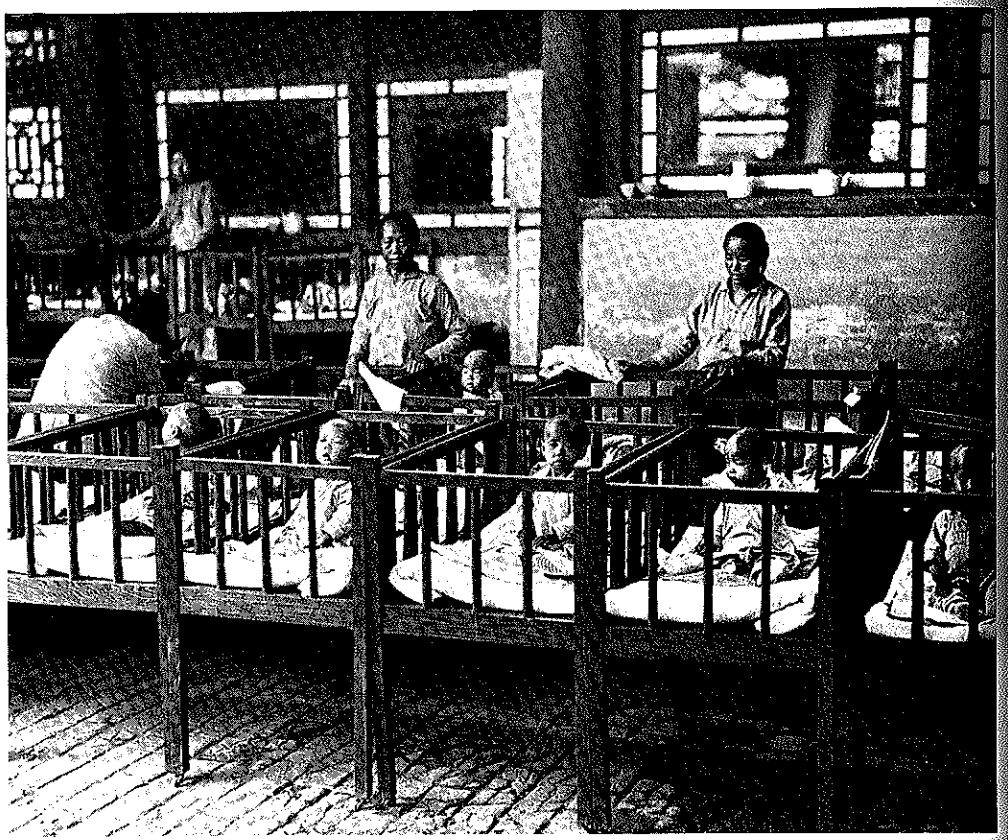


Yuan Shikai, pictured here with his bodyguards, took office as president of the republic on February 13,

"Charlie" Soong, one of Sun Yat-sen's earliest supporters Soong's three daughters married Sun Yat-sen, Chiang Kai-shek, and the Guomindang finance minister, H. H. Kong.

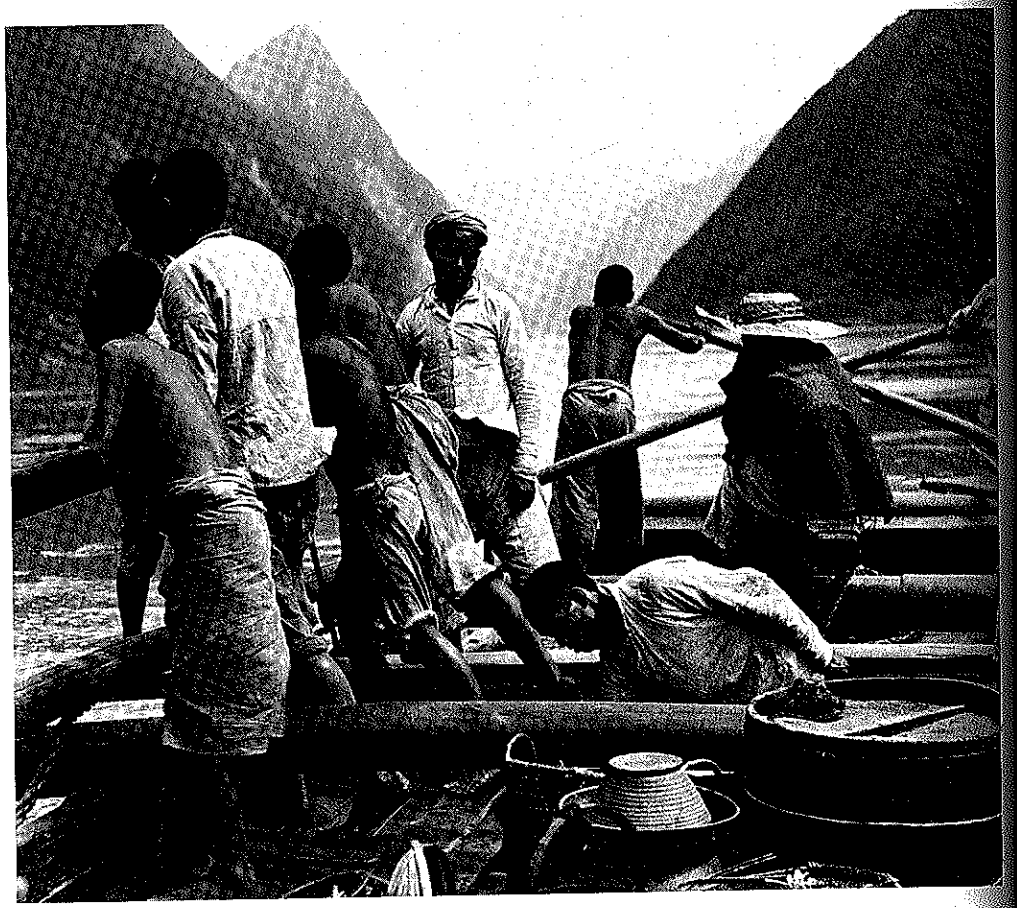
Sun Yat-sen (center) with officials of his Nanjing government, early 1912 Wang Jingwei (first row, far left) and Hu Hanmin (first row, with hat) stand near Sun.

An old lady and her attendant, Forbidden City, Peking, 1918 (photograph by Sidney D. Gamble) An elderly



Foundlings' Home babies, Peking, 1919 (photograph by Sidney D. Gamble) Gamble (1890–1968), sociologist, YMCA activist, and photographer, reported that 130 babies had been abandoned at the Foundlings' Home in the year 1917–1918. Of these, 111 were girls.

Pumping water, An Chu Chang, 1917 (photograph by Sidney D. Gamble) The irrigation of fields with water wheels such as this was a centuries-old practice in China.



Rowers on the Yangzi River (photograph by Sidney D. Gamble)

"the scramble for concessions"—which placed the Qing in greater jeopardy. In this context, the emperor Guangxu, who undoubtedly had a wider view of the options facing China than any of his predecessors and had even been studying English, decided to assert his own independence as ruler, and to act on the country's behalf. Between June and September 1898 he issued an extraordinary series of edicts, earning for this period the name of the "Hundred Days' Reforms." Although most of the edicts dealt with proposals that had already been raised by self-strengthening reformers and by the *jinshi* protestors of 1895, there had never before been such a coherent body of reform ideas presented on imperial initiative and backed by imperial prestige.

Guangxu called for changes in four main areas of Qing life and government. To reform China's examination system, he ordered the abolition of the highly stylized format known as the "eight-legged essay," which had structured the exams for centuries. He also urged that fine calligraphy and knowledge of poetry no longer be major criteria in grading degree candidates; instead he ordered the use of more questions related to practical governmental problems. Also in the area of education, he ordered the upgrading of the Peking college and the addition to it of a medical school, the conversion of the old academies (along with unnecessary rural shrines) to modern schools offering both Chinese and Western learning, and the opening of vocational institutes for the study of mining, industry, and railways. In the broader area of economic development, the emperor ordered local officials to coordinate reforms in commerce, industry, and agriculture, and to increase the production of tea and silk for export. New bureaus in Peking were established to supervise such growth, along with mines and railways, and the Ministry of Revenue was to design an overall annual budget for the country as a whole.

Guangxu also addressed the strengthening of the armed forces. Much of the money that had been needed by the navy had gone into the rebuilding of the empress dowager's summer palace, which included construction of a marble "boat" for her lake-viewing pleasure. Now a fleet of thirty-four modern warships was to be assembled, by purchase or by local construction. Army drill was to be standardized along Western lines. Training and discipline of local militias were to be improved. Emperor Guangxu even promised to take the empress dowager to review the new armies in Tianjin. Finally, he tried to strengthen the bureaucracy by streamlining it and simplifying its procedures. He sought to abolish the more obvious sinecure appointments and to move some of the displaced officials to positions in the new economic planning bureaus.

In developing this reform program, several important personnel changes

were made. Li Hongzhang had steadily lost influence since the Japanese war disasters and was now removed from the Zongli Yamen. Guangxu's own tutor was also dismissed for being cautious about the scale of reform. Several reformist thinkers, among them Kang Youwei, were appointed as secretaries in the Grand Council or the Zongli Yamen so they could be in on important discussions and memorialize the emperor through their superiors. Kang was granted an imperial audience and submitted two works of historical analysis to the emperor: one on the fate of Poland; the other on the triumphs of Japanese reforms in the Meiji Restoration. But many senior officials, viewing Guangxu's reform program with a jaundiced eye, saw it as detrimental to the long-term good of China and destructive of China's true inner values. Guangxu seems to have mistakenly thought that his aunt Cixi would support his vision of a new China and would help him override this opposition. In fact she was disturbed by some of the proposed changes that threatened to weaken the Qing ruling house, and was worried that the faction supporting Guangxu seemed dangerously subordinate to pressures and influences from both the British and the French.

Although the evidence is contradictory, it seems that a number of the reformers feared there might be a coup against the emperor, and accordingly approached some leading generals in an attempt to win their support. This led to a backlash when news of the scheming was reported to the empress dowager, who, on September 19, 1898, suddenly returned to the Forbidden City. Two days later, she issued an edict claiming that the emperor had asked her to resume power. She put Guangxu under palace detention and arrested six of his reputedly radical advisers. Before they could even be tried on the vague conspiracy charges, her order that they be executed was carried out, to the dismay of the reform party and of many foreigners in China. Kang Youwei had left Peking on assignment just before the coup, but his younger brother was among the victims. Now with a price on his head, Kang Youwei was carried to safety in Hong Kong on a British vessel, whence he made his way first to Japan and then to Canada. Liang Qichao also fled China and began a life of exile. His and Kang's dreams for a coherent program of reform, to be coordinated by the emperor in the name of a new China, had ended in disaster.

Three Sides of Nationalism

During 1898 and 1899, as part of their general wave of imperialist expansion, the foreign powers intensified their pressures and outrages on China. The Germans used the pretext of an attack on their missionaries to occupy

the Shandong port city of Qingdao and to claim mining and railway rights in the countryside nearby. The British took over the harbor at Weihaiwei on the north of the Shandong peninsula (where the Qing fleet had been sunk at anchor by the Japanese three years before), and forced the Qing to yield a ninety-nine-year lease on a large area of fertile farmland on the Kowloon peninsula north of Hong Kong, which the British henceforth called "The New Territories." The Russians stepped up their presence in Manchuria and occupied Lüshun, where they erected massive fortifications. The French claimed special rights in the Tonkin border provinces of Yunnan, Guangxi, and Guangdong, and on the island of Hainan. The Japanese, already masters of Taiwan, continued to put pressure on Korea and intensified their economic penetration of central China. Attempts by the United States to declare an "open door" policy for China, under the terms of which all countries would agree not to deny others access to their spheres of influence, may, through some moral effect, have slowed the slicing up of China, but there were no sanctions to enforce such a policy. Some Chinese began to fear—rightly enough—that their country was about to be "carved up like a melon."

In this atmosphere of hostility and fear, a vigorous force began to develop in China. The many guises in which it appeared can be encompassed under the blanket term *nationalism,* which for the Chinese comprised a new, urgent awareness of their relationship to foreign forces and to the Manchus. It carried as well a corresponding sense of the Chinese people as a unit that must be mobilized for its own survival. One can see the growth of this phenomenon in three examples: the Boxer Uprising of 1900, the publication of *The Revolutionary Army* by Zou Rong in 1903, and the anti-American boycott of 1905.

The Boxers United in Righteousness, as they called themselves, began to emerge as a force in northwest Shandong during 1898. They drew their name and the martial rites they practiced from a variety of secret-society and self-defense units that had spread in southern Shandong during the previous years, mainly in response to the provocations of Western missionaries and their Chinese converts. Some Boxers believed they were invulnerable to swords and bullets in combat, and they drew on an eclectic pantheon of spirits and protectors from folk religion, popular novels, and street plays. Although they lacked a unified leadership, Boxers recruited local farmers and other workers made desperate by the disastrous floods that had been followed by droughts in Shandong; they began to call for the ending of the special privileges enjoyed by Chinese Christian converts and to attack both converts and Christian missionaries. By early 1899 they had destroyed or stolen a good deal of property from Chinese Christians and had killed

several converts in the Shandong-Hebei border area, seriously alarming the foreigners, who demanded that the Qing suppress the Boxers and their supporters. The Boxers responded with a popular slogan, "Revive the Qing, destroy the foreign," which was soon expanded into a more detailed diatribe:

> There are many Christian converts
> Who have lost their senses,
> They deceive our Emperor,
> Destroy the gods we worship,
> Pull down our temples and altars,
> Permit neither joss-sticks nor candles,
> Cast away tracts on ethics,
> And ignore reason.
> Don't you realize that
> Their aim is to engulf the country?[2]

The following year, the diatribes were made into catchy jingles in doggerel verse, some of which were hung as wall posters near Boxer altars or on street corners:

> Their men are all immoral;
> Their women truly vile.
> For the Devils it's mother-son sex
> That serves as the breeding style.
>
> No rain comes from Heaven,
> The earth is parched and dry.
> And all because the churches
> Have bottled up the sky.
>
> When at last all the Foreign Devils
> Are expelled to the very last man,
> The Great Qing, united, together,
> Will bring peace to this our land.[3]

By spring 1900, the year their leaders had predicted as the dawn of a new religious age, the Boxers had expanded dramatically. Perhaps 70 percent were poor peasants, male and young. The rest were drawn from a broad mixture of itinerants and artisans: peddlers and rickshaw men, sedan-chair carriers, canal boatmen, leather workers, knife sharpeners, and barbers; some were dismissed soldiers and salt smugglers. They were joined by female Boxer groups, the most important of which was named the Red Lanterns Shining, girls and women usually aged twelve to eighteen whose

female powers were invoked to fight the "pollution" of the Chinese Christian women, which was believed to erode the strength of Boxer men. Best known among these women was "Lotus" Huang, daughter of a poor boatman and herself a former prostitute, who was believed to have unique spiritual powers. Other women were banded together in teams called the Cooking-Pan Lanterns and fed the Boxer troops from pots that were allegedly replenished magically after every meal.

Still without any coordinated leadership, Boxer groups began to drift into Peking and Tianjin in early June. Roaming the streets, dressed in motley uniforms of red, black, or yellow turbans and red leggings, and with white charms on their wrists, they harried—and sometimes killed—Chinese converts and even those who possessed foreign objects—lamps, clocks, or matches. The Boxers also killed four French and Belgian engineers and two English missionaries, ripped up railway tracks, burned the stations, and cut telegraph lines. Powerful provincial officials wavered, as did the Qing court, sometimes protecting foreigners by meeting Boxer force with force of their own, at other times seeming to condone or even approve the Boxer show of antiforeign "loyalty." The Western powers had sent an extra 400 troops to Peking by train in late May and early June to guard their citizens. But after the tracks had been torn up, another army of 2,000 Western reinforcements tried to force their way from Tianjin to Peking. They were beaten back by the Boxers, suffering heavy losses.

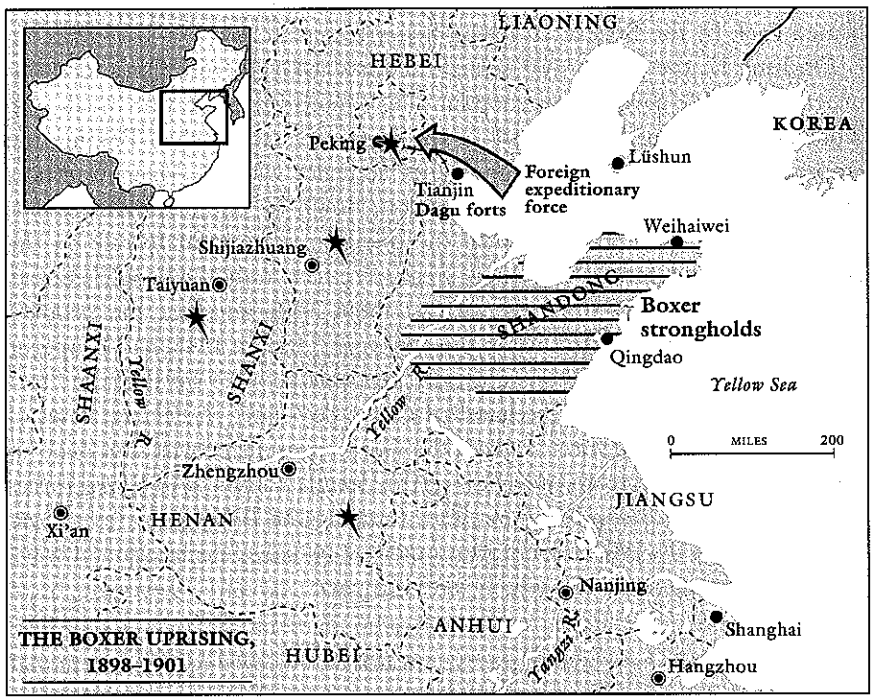
On June 17, the Westerners seized the forts at Dagu from Qing forces in order to provide cover for a troop landing should full-scale war break out. That same day, but before news of the forts' fall had reached Peking, the empress dowager Cixi held an emergency audience with the Manchu princes and her senior officials. Her words, taken down by one of those present, reflect her anguish and doubt over the question of how far to rely on the Boxers: "Today China is extremely weak. We have only the people's hearts and minds to depend upon. If we cast them aside and lose the people's hearts, what can we use to sustain the country?"[4] (So, in 1848, had Emperor Daoguang mused that if he could only keep his people's loyalty, the "foreign bandits" could always be handled.) Two days later in Peking, news of the battle at the Dagu forts arrived, the German minister was shot dead in the street as he went to an interview at the Zongli Yamen, and Boxer forces laid siege to the foreign-legation areas. Praising the Boxers now as a loyal militia, on June 21, 1900, the empress dowager issued a "declaration of war" against the foreign powers, which stated in part:

> The foreigners have been aggressive towards us, infringed upon our territorial integrity, trampled our people under their feet. . . . They oppress our people and blaspheme our gods. The common people suffer greatly at their hands,

and each one of them is vengeful. Thus it is that the brave followers of the Boxers have been burning churches and killing Christians.[5]

With the empress dowager and senior Manchu officials now clearly behind them, the Boxers launched a series of attacks on mission compounds and on foreigners. The attacks were particularly vicious in Shanxi, Hebei, and Henan, with the worst atrocity occurring in Shanxi. There, the Manchu governor Yuxian summoned the missionaries and their families to the provincial capital of Taiyuan, promising to protect them from the Boxers. But once they arrived, he ordered all forty-four men, women, and children killed.

In Peking, the foreign diplomatic corps and their families retreated into a defensive area composed mainly of the British, Russian, German, Japanese, and American compounds, hastily defended with makeshift barricades of furniture, sandbags, timber, and mattresses. Had the Boxers been better organized or had large numbers of regular Qing army troops joined in the attack, the Westerners would surely all have been killed. But the



attack was not pressed with coordinated vigor, the modernized Qing armies stood outside the fray, and the powerful governors-general of central China such as Zhang Zhidong stalled for time and refused to commit their newly trained troops to the conflict.

On August 4, 1900, a foreign expeditionary column of about 20,000 troops, consisting mainly of soldiers from Japan, Russia, Britain, the United States, and France, and operating under a complex joint-command structure, left Tianjin. Boxer resistance quickly crumbled, key Qing commanders committed suicide, and the Western troops entered Peking and raised the Boxer siege on August 14. As they came into the city from the east, the empress dowager and her nephew Guangxu fled to the west, establishing a temporary capital in the Wei River valley city of Xi'an. After a protracted, often bitter campaign, conducted primarily by a newly arrived expeditionary force of German troops, and complex negotiations with the fugitive court and Li Hongzhang (once again indispensable as a mediator), a formal peace treaty known as the Boxer Protocol was signed in September 1901.

In this protocol, the Qing agreed to erect monuments to the memory of the more than two hundred Western dead, to ban all examinations for five years in cities where antiforeign atrocities had taken place, to forbid all imports of arms into China for two years, to allow permanent foreign guards and emplacements of defensive weapons to protect the legation quarter in perpetuity, to make the Zongli Yamen into a fully prestigious Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and to execute the leading Boxer supporters, including the Shanxi governor Yuxian. They also agreed to pay an indemnity for damages to foreign life and property of 450 million taels (around £67 million or $333 million at the then current exchange rates), a staggering sum at a time when the entire annual Qing income was estimated at around 250 million taels. The Chinese were to pay the indemnity in gold, on an ascending scale, with 4 percent interest charges, until the debt was amortized on December 31, 1940. With all interest charges factored in, total Chinese payments over the thirty-nine-year period would amount to almost 1 billion taels (precisely 982,238,150).

In January 1902, the empress dowager and her nephew Guangxu returned by train from Xi'an to Peking, where Li Hongzhang had just died from illness at the age of seventy-eight. Cixi re-established her residence in the Forbidden City, which for over a year had been the headquarters for the foreign expeditionary force. At the end of that month, in an apparently genuine gesture of reconciliation, she received the senior members of the foreign diplomatic corps in person at her palace; on February 1, in another unprecedented action, she held a reception for their ladies. But Emperor Guangxu was still not allowed to play any open political role.

The two exiled reformers, Sun Yat-sen and Kang Youwei, both tried to exploit the disruption caused by the Boxer Uprising by launching their own attacks against the Qing during 1900. Kang's took place in Hubei and Anhui in August and Sun's in Huizhou, east of Canton, in October. Kang's goal was to restore Guangxu to power as a constitutional monarch, whereas Sun wanted to found a Chinese republic. Neither plan was well financed or well coordinated, and both were suppressed by Qing troops without difficulty.

The forms of protest now passed back to the manipulators of the written word. The most articulate of these turned out to be an eighteen-year-old student named Zou Rong, whose work provides a second case study of the new forms of nationalism. Zou Rong was one of a growing number of young Chinese who, in the years after the Sino-Japanese War, had gone to study in Japan; awed by Japan's power, these students sought to observe it at the source. Zou grew dismayed at the apparent inability of the Qing to react creatively in their time of crisis. Like certain secret society and Taiping leaders before him, he singled out the Manchus for blame, but unlike those earlier rebels he moved beyond slogans to draw up a lengthy and careful indictment of the Manchus' weakness. Ironically, he was able to do this because he had returned from Japan to live in the foreign-concession area of Shanghai, where, according to complex jurisdictional agreements concerning "extraterritoriality," residents were subject to the so-called "mixed" courts dominated by Western legal practices. Such residents could write, and disseminate their writings, with a freedom impossible to those living in ordinary towns supervised by the Qing magistrates and police.

Zou Rong drew his anti-Manchu ideas together in a short book entitled *The Revolutionary Army* (1903). In ringing language, he called on his Chinese countrymen to reject the Manchu yoke and seize their own destiny. The Chinese had become a race of slaves, declared Zou, and such men as Zeng Guofan, destroyer of the Taiping, far from being heroes, were the lackeys of the Manchus and the butchers of their own countrymen. The Chinese should learn from Western examples that it is possible to overthrow domestic tyranny and free a country from foreign domination if the people are conscious of their unity and struggle together. As Zou wrote:

> I do not begrudge repeating over and over again that internally we are the slaves of the Manchus and suffering from their tyranny, externally we are being harassed by the Powers, and we are doubly enslaved. The reason why our sacred Han race, descendants of the Yellow Emperor, should support revolutionary independence, arises precisely from the question of whether our race will go under and be exterminated.[6]

And he called dramatically on his Han countrymen to reclaim their destiny:

> You possess government, run it yourselves; you have laws, guard them yourselves; you have industries, administer them yourselves; you possess armed forces, order them yourselves; you possess lands, watch over them yourselves; you have inexhaustible resources, exploit them yourselves. You are qualified in every way for revolutionary independence.[7]

These challenging calls, inserted in the midst of Zou Rong's other demands for such reforms as elected assemblies, equality of rights for women, and guarantees for freedom of the press and assembly, made an exciting mix. The tract spread widely, and Sun Yat-sen in particular seized on it as a means to outflank the more cautious Kang Youwei, distributing thousands of copies to his own supporters in San Francisco and Singapore. Qing officials put powerful pressures on the Western authorities in Shanghai to yield up Zou and those writers and journalists who had collaborated with him to publish and circulate his work. The Westerners refused, and in 1904 Zou was tried in the Shanghai Mixed Court on a charge of distributing inflammatory writings. There he received a two-year sentence, whereas a Qing court would swiftly have had him executed. By a cruel irony, Zou, spared humiliating and painful death at Qing hands, fell ill in prison and died in early 1905. Even though he was only nineteen, he had managed to make an extraordinary mark on his times.

During the period of Zou's trial, another wave of protest against foreign abuses had been building. Ever since the passage in the United States of the 1882 anti-Chinese exclusion laws and their enforced ratification by treaty, Americans had performed numerous hostile acts against Chinese immigrants. Immigration officers of the United States Treasury Department broke into Chinese homes in American cities allegedly to check registrations; harassments and deportations were common; and Chinese arriving at United States ports—including visitors of high status such as the delegations coming by invitation to the St. Louis Exposition in 1904—were roughly handled and abused. Further bitterness developed when America's exclusionary policies were extended to Chinese residing in Hawaii and the Philippines.

Some Chinese tried to avoid these complications by using fake identification papers, and were turned back at the docks; others, more subtly, used illegally acquired yet technically genuine passports from other countries. In 1904, for instance, when Charlie Soong sent his eldest daughter Ailing to the United States to get a college degree, she traveled on a Portuguese passport issued on the basis of her father's alleged Macao residency. Although she was at first forbidden to land in San Francisco and was forced to spend days under ship detention in the harbor, pressures from friends and local missionaries finally won her admission to American soil.

By 1905, a new sort of response was developing in China, providing a third expression of nationalist feeling. The newly established Qing Ministry of Foreign Affairs, urged on by China's minister in Washington, was so outraged by the stories of mistreatment of Chinese that it refused to renew the immigration treaty with the United States. To strengthen China's position, merchants in Canton, Shanghai, Xiamen, Tianjin, and elsewhere declared a total boycott of American goods in June 1905. There had been such boycotts before, most notably by merchants in Hankou in the 1880s, but nothing so widespread and ideologically charged. Although the American government protested and some local Qing officials stepped in, especially in north China ports, the boycott was effective in many cities, particularly Canton and Shanghai. The Qing court eventually yielded to American pressure and issued a proclamation against the action; but since the copies of the proclamation were posted upside down in many cities, the Chinese boycotters correctly guessed that the court was ambivalent about the ban. Supported by funds from Chinese communities in California and Oregon, and by the patriotic excitement of Chinese students—many recently returned from studies in Japan—Chinese merchants refused to handle such goods as American cigarettes, cotton, kerosene, and flour. Only in late September did their solidarity crack and trade slowly return to normal. Although it was not as dramatic on the surface as Boxer violence or Zou Rong's fiery rhetoric, this attempt to respond to national humiliation by means of concerted economic action marked a new kind of popular movement in Chinese history.

Emerging Forces

The growing strength and complexity of Chinese nationalism was but one aspect of a new search for self-identity that cut across the whole of society in the later Qing. Economic, political, educational, and social pressures now began to impinge on virtually everyone in China, except perhaps for those bound to traditional patterns of rural toil far from the cities. Even such poor farmers, however, learned that taxes had to go up if new reforms were to be paid for, and they gathered in protest in many parts of the country only to be roughly suppressed by Qing troops or the agents of newly founded police forces. Among those who would once have been ignored but who now made their voices heard with ever greater effect in the closing years of the dynasty were the overseas students, women, merchants, and urban workers.

After the recall of the official Qing student mission from Hartford, Connecticut, in the 1880s, a new surge of Chinese students left for Europe, where Britain and France were especially popular destinations. A pioneer of this movement was Yan Fu, who had been educated in the Fuzhou shipyard school during the 1860s and sent in 1877 to England, where he enrolled in the naval schools at Portsmouth and in Greenwich. There he studied British naval technology, still the best in the world despite a vigorous challenge by the Germans. He also spent much time examining Western legal practices and began a broad reading of Western political theory. In the course of this he developed an interest in the so-called "Social Darwinists"—those who sought to apply Charles Darwin's theories of species evolution to the fate of social units.

Such theories, which spoke of the "survival of the fittest" and the need for creative adaptation if species were to avoid extinction, seemed to Chinese to have a melancholy relevance to their nation's plight. Yan Fu's translations of such works into Chinese circulated widely. After his return to China in 1879, Yan also worked as an academic administrator in Li Hongzhang's Beiyang naval academy, becoming superintendent in 1890. In addition to his many other duties, he embarked on a series of translations of such influential works as Thomas Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics,* John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty,* Montesquieu's *Defense of the Spirit of the Laws,* and Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations.* Although he was often depressed and unsuccessful in his professional career at the Beiyang academy—extreme depression led him to opium addiction—Yan nevertheless managed to introduce an electrifying range of ideas to China's students.

When the Qing court ordered the abolition of the traditional Confucian examination system in 1905, the way to a successful intellectual or academic career was thrown wide open and new options arose for China's youth. One young man, Zhou Shuren, who subsequently became China's most famous short-story writer under the pseudonym of "Lu Xun," was caught up by these new currents. Initially trained in local Confucian schools in Zhejiang, Lu Xun read Yan Fu's Social Darwinist works in his late teens and subsequently joined the great exodus of Chinese students to Japan, which had become a magnet for young Chinese. So much nearer and cheaper than the United States or Europe, sharing a common script and not as culturally distant in dress or diet, Japan offered an attractive model after its defeat of the Chinese in 1894 and became even more enticing after its shattering defeat of Russian forces at Lüshun in 1904. The means by which the Japanese had managed to graft a constitutional structure onto the existing imperial system deeply interested reform-minded young Chinese. Japanese law and medical schools, military academies, departments of political science and economics—all seemed to offer Chinese new hope at a time when

that traditional Chinese "essence" seemed every year more fragile in the face of the West's overwhelming practical power.

It was while studying medicine in Japan in 1905 that Lu Xun was shocked by a lantern slide he was shown of triumphant Japanese executing an alleged Chinese traitor in the midst of a large, apathetic circle of Chinese onlookers. He resolved then to give up medicine and concentrate on literature, which, he believed, could in turn shock the Chinese into an awareness of their plight. While China's cultural and spiritual life was in such chaos, there was, thought Lu Xun, little sense in worrying about the health of Chinese bodies. He began a program of translating into Chinese important works of social realism from Europe and Russia so that China's students would understand the great issues that had dominated other parts of the world over the preceding half century.

The thousands of Chinese students in Japan could only be loosely supervised by the Qing authorities, if at all, even though many were supported by government stipends and technically could be returned home for improper behavior. In their excitable, energetic ranks, Sun Yat-sen found ready recruits for his anti-Qing organizations, and in 1905 he allied his revolutionary organization with a number of other radical groups to form the "Revolutionary Alliance" (Tongmeng hui). The alliance tried to infiltrate student members back into China once their education was completed, there to work toward eventual military insurrection. Its ideology was a mixture of Sun's republican ideas—developed during his period of European study and in subsequent reading—and socialist theories on land-tax equalization and the need to control capitalist development. Sun Yat-sen's bold call for revolutionary activism was steadily becoming more compelling than Kang Youwei's more cautious call for constitutional monarchy and protection of the emperor Guangxu.

Among the students in Japan were many young women, and this marked a drastic change in Chinese social and political life. Although some Chinese "revolutionaries" still brought their bound-footed concubines to Japan, many independent young women were, with the encouragement of their own parents or brothers, unbinding their feet and struggling to obtain an adequate or even advanced education. They found moral and social support in sisterhoods that promised lodging and economic help if they remained unmarried, in groups of men who pledged to marry young women with the still unfashionable "large feet," and in schools that actively encouraged their pursuit of learning. These women now had new role models in the guise of famous Western figures like Joan of Arc, Mme. Roland, Florence Nightingale, and Catharine Beecher, whose biographies were translated, printed, and reprinted in magazines. There were also stark new images

such as that of the young Russian radical Sophia Perofskaya, whose successful assassination of Tsar Alexander II, even though it led to her arrest and execution, made her a model for female intransigence and courage in the face of autocratic misrule.

Although the scale was still small—by 1909, only around 13,000 girls were enrolled in schools in the whole of China, and a few hundred more overseas—for these thousands of young Chinese women this was a period for the steady development of literary skills and cautious reflection on China's weakness and the restrictions of family life. But a vivid example of the literal acting out of the more revolutionary female goals was offered by Qiu Jin, a young woman from the same part of Zhejiang as the writer Lu Xun. Married young, by her parents' arrangement, to a merchant's son whom she disliked, she bore him two children before suddenly leaving her family and sailing alone for Japan in 1904. There, supporting herself by selling her jewelry and assisted by friends, she began to study a wide range of Western subjects and to speak out publicly on the need for reform.

Drawn to the orbit of Sun Yat-sen's Revolutionary Alliance, Qiu Jin liked to dress in men's clothes on occasion and to experiment with explosives. Returning to China in 1906, she became a radical teacher in a small school in Zhejiang, keeping up her contacts with members of the Revolutionary Alliance and meeting members of local secret societies. Often practicing military drills and riding her horse astride, she inevitably drew criticism from more conservative townsfolk, but she managed to retain her position. It was at her school, in July 1907, in attempted conjunction with a revolutionary friend in Anhui, that she tried to launch an uprising against the Qing. Local troops captured her with little trouble, and after a brief trial she was executed. A short, unhappy, futile life, some might have said; yet the example she left was one of courage and initiative in the face of deep national frustrations, and other Chinese women were to press forward and take up the struggle for political freedoms.

The commercial world of China's merchants was also roiling with change during this period. We have noted that Qing "self-strengthening" statesmen had sought to expand China's economic base by developing "government-supervised merchant-management companies" and that some of these had succeeded in fields such as shipping and mining. But problems of overlapping jurisdiction and lack of capital slowed these efforts, and by the 1890s there had come to be greater interest in so-called "officials' and merchants' joint-management companies." Many of these were promoted by officials in Shanghai or by Governor-General Zhang Zhidong in Hunan-Hubei, and they included several new spinning and weaving mills, capitalized at 500,000 taels or more. The capital was raised by wealthy officials

acting in conjunction with local gentry and merchants, although in some cases merchants were essentially forced to "contribute" by provincial officials. From this level of activity, it was only a short step for some provincial officials to act as independent entrepreneurs or for some wealthy local figures to develop their own industries without state support. Zeng Guofan's son-in-law Nie was one senior official who invested in the new Shanghai cotton mills; Nie's two English-speaking sons, in turn, without holding office, became significant capitalist developers, bringing in profits to the family of over 100,000 taels in 1904.

Since the Qing court, the metropolitan Peking bureaucracy, the provincial officials, and the merchants each had their own interests and constituencies, it proved impossible to develop the kind of coordinated economic policy that had been so successful in Japan during the Meiji Restoration. Some leaders at court made gestures in that direction, however. Prince Chun, for example, Emperor Guangxu's brother, met large numbers of overseas Chinese merchants during his diplomatic journey to apologize to the Western governments for the massacres in the Boxer Uprising. He returned to China a strong backer of vigorous economic intervention by the state. Partly on his urging, the Qing in 1903 founded a Ministry of Commercial Affairs (Shangbu) with similar ranking to the old six ministries and the new Foreign Affairs Ministry. The Commercial Affairs Ministry had four main bureaus: one to deal with trade (including patents and monopolies); one for agriculture and forestry; one for industry, and one for "auditing" (which included such areas as banking, trade fairs, weights and measures, and commercial litigation).

At the same time, the state urged the formation of chambers of commerce in the hope that they might facilitate central control over merchants. The Qing do not seem to have realized that chambers of commerce might also give commercial Chinese a greater sense of local initiative and autonomy. Drawing members from traditional urban trade guilds, from local banking institutions, and among the newly wealthy entrepreneurs, the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce was organized in 1903, although it remained dominated by financial figures from the city of Ningbo in Zhejiang province. The Canton chamber was slower to grow because of local unwillingness to allow central supervision, but it was an economic force by 1905. Both chambers played an important part in leading the anti-American boycott of later 1905. As overseas Chinese merchants in Southeast Asia (and, to a lesser extent, in Canada and the United States) grew wealthier, they also began to invest in certain Chinese enterprises or to make capital available for investment by others.

These new forms of commerce and industrial development became, like

foreign imperialism, sources of dislocation in the lives of urban workers. Scattered records allow glimpses of the responses of these workers. In the earlier Qing period, there had been examples of urban market stoppages and labor strikes among such workers as the porcelain furnace men in Jiangxi and the grain-barge pullers on the Grand Canal. But a letter of 1897, written in Shanghai by a twenty-five-year-old American salesman for the Winchester Repeating Arms Company, shows urban tensions escalating in the midst of new social realities, and how swiftly foreigners could become involved.

The writer describes a conflict in late March 1897 over a decision by the Municipal Council of Shanghai to raise the tax on wheelbarrow coolies from 400 copper cash to 600 copper cash a month (a jump from 25 cents to 37.5 at contemporary rates). In protest, the coolies managed to organize and get all wheelbarrows off the streets by April 1. When one lone coolie, a few days later, tried to cross from the French Concession to the English Concession with a wheelbarrow full of offal, a crowd of workers beat him up and smashed his wheelbarrow. A policeman, coming to aid the beaten coolie, was beaten in turn. Westerners in their club, seeing the policeman in trouble, came to help him, and mounted policemen rode to their aid but were forced to dismount because their ponies were too frightened of the crowd. The coolies fought the policemen's drawn swords with poles and bricks pulled from nearby walls. Four blasts from the ship's siren on a British gunboat brought Western "volunteers" to the scene in twenty minutes, and the coolies were dispersed, leaving behind three of their number dead and having wounded two policemen. Within thirty minutes, "Blue Jackets" from several foreign ships had arrived and occupied key bridges and public spaces. Peace returned to the streets, and the Municipal Council decided to postpone the tax increase until July.[8]

Hankou was also undergoing dramatic industrial development under Zhang Zhidong, with well over 10,000 workers employed in modern industrial plants by the 1890s. Here, too, an expansion of resident foreigners and the opening of new foreign-concession areas heightened social tensions. Labor conditions were bleak, wages low, and housing conditions atrocious as rural workers migrated to the already crowded city in search of either long-term or part-time employment. Copper workers struck in 1905, mint employees in 1907, and thousands of street vendors, hawkers, and stall keepers, along with piece-goods shop assistants, struck in 1908. In China's other large cities, the new cotton mills, cement works, cigarette factories, iron works, paper mills, and other plants that were being built—often with foreign capital—all showed the prospects of exploitation and unrest.

No larger patterns in these industrial protests were yet perceived by most

people, but news of the attempted Russian Revolution of 1905 had a strong impact in east Asia. Japanese radicals close to Sun Yat-sen drew a new kind of Russo-Chinese parallel, and put Sun himself in contact with Russian revolutionaries. As one Japanese explained it with graphic simplicity, China and Russia were the two greatest autocracies in the world, and the repression they enforced was a block to freedom everywhere. The solution was clear: "For the advance of civilization it was necessary to overthrow these autocracies."[9]

CHAPTER 11

The End of the Dynasty

The Qing Constitution

Between 1860 and 1905, the Qing court and Chinese provincial officials had tried to adapt a wide range of Western techniques and ideas to China's proven needs: artillery, ships, the telegraph, new schools, factories, chambers of commerce, and international law. Although the focus constantly shifted, the goal was always to learn certain practices from the West that would make China stronger and better able to protect itself from the pressures and demands of those same foreigners. It was, therefore, logical after the debacle of the Boxer uprising that the Qing try to take over elements of the constitutional structures that seemed to lie at the heart of Western power.

In the 1850s, scholar-officials like Xu Jiyu had especially praised the flexibility and openness of the American congressional and presidential system, and it was initially to the United States that the Qing had sent their students for training. Other scholars were drawn to the ideology of the French Revolution and admired the dramatic expansion of French power in the nineteenth century. But since the idea of a republic that would entail their own demise could hardly be to the Qing court's taste, they also began to look seriously at various examples of constitutional monarchy that might both strengthen the country and shore up their own dynasty. Great Britain, still the world's paramount industrial and military power, was one obvious example; another was Germany, rapidly rising to global prominence; and a third—and most dramatic—was Japan, which in less than twenty years since the establishment of a joint imperial and parliamentary structure had transformed its economy, its industry, its military and navy, and its entire

system of landholding. The most astonishing proof of the strength these changes brought Japan were its victory over China in the war of 1894 and over Russia in 1904–1905.

The first dramatic gesture in the direction of constitutional reform was made by the empress dowager Cixi in 1905, when she ordered the formation of a small study group of five princes and officials—three Manchus and two Chinese—who would travel to Japan, the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Russia, and Italy to study their governments. The realization that the mission might so strengthen the Qing state that it would be impossible to overthrow dismayed certain radical Chinese nationalists, some of whom resorted to terrorist tactics in an attempt to stop this new Qing gesture toward change. One young revolutionary student tried to blow up the train carrying the constitutional mission as it was leaving Peking station in September. The explosion was mistimed, and the would-be assassin was killed, but he did manage to injure two of the commissioners and to delay matters for four months until substitute commissioners could be named.

The revised mission traveled to the United States via Japan, reaching Washington, D.C., in January 1906 before proceeding to Europe, where they stayed until spring. When they returned to China, they recommended to the empress dowager that some kind of constitutional reform be implemented and suggested Japan as the most effective model, since there the reigning imperial family had been maintained in power. In November 1906, the empress dowager issued an edict promising to prepare a constitution and reform the administrative structure of China by reshaping the existing ministries and adding new ones, by curbing the powers of the governors-general, and by convening a national assembly. It was only eight years since Emperor Guangxu and his supporters had been prevented from pushing through much milder reforms, but the crisis was now so clear that the empress dowager's decision was widely accepted by both Manchu and Chinese officials.

Even before these policy decisions had been made at the central-government level, a reassessment of the nature of Qing local government and its accessibility to the people was being made by some Chinese officials. As early as 1902 the governor of Shanxi province, Zhao Erxun, was formulating proposals that would redesign the *baojia* mutual-security system into a local government network spanning small towns or groups of villages under carefully chosen local headmen. This would create much smaller administrative units than the current counties *(xian)* controlled by magistrates, and would allow greater popular participation in local administration and financial planning. Other proposed reforms were to establish women's schools, to develop an urban police system, and, in particular, to redirect

funds from local community organizations—such as temples or lineages—to the needs of reforming local government and education. Zhao Erxun felt that a new level of local structure was essential, since magistrates were swamped with paperwork and the "majority of the officials in Shanxi are used to taking no initiative. In poor and far away districts these men are contentedly at ease with despicable people of their own type."[1] The newly formed Bureau of Government Affairs officially publicized these reform attempts, and in 1905 the court formally encouraged subcounty administrative offices.

The problems that became manifest in such reform attempts suggest the frailty of protodemocratic institutions and the difficulty of establishing them in an unprepared context. Members of the Confucian-educated Chinese elite, whether officeholding, landholding, or involved in trade (and in some cases the same family was engaged in all three), enjoyed a natural dominance in the countryside and the cities. Their power had long been stabilized by various institutions of the Chinese state, including the bureaucratic hierarchies, the office of county magistrate, the state examinations, the *baojia,* and the system of rural taxation. But constitutional change would not necessarily diminish the power of this elite; it might, indeed, perpetuate or increase it if the elite could adjust to change intelligently and gain control of the new organs of government.

A case in point was the "law of avoidance," under which Qing officials were forbidden to serve in their own native provinces so that they could not use their office to bolster their economic interests at home. But if, as the governor of Shanxi had proposed, local men were to be appointed to local office, they would be able to consolidate and abuse their power in their own communities. Another example of the ambiguity of reform was the abolition in 1905 of the state examination system. In one sense this could be seen as offering greater opportunities to the talented of all social classes and occupational groups, but in fact it was largely the sons (and occasionally the daughters) of the traditional elite groups who had the money and ambition to enroll in the new schools, whether in China or overseas; thus constitutional change that demanded fairly advanced education as a criterion for the vote or for officeholding might also strengthen certain wealthy local families.

In Tianjin, which had emerged in the late Qing as a cosmopolitan center for foreign trade and the headquarters of China's modern military and naval units, the reformist governor Yuan Shikai proposed a different path for local change. Unlike the Shanxi reformers, his plan was to abolish *baojia* systems altogether and institute a police force staffed, trained, and paid along Western lines so as to strengthen local control. Yuan and his staff, in

interpreting Qing decrees on local government, were also influenced by Japanese models, and they moved swiftly to set up a "self-government bureau" to explore the possibilities of limited representation in local administration. A purpose of the bureau was to strengthen the emergent urban constituency rather than increase already entrenched rural gentry power. One of Yuan's own advisers admitted that "Western scholars have said that the tide of civilization in the past came from the East to the West. Now it comes from the West to the East. We can see that after these next few years there will certainly be no more autocratic countries."[2] The adviser's solution was the election of subcounty assemblies. Although this was too swift a change for Yuan, by 1906 he had established local self-government schools to educate residents of northern Chinese cities for the changes that lay ahead, and in 1907 authorized an election for a council in Tianjin.

Elsewhere in China, with varying degrees of speed and thoroughness, the country edged toward constitutional change. In late 1908 the court announced that full constitutional government would be established over the next nine-year period, the same time span for change that had been followed by the Japanese after the Meiji Restoration of 1868. Although the Qing emperor was to maintain almost total power over the new parliamentary structure, the budget, the armed forces, foreign policy, and the judicial system, the need for a working system of electoral government at the central, provincial, and local levels was now accepted. The death of the empress dowager Cixi in November 1908, which followed by one day the death of the unfortunate emperor Guangxu—still under palace detention after his failed reform attempt of a decade before—did not deflect the general direction of reform. If anything it increased the sense of urgency, since the Manchu regents for the new emperor, Puyi—a baby at his accession, like his two predecessors—formed an advisory cabinet packed with Manchus, foolishly failing to see that this would heighten Chinese suspicions that the whole system of constitutional reform was going to be manipulated to protect the ruling dynasty.

The provincial assemblies, which met for the first time in October 1909, were a startlingly new institution and had a volatile effect on the political life of the country. Although these were still elite bodies, open only to males, with careful criteria as to age, wealth, and education, they drew together in public forums men who cared not only about their own families and local interests, but also about the fate of their country. Election turnouts were high for such a thoroughly new institution. The Chinese state had always looked with disfavor on public gatherings, especially those with a political flavor, as was shown by the late Ming treatment of the Donglin party or Kangxi's and Yongzheng's attempts to focus political thinking

around the moralistic and hierarchical Sacred Edict. Now such gatherings received official backing. Moreover the assemblies were immediately suffused with new viewpoints expressed in political magazines and newspapers, and strengthened by the breadth of experience of members who had been trained in military academies or universities overseas, or worked as entrepreneurs in new industries. By early 1910, these provincial assemblymen had exerted so much pressure on the Qing court that it agreed to speed up the reform program and convene the provisional national assembly in Peking that October.

The range of expertise within these provincial assemblies is apparent in the men who emerged as their leaders. In Guangdong, the focus of foreign contact and trade for so much of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the assembly that met in the provincial capital of Canton was presided over by the descendant of a Hong merchant family, the *jinshi* degree holder and former official Yi Xueqing, who had been active in nationalist agitations against the Portuguese in Macao and a leading member of the Guangdong Association for the Study of Self-Government. In the Hunan capital of Changsha, long a site of antiforeign unrest, the leader was Tan Yankai, a fine classical scholar who had received the *jinshi* degree in 1904 and had then been posted to the Hanlin literary academy. But as a director of schools for the Qing in Hunan, he had become antiforeign, antidynastic, and active in trying to defend the economic interests of the Hunanese. In Zhejiang, now a fruitful center of agriculture and foreign trade connected by myriad links to the growing metropolis of Shanghai, yet another pattern emerged. Here the leading figure in the provincial assembly was Chen Fuchen, also a *jinshi* degree holder who had become affiliated with a radical academy in Hangzhou. While lecturing there he met fiery anti-Qing agitators and many radical students who subsequently went to Japan.

It was impossible to tell precisely how these men and the assemblies they dominated were going to act, but one thing should have been clear to the Qing leaders: the Qing court had now effectively guaranteed that any actions it undertook in the future to strengthen its position would meet with sustained scrutiny from the very social strata that, in the past, had provided the dynasty with its most trusted supporters.

New Railways, New Army

Of the new technologies confronting the Qing, the railways proved to be the most troublesome. Many Chinese considered railways disruptive to the harmony of nature and of man: they sliced across the land, disturbing its

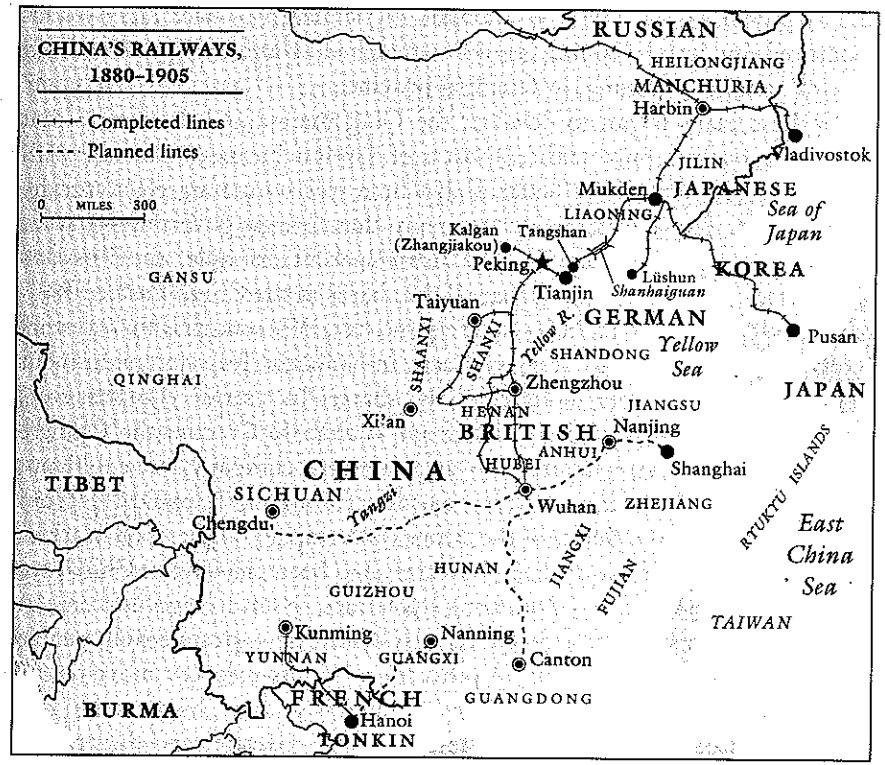
normal rhythms and displacing its benevolent forces; they put road and canal workers out of jobs and altered established market patterns. Although some mid-nineteenth-century Chinese scholars pointed out that railways had been a main source of Western industrial development, the first short stretch of railway built in China, near Shanghai, was bought by the governor and torn out in 1877.

In 1880 Li Hongzhang had to use subterfuge to get a short length of track laid to move coal from the Kaiping mines at Tangshan to a nearby canal. This stretch of line was extended to Tianjin and adjacent towns in 1888, and a spur run into southern Manchuria in 1894, penetrating the pass at Shanhaiguan where Manchu troops had invaded China two hundred fifty years before. Despite the expressed willingness of many foreign powers to lend money to the Qing so that they might build a railway network, for a few years little further work was attempted, and at the end of 1896 China had only 370 miles of track. By contrast, the United States had 182,000 miles, Great Britain 21,000 miles, France 25,000, and Japan 2,300 miles.

The great advance in Chinese railway building was spurred in part by a change in Qing perceptions, in part by the pressures of foreign powers. The biggest perceptual change occurred in 1900. Before then, the official argument against extending China's railways had been that the lines would speed the invasion of foreign attackers into the country. But during the Boxer Uprising, the Qing discovered that they could use the Peking lines to move their own troops swiftly, and easily tear up the track afterward to prevent the advance of foreign troops. This tactic enabled the empress dowager's generals to give the joint Western expeditionary force a hard time as it tried to relieve the siege of the Peking legations. As a result, although the Boxer war ended in defeat for China, railways emerged with greater prestige.

The pressures from foreign powers had been building up ever since China's defeat by Japan in 1894, but reached new levels in the five years following the Boxer Uprising. China, which now had the vast Boxer indemnity of 450 million taels to pay on top of all its other debts, began to find the proffered railway-development loans attractive, even if they came from foreigners. China's most ambitious railway scheme, the Peking to Wuhan* line, had already failed to lure enough active capital from Chinese shareholders, despite its integration with the newly founded Imperial Bank of China. The foreign powers, in turn, were making it clear that they would go ahead anyway and build railways in their areas of influence even if the Qing protested. Germany began to build lines in Shandong; the British

*Wuhan is a generic name, referring to the three linked mid-Yangzi cities of Wuchang, Hankou, and Hanyang.



drew up plans for lines in the Yangzi valley; the French projected a line from Hanoi north to Kunming; the Russians, who had already by treaty agreement driven a line straight across Heilongjiang province to their major port at Vladivostok, added a branch line to Lüshun; and the Japanese, as part of their military assault on Russia in the war of 1904–1905, drove lines north from Korea toward Mukden. After their victory, the Japanese took control of the main lines in the region and consolidated them as the Southern Manchuria Railroad Company. The results of foreign activity can be clearly seen in the mileage of Chinese track completed in this period: 280 miles between 1896 and 1899, and 3,222 miles between 1900 and 1905.

In this expansionist climate, China seemed a good target for railway investors; and through such new banking conglomerates as the British and Chinese Corporation (a key partner in which was the old opium trading firm of Jardine, Matheson), immense sums of money were offered for the basic development of a comprehensive system, the elements of which slowly began to take focus. The key north-south line, completed in 1905, linked Peking to Wuhan, and a second stage was planned to run from Wuhan to Canton. From Wuhan, another line was planned to run east to Nanjing

and Shanghai, and one west to Chengdu in Sichuan province. The French-sponsored line into Kunming would be matched by another spur line from Indochina up to Nanning, in Guangxi province.

As these plans began to develop, the Qing maintained the fiction that they were dealing only with consortia of foreign businessmen, not with foreign governments, and, hence, that China was remaining economically independent. But it was obvious to many that foreign governments were behind most of the deals. To give a transparent example, the Russians announced early one morning that all the shares in the China Eastern Railroad would go on sale at 9:00 A.M. the same day. When no private investors showed up at such short notice with cash in hand, the Russian government representatives promptly bought all the shares. In a more complex case, that of the projected southern line from Wuhan to Canton, the Chinese signed their loan agreements with an American company but could not prevent Belgian financiers—acting on orders from King Leopold II—from quietly buying up the shares of the American company in the open market.

A strong mood of nationalism, however, had been growing in China; we have seen elements of it in Zou Rong's polemics, in antiforeign boycotts, as well as in antimissionary activity. As part of this new groundswell, people in many areas of China began to press for a "rights-recovery movement." The aim was to raise money through local bonds so that Chinese could buy back the railroad rights made available to foreign investors and thus regain complete control of their own transportation system. The confidence that suffused the movement partook of other economic and technological advances. One was the growth of new heavy industries in China run by Chinese entrepreneurs; another, the availability of a good deal of investment capital among the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia; a third, the success of a new generation of Western-trained Chinese engineers in handling even the most difficult problems of railway construction in harsh terrain. Nineteen such railroad rights-recovery groups were chartered locally between 1904 and 1907, covering nearly all the provinces of China.

The recovery of railway rights became a passionate issue to Chinese patriots. They held huge rallies, the most dramatic of which were conducted by those seeking to regain the Peking-Wuhan rights, and by Sichuanese seeking to develop the Chengdu line to Wuhan. But these movements raised more excitement than investment capital; and despite significant successes, such as the completion of the Peking-to-Kalgan (Zhangjiakou) line, there were numerous failures. Only some fifty miles of the Canton-to-Wuhan line were completed by 1909, for instance, despite the $6.75 million that had been put up in 1905 to buy the rights back from the syndicate that had controlled them. Governor-General Zhang Zhidong had tried to generate

a concerted plan for central Chinese railway development but had been frustrated by local interests and by the sudden insistence of the United States in 1909 that American capital also be used in major new railway projects.

By 1910 the Qing government had decided that China's economic development and political stability required an efficient, centralized national railway network. The court therefore decided to buy out, in turn, the rights to railroad lines from their Chinese investors, and to nationalize the whole system under Qing control. They were drawn to this decision in part because those railways that were controlled by the new Qing Ministry of Posts and Communications (founded in 1906) were turning a handsome profit of around 8 million to 9 million taels a year. With annual budgeted expenditures by the Qing now running at 296 million taels on an income base of 263 million taels, this new source of funds made exciting news. The inexperienced Manchu regents for the boy emperor Puyi had little sense of how volatile an issue this had become to the Chinese, and were even told by their advisers that the Chinese investors need only be recompensed for part of their investments. The final edict on railway nationalization, promulgated in May 1911, stated in strong language the reasons for the decision:

> The Government must have in all directions extending to the borders of the Empire great trunk lines in order to carry on government effectively, and to maintain centralized authority. Hitherto the methods have been ill-conceived and there has been no fixed plan. . . . How can we contemplate the consequences of such mistakes? We now proclaim clearly to the whole Empire that the trunk railway lines are to belong to the Government.[3]

Only ten days later the Qing, who had just borrowed £10 million (around $50 million) from a British-American banking consortium, signed a new loan agreement with the same consortium for another £6 million to resume work on the Wuhan-Canton and the Wuhan-Chengdu lines. The many Chinese who believed that each province should have the right to control its own railway development, and that foreign powers should not be allowed a dominant role in the process, were outraged. Within weeks of the May 1911 decision, rallies and protests as angry as any once held against foreigners were being mounted against the Qing. Popular anger remained unabated throughout the summer, especially in Sichuan, where leaders of the provincial assembly and prominent stockholders vowed not to pay further taxes to the government and to fight for retention of their rights.

In the railway agitation of 1910 and 1911, the officers and soldiers of the newly reformed Chinese Army played a prominent role. Many of these

troops were deeply nationalist and felt that the Qing were selling out the nation's resources to foreigners. At one railway rally, an army officer cut off his finger to protest his government's action. At another, a private soldier wrote a letter in blood to the Qing railway company, urging it to restore local control. In Sichuan itself, when a Qing general ordered those of his troops who were members of the antigovernment Railway League to step forward so they could be identified and expelled from the ranks, all the troops stepped forward in a show of solidarity, and the general had to rescind his order.

The officers and men in these armies represented a new element on the Chinese scene, the antecedents of which lay back in the 1850s, when Confucian generals like Zeng Guofan had formed locally recruited peasant armies, well drilled and ideologically loyal. Zeng had enhanced the military efficiency and moral rectitude of his troops by offering them decent wages and instilling in them a code of conduct designed to end the popular conception of Qing soldiers as the scourges of the countryside in which they fought. In the Beiyang (north China) armies developed by Li Hongzhang and others, with their officer-training schools, staff colleges, foreign instructors, and up-to-date armaments, the genesis of a modern army for China, to replace the Manchus' Eight Banners system, was firmly in place.

Starting in 1901 the Qing court made a concerted attempt to reorganize the armed forces and to develop what was termed "the New Army." By 1904 the Qing had established in each province a local war board, divided into three main sections: administration, the general staff, and training and education. Each war board was under the direction of the provincial governor. Such an army, however, with its local loyalties and affiliations, could foster a decentralized authority that might threaten the Qing state. So just as they had with the railway system, the Qing rulers tried to standardize and control the New Army on their own terms. Accordingly the various provincial New Army units were concentrated into 36 divisions under the direct control of the Peking-based Commission for Army Reorganization. With each division projected at 12,500, this would give the government a centrally directed New Army of 450,000 men. In 1906 the Qing also reorganized the Ministry of War, putting it under the direction of a senior Manchu officer served by two Manchu deputies. In 1907 a new position was created—comptroller of the army—and once again the incumbent was a Manchu. That same year the two most powerful provincial governors-general, Yuan Shikai and Zhang Zhidong, both of whom were Chinese, were transferred to Peking to be grand councilors, a technical promotion that took them away from their own troops. The dynasty clearly wished to show that final authority rested with the Manchus in Peking rather than with the Chinese in the provinces.

Yinchang, a talented Manchu officer, was named minister of war in 1910 and rapidly emerged as a forceful spokesman for military reform. A graduate of the government college in Peking, Yinchang had been trained at military schools in Germany and directed the Tianjin military academy on his return to China. He spoke fluent German, had married a German woman, and was open about his great admiration for the military prowess of that country as well as for the armaments produced by the rapidly expanding German firm of Krupp. Yinchang especially tried to instill a sense of pride and discipline in his troops, to keep the number of foreign advisers to a minimum, and to limit these advisers to subordinate capacities. He also sought to consolidate his own power over the New Army in the Peking metropolitan region, and to weaken the power of provincial governors over their local troops by placing all power for transfer of senior officers in the hands of the Ministry of War. At the same time, he promulgated a new code of military law that removed soldiers from civil jurisdiction.

At many levels, Qing reorganization of the military was effective. A new system emerged that stationed divisions of the New Army at strategic locations across China, including cities where there were also garrisons of the traditionally organized Eight Banners, although these were now being slowly phased out. Qing troops had some dramatic successes in 1910 and 1911, the most spectacular in a series of campaigns in Tibet, where Qing influence had been waning in the face of the assertive independence of local princes and the maneuverings of the British in northern India. Qing forces dispatched to the region overcame the logistical and transportation problems posed by the harsh terrain and conquered portions of eastern Tibet, which were reconstituted as a new Chinese province called Xikang. Qing troops also occupied Lhasa, unseated several recalcitrant princes, garrisoned several towns, and forced the flight of the Dalai Lama to India. Qing soldiers even advanced to the borders of Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim to warn the British to ease their pressures on the region. To some Manchu leaders it must have seemed as if the grand old flames of Emperor Qianlong's eighteenth-century victories were being rekindled.

But many problems remained for the Qing military. The army command structure was still fragmented, especially in north China, where Yuan Shikai maintained a loyal following among the troops of the Beiyang army. The Manchus' only answer to Yuan's prestige was, in 1910, to have him removed from office on a trumped-up excuse of illness, which left him angry and his loyal senior officers disaffected. Among the New Army offi-

cers were many men who had embarked on military careers after the abolition of the traditional exams in 1905, since the army seemed to offer a swift and sure new channel of upward social mobility. Ambitious and restless, such men were actively involved in the agitations of the provincial assemblies, and New Army ranks were infiltrated with members of the revolutionary anti-Qing societies that owed allegiance to the exiled Sun Yat-sen.

As the troops and officers of the New Army began to adopt the drill, the khaki uniforms, and the modern weaponry of the European and Japanese troops they sought to emulate, they became more aware of the absurdity of certain customs that had hitherto been taken for granted. The Chinese practice of greeting a fellow gentleman by bowing slightly and repeatedly with one's hands clasped at one's chest, for instance, began to be replaced in the army by a crisp military salute. Of symbolically greater importance, the long queue of braided hair that the Manchu regent Dorgon had forced the Chinese to adopt in 1645 as a sign of loyalty and subservience looked ridiculous in modern combat situations. Soldiers who had first tucked their queues under their caps soon began to cut them off. With Taiping rebels in the 1850s, the cutting of the queue had been proof enough of rebellion against the state. Now, in 1910, the Manchu court took note of it but decided there was no disciplinary action that could be appropriately taken, and no alternative to grudging acquiescence.

Nationalists and Socialists

In the years between 1905 and 1911, as the Qing edged toward constitutional reform and tried to strengthen their control over the New Army and the railways, dissent in China continued to grow. Having begun to taste the excitement of new opportunities, assemblymen, overseas students, women, merchants, urban workers, and troops in the New Army all pushed both local authorities and the central government to respond more forcefully to their calls for reform. The government's failure to meet their varied demands provoked ever sharper criticism in which new concepts of China as a nation—and of the socialism that might transform it—began to emerge.

The Manchus' position was extraordinarily difficult. With the banner garrisons being slowly cut back or reassigned to civilian occupations and the planned New Army not yet under complete central control or up to full strength, the Qing had no clear military dominance over the country. Each fresh initiative—schools, public-works projects, diplomatic establishments overseas—brought rocketing expenses. When the Ministry of War drew up its first detailed budget in late 1910, it calculated that the expanding army would require expenditures of 109 million taels the following year (this huge sum did not include naval expenses), of which 54 million taels would go to the New Army units. In 1911, army expenditures alone represented almost 35 percent of the projected national budget of 338 million taels. This budgetary total was already 40 million taels higher than the deficit budget of 1910. The advisory national assembly, meeting in Peking, responded by slashing some 30 million taels from the army budget. Even so, the resulting budgetary deficit was huge and had to be met by increased agricultural taxes, a wide range of new duties on tea, wine, salt, and tobacco, higher transit and customs dues, and special taxes on all real estate and land-registration deals.

Aspects of these taxes angered almost everyone, and even when the Qing government was on the side of the angels—as, for instance, with its decision to stamp out opium smoking—it ran into problems. Opposition to the effort no longer came from the British, but from Chinese peasant cultivators of opium, who naturally resented the plowing under of their poppy fields. British opium sales had by now been thoroughly undercut by Chinese domestic production, which, confined early in the nineteenth century mainly to Yunnan and Guizhou, was now a vast enterprise in Sichuan, Shaanxi, and the coastal provinces of Zhejiang and Fujian. The Qing anti-opium drive antagonized people across a range of social strata, including distributors, transporters, opium-den managers and their staffs, and the millions of addicts themselves, many of whom were from the wealthiest classes. As if these problems were not enough, the very weather conspired against the Qing. Torrential rains in the Yangzi and Huai valleys during 1910 and 1911 caused catastrophic flooding, ruined millions of acres of crops, drove up grain prices, led to hundreds of thousands of deaths, and forced millions of refugees into major cities for relief.

The power of the state was nevertheless still strong within China itself—except in the treaty ports and concession areas—and it remained difficult for a concerted political opposition to flourish. Thus in the years after 1905, as before, much of the most effective political criticism came from Chinese living overseas, whether voluntarily or in exile. Among those offering significant critiques of the Qing, and backing them with their own original political programs, were the constitutional monarchists who followed the leadership of Kang Youwei, the nationalists influenced by Liang Qichao, various groups of anarchists and Marxists, and those held together in the Revolutionary Alliance directed by Sun Yat-sen.

Of all these critics, Kang Youwei enjoyed the greatest prestige among educated Chinese at home and overseas, since he was a distinguished clas-

sical scholar in his own right, had earned the *jinshi* degree (in 1895), and had been a personal adviser to Emperor Guangxu on the 1898 reforms. Right up to 1911 he continued to urge the Qing to reform their government and to modernize the country so that they could emulate the Japanese and make China strong enough to resist further foreign aggression. He formed various organizations to expound his views, the most important of which were the Society to Protect the Emperor and the Society for Constitutional Government. Kang received large donations from Chinese merchants and bankers in Southeast Asia, the United States (which he visited in 1905), and Canada to speed the cause of reform at home. After 1900, when he had attempted to direct his supporters in two bungled insurrections against the empress dowager, Kang no longer supported armed uprisings. Instead, as the names of his organizations indicated, he tried to get Guangxu released from the palace arrest in which he was held after 1898 so that the young emperor could provide the progressive leadership for China that the Meiji emperor had provided for late nineteenth-century Japan.

Guangxu's death in 1908 left Kang Youwei with no sharp focus for his loyalties. Still he continued to support the Manchus' right to govern and to be true to the ideals of legitimate constitutional monarchy guided by an admixture of Western and Confucian principles. But as anti-Manchu sentiment grew stronger, Kang's position began to seem eccentric even to his personal supporters, while his various financial backers began to wonder where all their money had gone. Kang was personally extravagant and financially inept. He traveled widely and in style with a young female companion, lived in Paris for a time (where he saw the city from a balloon), and bought an island off the coast of Sweden as a summer retreat. His investments were erratic; he put much of his funds into shaky ventures in Mexico, where they were lost in the Mexican Revolution. Finally, his writings on politics, executed in elegant classical Chinese, began to seem out of place in the twentieth-century world. In his most visionary writings, he speculated on the possibilities of a unified world government that would end all nationalist antagonisms, and on the design of a comprehensive welfare state that would protect and nurture humans from birth to death. "It is as if we are all parts of an electrical force," as Kang put it, "which interconnects all things, or partake of the pure essence that encompasses all things."[4] He proposed the ending of gender discrimination at political gatherings by having all participants wear unisex clothing, and also suggested replacing current marriage arrangements with annual marriage contracts that each party could choose not to renew; such marriage contracts could also be made between two men or two women. But these visionary writings were kept mostly in manuscript, and few people at the time knew of the full range of Kang's thinking.

One of Kang's most loyal disciples, a fellow Cantonese who had sat for the same *jinshi* examinations in 1895, was Liang Qichao. Liang was less emotionally attached than Kang to the emperor Guangxu or to the Qing ruling house, and explored a greater range of political options. For a time he was even drawn to extreme ideas that prescribed "the medicine of liberty" as the cure for the "corruption and degeneration" of China. Yet he shied away from the violence of the French Revolution, noting that "the sacrifices of 1793 in France were rewarded only in 1870, and the rewards did not measure up to the expectations. If we now seek to purchase liberty at the price of infinite suffering, it may not be attained after seventy years, and even if it is, what will have happened to our ancestral country?"[5]

Liang worried, too, that the Chinese people were unprepared to assume democratic responsibilities. His pessimism was strengthened by what he saw of life in America's Chinatowns: Chinese behavior there seemed to him uncoordinated or cowardly, and the social conditions deeply unsatisfactory. So Liang used his great didactic powers at public meetings, and his forceful writing style in a wide range of newspapers (some of which he directed), to push for a stronger Chinese nation that would draw on all its people, including women, and develop an informed citizenry under the initial tutelage of tough natural leaders. To achieve this ideal of an active and unified community of citizens, China needed someone of iron discipline to curb its weaknesses, he wrote, like the Spartan leader Lycurgus or England's Oliver Cromwell, and should forget about the Jean-Jacques Rousseaus or George Washingtons of the world for the time being. But he could not condone Cromwell's execution of the English king, and Liang continued to extol the virtues of constitutional monarchy if it could go hand in hand with progress and economic development. His political ideas, which he expressed in novels and plays as well as in essays, attracted a broad following among overseas Chinese and circulated widely within China itself, spreading a sense of disillusion about the Manchus' ability to lead the nation to reform and revitalization.

Far more radical, although less influential and often less elegantly expressed, were the feelings of a considerable number of Chinese who were drawn to various themes within European socialism and anarchism. The development and radical application of Marxist thought had been vigorous in Europe during the nineteenth century, and continued after Karl Marx's death in 1883. In 1889 a broad spectrum of Socialist parties and trade unions, many of them profoundly shaped by Marxist theories, were federated into the

Second International, based in Brussels. Although this body supported the concept of parliamentary democracy, it also pledged to exploit the possibilities of international social upheaval brought about by warfare and to use every opportunity to advance the cause of socialist revolution. Members of the Second International accepted Marx's main premises concerning the inevitability of social revolution.

The first discussion of Marx in a Chinese publication appeared in 1899. Marx was summed up as saying that the poor would "continue to have many strikes to coerce the rich," and as believing that "the power of the rich will extend across state boundaries to all of the five continents."[6] Marx was also described, erroneously, as having been English. The attempted Russian revolution of 1905 was exciting to those Chinese who saw the tsars as parallel autocrats to the Qing emperors, and stimulated new interest in Marxist theories, which seemed to offer an opportunity to jolt China into the modern world. Several Chinese began to study an 1899 Japanese work, *Modern Socialism,* which had been translated into Chinese and stated that Marx "used profound scholarship and detailed research to discover an economic base" and that "socialism is easily grasped by the working people and receives the thunderous support of the majority."[7]

In 1906 a summary and partial translation of Marx's *Communist Manifesto* appeared in Chinese, with a rather more poetic and less violent touch than in the English or German version. The famous conclusion to the *Manifesto,* "The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. WORKING MEN OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!" emerged in Chinese as "Then the world will be for the common people, and the sounds of happiness will reach the deepest springs. Ah! Come! People of every land, how can you not be roused."[8] (The Chinese translator noted that he used the phrase "common people"—*pingmin*—to translate "proletarian" since the Chinese word for *worker* did not include laboring peasants, as *pingmin* did. *Pingmin* had originally been a Japanese neologism for "proletariat.")

After the founding of the Japanese Socialist party in 1906, Chinese interest became more focused. Although there was no organized Chinese Socialist party until 1911, by 1907 the classical Chinese scholar Jiang Kanghu, whose reading abilities included Japanese, English, French, and German, began the scientific study of socialism. Jiang had served as educational adviser to Yuan Shikai and was an ardent feminist. In 1909 he attended the Congress of the Second International when it met at Brussels.

Other Chinese were drawn to anarchism, specifically to the theories of Bakunin and Kropotkin, which criticized the entire contemporary structure

of ideas about the state and stressed the role of the individual, the power of cultural transformation, and the importance of popular participation in all revolutionary processes. A group of Chinese living in Paris founded the anarchist New World Society in 1906 and published the journal *New Era.* Most of these Chinese were also connected to Sun Yat-sen's Revolutionary Alliance, but they were fortunate enough to have their own source of funding, since one of their number owned a bean-curd factory and a restaurant–tea shop. The anarchists' goals were broad and visionary: to abolish political authority and the military; to abolish all laws; to abolish class distinctions, and to abolish private property and capital. They advocated various ways of advancing toward revolution: written propaganda, mass associations, strikes, boycotts, mass uprisings, and assassinations when undertaken out of moral commitment. Another Chinese anarchist group flourished in Tokyo at the same time; this one focused more on the plight of women in traditional society, and embraced an antimodernist, agrarian position. Their hero was Tolstoy, and they took seriously the role of the peasantry in revolution, discussing such topics as communitarian life in the countryside and the possibilities of combining agriculture with industry in a rural economy.

Finally there was Sun Yat-sen himself, since 1905 the titular head of the broad spectrum of "revolutionary" and anti-Qing groups that were lumped together as the Revolutionary Alliance. Some of his adherents were drawn to terrorism and preached the use of assassination; most were completely committed to the idea of a republican revolution. They implacably opposed the Manchus and, as "nationalists," they sought China's release from what they considered the economic stranglehold of the West and Japan. Some were also determined socialists who wanted to move China away from what they saw as its "feudal" past into a new and advanced level of development that would avoid the ills of the capitalist system. A good many members of Sun's alliance were women with various agendas for strengthening the roles of women within a new Chinese state. Sun also had strong contacts with secret societies in southern China. He himself had been inducted into the Hawaii branch of the Triad society in 1904 and had relied on Triad support among overseas Chinese in the United States and Canada.

Sun's views were fundamentally nationalist and republican, although elements of socialism were present, too. In 1905 he visited the Secretariat of the Second International in Brussels, where he presented his party as a socialist one and asked that it be affiliated with the International. A Belgian newspaper of the time reported Sun as saying that he hoped in China "to introduce European modes of production and to use machines, but without the disadvantages." By avoiding capitalism, the Chinese would "build a

new society in the future without any transition." "They accept the advantages of our civilization," noted the journalist, "but they refuse to become its victims."[9]

Sun also consistently sought the overthrow of the Qing with armed force. Between 1906 and 1908, the Revolutionary Alliance directed or instigated at least seven uprisings against the government: three took place in Guangdong province, where Sun's contacts were strongest, and the others occurred in Hunan, Yunnan, Anhui, and Guangxi. Even though each uprising was suppressed by the Qing, Suh remained a charismatic figure to the overseas Chinese, wooing away many former supporters of Kang Youwei and attracting a steady stream of donations into his treasury. Much of this cash came in the form of outright gifts from those Sun had addressed in the United States (where he traveled on a false passport, claiming he was born in Hawaii), Canada, and Singapore, where he had strong backing from several wealthy Chinese entrepreneurs. Sun also sold bonds to those who supported his future regime, promising them a tenfold return on their investments if they would help him attain power. (Although Sun may not have realized it, Lin Qing had followed a similar strategy in his rebellion a century before.)

Despite his vague planning and many failures, Sun was kept going by his energy, persuasiveness, and the virulence of his hostility to the Qing. By the summer of 1911, the number of active Revolutionary Alliance members had grown from around 400 in 1905 to almost 10,000. Many of these were students who had been recruited in Japan by Sun or his affiliates, and had then returned to their home provinces to continue secret agitation against the state. Some had risen to be members of the new provincial assemblies, and others were soldiers or officers in New Army units, where they actively canvassed for further support with revolutionary rhetoric and by offering material inducements. The mix of anger, frustration, dreams, and hard cash was an explosive one.

Qing Fall

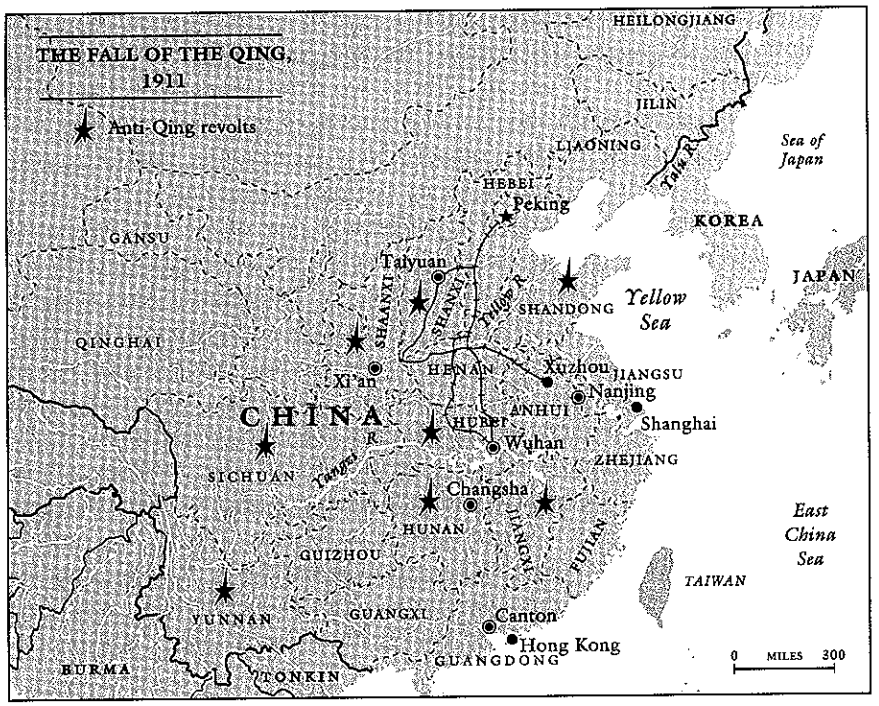
The specific series of events that led to the fall of the two-and-a-half-centuries-old Qing dynasty was triggered by an accidental bomb explosion in Hankou, one of the three cities that composed the area of Wuhan, on October 9, 1911. This explosion might well have remained an isolated and forgotten incident, however, had it not been for the general agitation over constitutionalism, railways, the armies, Manchu power, and foreign encroachments.

Since at least 1904, groups of radical young Chinese—many of them

students who had lived in Japan and a few of them affiliated with the Revolutionary Alliance—had formed revolutionary cells in Hankou and the neighboring city of Wuchang. These two cities, along with Hanyang, the third linked city, with their large numbers of industrial workers and Yangzi River boatmen, modern schools, New Army units, and Qing governmental staff, made the Wuhan tricity complex an exciting area for political and social experimentation. The long-range goal of the revolutionaries was to overthrow the Manchu state, "to avenge the national disgrace" (as they termed it), "and to restore the Chinese."[10] Their shorter-term strategy was to infiltrate the ranks of the New Army units and to coordinate political activities there with members of the various secret societies that had strong branches in the region. The revolutionaries' infiltration of these groups and recruitment of new members to their own ranks were carried out under cover of an elaborate net of allegedly literary or fraternal societies, which enabled small meetings to be held and individual prospects to be approached. When a particular society was investigated by local authorities, the revolutionaries would disband it and later regroup in another area under another name. By the fall of 1911, these various societies in the Wuhan tricity area had attracted 5,000 to 6,000 of the Hubei New Army troops, about one-third of the total force.

The explosion on October 9 occurred while a group of these revolutionaries were making bombs at their meetinghouse in the Russian Concession area of Hankou. Like earlier anti-Qing agitators in Shanghai, they had learned that the institutions of foreign imperialism could afford a measure of protection from Qing police, but on this occasion the size of the explosion brought the authorities to investigate. As the most seriously injured conspirators were rushed to the hospital by their comrades, the Qing investigators raided the headquarters and found three other revolutionaries, who were executed immediately. They also obtained the membership registers of the soldiers and others enrolled in the revolutionary societies. The revolutionaries understood that unless they could launch an uprising rapidly, their organization would be unraveled and many more members would lose their lives.

The first troops to take action were in the Wuchang Eighth Engineer Battalion, who mutinied on the early morning of October 10 and seized the ammunition depot. They were joined by transport and artillery units stationed outside the city. These troops launched a successful attack on Wuchang's main forts, and by the day's end troops from three other New Army regiments had come to their support. After trying in vain to muster loyal troops to defend the governor-general's offices, both the governor-general (a Manchu) and the Chinese divisional commander retreated from



the city. On October 11, members of the revolutionary societies launched a successful uprising in the third of the tricities, Hanyang, across the Yangzi River from Wuchang, and, along with troops from the First Battalion, seized the Hanyang arsenal and ironworks. The Hankou troops mutinied on October 12.

It now became imperative that some prestigious public figure take over titular leadership of the mutinous Wuhan troops and guide the revolutionary movement. Since there were no senior members of the Revolutionary Alliance in the area, and no other local revolutionary society leaders considered suitable for the role, the rebellious troops approached the president of the provincial assembly, who cautiously declined. They then named the popular commander of one of the Hubei New Army brigades, Li Yuanhong, as military governor. No revolutionary himself (initially, he had to be forced at gunpoint to take the assignment), Li seemed a good choice because he was popular with the troops, had been an activist in the railway agitations, was well liked by the provincial assembly leaders (who agreed to serve in his "administration"), and spoke English, which reassured the large foreign community in Wuhan.

The Qing court responded vigorously to the crisis, ordering Minister of

War Yinchang to coordinate a counterattack on Wuhan with two divisions of Beiyang army troops. At the same time the Manchus, swallowing their pride, summoned Yuan Shikai back from the "retirement" to which they had banished him in 1910. They believed that Yuan, with his long history of leadership over the Beiyang army and his strong personal ties to many of its senior officers, could muster those troops behind the Qing while the crisis in the south was stabilized. But Yuan was too canny to accept the appointment as military commander until he had a better sense of how the situation might develop.

Events now moved too swiftly to be controlled by any individual or political party. On October 22, 1911, the New Army mutinied in both Shaanxi and Hunan provinces: in the Shaanxi capital of Xi'an, large numbers of Manchus were massacred, and in Changsha, commanders loyal to the Qing were killed. In both cases the leading members of the provincial assemblies expressed their support for the revolution. During the last week of October, three other provinces rose against the Manchus. In Taiyuan, Shanxi, the governor and his family were killed, and the assembly joined with the mutinous New Army units; in Jiangxi province, a complex alliance of merchants, students, and teachers joined with assemblymen and army officers to assert independence of the Qing; and in Yunnan province, far to the southwest, the instructors in the officers' school rebelled and joined with New Army units in an attack on troops loyal to the Qing.

The military significance of railways, over which there had been so much debate in the later nineteenth century, now became apparent to both sides in the battle. While the Qing, using the Peking-Wuhan railway, sped troops south to quell the mutinies in Wuhan, rebellious units from Shanxi moved down the branch line from Taiyuan to cut that same route, thus severing the supply lines of Yinchang's army. At the end of October, a senior northern general rebuffed the Qing order that he lead his troops south by rail, instead joining with a number of other field commanders and issuing a circular telegram of twelve demands to the Qing court. The critical demands were to establish a parliament within the year, to promulgate a constitution through that same parliament, to elect a premier and have him ratified by the emperor, to deny the emperor all rights of summary execution of criminals, to declare a general amnesty for all political offenders, to forbid members of the Manchu imperial clan from serving as cabinet ministers, and to have the parliament review all international treaties before they were approved by the emperor.

Within a week the Qing court had complied with most of these demands. On November 11, three days after the members of the Peking provisional national assembly elected Yuan Shikai premier of China, the court issued a

decree appointing him to the same office and ordering him to form a cabinet. Yuan complied, naming mostly his own partisans to key positions.

These developments were clearly moving China toward a constitutional monarchy under Manchu direction—the kind so long advocated by Kang Youwei and his supporters—rather than toward the republican form of government central to the demands of Sun Yat-sen and the Revolutionary Alliance. But Sun's supporters, although numerous, did not wield unified military strength in China, and Sun himself was fund-raising in the United States during the events of late 1911; he read the news of the Wuchang uprising in a Denver newspaper while en route to Kansas City. Sun saw his first priority as securing European promises of neutrality in the coming conflict, and accordingly traveled to London and Paris to confer with the foreign governments there before returning to China. In an important political success, he persuaded the British not to advance any more major loan payments to the Qing government.

Throughout November, Yuan Shikai performed a delicate balancing act, using his influence over the Beiyang army to pressure Manchus and revolutionaries alike. Qing forces managed, after heavy fighting, to recapture both Hankou and Hanyang (though not Wuchang, south of the Yangzi), but this was not much solace to the court as province after province declared its adherence to the revolution. Sun's Revolutionary Alliance turned out to have a startling degree of mass support, which the alliance's leaders skillfully exploited. Expanding its organization and focusing its goals, the alliance played a critical role in three provinces that went over to the revolution: Jiangsu (which declared its independence from the Qing on November 3), Sichuan (November 22), and Shandong (December 12). Elsewhere, the alliance remained part of a broader coalition of anti-Qing movements that continued to draw leaders mainly from the New Army, the provincial assemblies, and, in some cases, local merchants.

The Qing court's position was immeasurably weakened when Manchu and loyalist troops were defeated in Nanjing in early December after several weeks of heavy fighting. Nanjing had been China's capital in the fourteenth century, and since that time had always carried a symbolic importance lacking in other cities. Its fall now reminded Chinese of the failures of the prince of Fu's forces there in 1645 and of the great Taiping victory in 1853. Nanjing thus provided a truly national base for the Revolutionary Alliance to consolidate its position.

The mother of the five-year-old boy emperor Puyi now moved to the front of negotiations, pushing through the resignation of the current Manchu regent and authorizing Yuan Shikai to rule as premier while the emperor presided at audiences and state functions. But to many, this seemed like a

return to the days of the empress dowager Cixi, and the compromise was not a popular one.

Sun Yat-sen returned to Shanghai by sea from France on Christmas Day, 1911. Four days later, the delegates from sixteen provincial assemblies, meeting in Nanjing, showed their respect for Sun's leadership and the influence of the Revolutionary Alliance by electing Sun "provisional president" of the Chinese republic. He assumed office in Nanjing on January 1, 1912, inaugurating the existence of the new republic, which was henceforth to follow the Western solar calendar with its seven-day weeks instead of the traditional Chinese lunar one with its ten-day periods. On that same New Year's Day, Sun sent a telegram to Yuan Shikai that acknowledged how weak his own military power base really was. In this telegram, Sun stated that even though he had accepted the presidency for the time being, "it is actually waiting for you, and my offer will eventually be made clear to the world. I hope that you will soon decide to accept this offer."[11]

China now had both a republican president and a Manchu emperor, an impasse that required some sort of resolution. Later in January 1912, the tension between Nanjing and Peking was underlined when a series of assassination attempts nearly took the lives of Yuan Shikai and several senior Manchu princes and generals. At the end of the month, a bomb killed the strongest remaining exponent of a tough Manchu line—the deputy chief of staff, who had endeavored to make the Imperial Guards Corps an elite Manchu military machine. The assassination attempts were believed to have been carried out by members of the Revolutionary Alliance.

The final blow to the Qing came at the end of January 1912, when forty-four senior commanders of the Beiyang army sent a telegram to the Peking cabinet urging the formation of a republic in China. While the most intransigent Manchu princes retreated to Manchuria, where they tried to coordinate a resistance, the emperor's mother and her close advisers negotiated frantically with Yuan Shikai and the other Beiyang army leaders for a settlement that would guarantee their lives and a measure of financial security. When both Yuan and the senate of the provisional government in Nanjing agreed to guarantee to the boy emperor and his family the right to continued residence in the Forbidden City of Peking and ownership of its great imperial treasures, as well as a stipend of $4 million a year and protection of all Manchu ancestral temples, the court announced the abdication of the emperor Puyi on February 12, 1912. Refusing to recognize Sun Yat-sen's claims, a brief accompanying edict gave to Yuan Shikai full powers "to organize a provisional republican government"[12] and to establish national unity with the Revolutionary Alliance and the other anti-imperial forces in central and south China.

So, with a few simple words, the more than two millennia of China's imperial history were brought to a close. And with almost no experience whatsoever in the arts and institutions of self-government, the Chinese people were presented with the option of devising their own future in a watchful and dangerous world.

III

ENVISIONING STATE AND SOCIETY

ONE LATENT SOURCE of trouble during the Qing dynasty had been the balance between central and local power. The hope of China's more progressive politicians, as they struggled to establish a viable republic in the place of the discredited imperial system, was to create a new governmental synthesis that would transform China into a modern nation-state. A parliament in Peking composed of provincial delegates would link center and periphery together. A pool of almost 40 million voters would ensure wide representation for diverse regions and interests. A revitalized structure of local government would placate provincial interests and draw new revenues to the center so that urgent reforms could be undertaken and the power of the foreigners curbed.

The dream collapsed within a few months of China's first national elections in 1912. The leader of the majority political party was assassinated and his organization then outlawed by the provisional president, Yuan Shikai. Though Yuan had ambitious plans to revitalize China, he lacked the military power or the organizational skills to hold the center together. Political power, accordingly, flowed out either to the elites in the provinces—both rural and urban—or to the hundreds of military leaders who began to emerge as the dominant power brokers in China's localities. China's political weaknesses were underscored by international developments: Japan placed ever harsher demands on China, and even China's bold initiative of sending 100,000 laborers to work with the Allied powers in Western Europe during World War I failed to obtain the backing of those powers for China's territorial claims.

The result was a period of political insecurity and unparalleled intellectual self-scrutiny and exploration. Many educated Chinese were convinced that their country was about to be destroyed, and they began to study every kind of political and organizational theory, examine the nature of their own social fabric, debate the values of new forms of education and language, and explore the possibilities for progress that

seemed to lie at the heart of Western science. Known generally as the May Fourth movement, such a concentrated outpouring of intellectual exuberance and doubt had not been seen in China for over two thousand years, although elements of the same search could be seen in the period of the Ming-Qing transition and in the debates over China's future at the end of the Qing.

From the many options explored by May Fourth thinkers, some of China's brightest minds were drawn to the doctrines of Marxist socialism, steered skillfully in this direction by international agents sent to China from the Soviet Union. By 1920 the nucleus for a Chinese Communist party was in place, and the first general meetings of the party were held in 1921. Although Sun Yat-sen's Guomindang (or Nationalist) party enjoyed a much wider prestige and following, the Communists were able to give cogent expression to China's aspirations in battling warlordism, landlordism, and foreign imperialism, and in addressing the plight of China's growing industrial working class. When Communist organizers joined with Guomindang activists, they were able to coordinate a number of impressive and effective strikes, though the strikers themselves sometimes paid for their boldness with their lives.

The alliance between the Communists and the Nationalists was born of a shared desperation and a shared hope. The desperation was over China's fragmented state, compounded by feuding militarist regimes and foreigners' special privileges. The hope lay in drawing on the spirit, skills, and intellectual powers of the Chinese people to create the strength necessary for lasting reunification. Despite competing long-range goals and clashing personalities, Communists and Nationalists could agree at least on the need to attempt reunification of the country through a mixture of military force and social reform. Working together in the southern city of Canton, they were able to train a new military elite and form rural associations that would add peasant numbers to the ranks of organized industrial workers. The military successes of 1926, which drove the newly combined armies to the Yangzi River, were astonishing. But the speed of victory over warlord forces only highlighted the depth of disagreement over social policy, and 1927 became a year of disaster for the Communists as they tried to outmaneuver their Nationalist allies and change the direction of the new state, only to see their movement all but crushed in the attempt.

While the Communists, driven out of the cities, tried to regroup in isolated rural areas, the Nationalists attempted to consolidate their hold over the entire country, and successfully brought China from Manchuria to Guangdong under one flag by the end of 1928. Juggling desperately with inadequate finances, Chiang Kai-shek concentrated on remolding the administrative organs of the state, and encouraging the development of an infrastructure of transportation, urban services, and educational facilities to go with them. Not all foreign powers were enemies in this task: the United States offered money and technically skilled personnel along with its missionaries. Germany contributed military experts and proposed immense deals involving German armaments and rare Chinese minerals. But Japan continued intransigent, extending its hold over Manchuria through the creation of a puppet regime there, and pushing its forces south of the Great Wall until the Chinese agreed to declare northeast China a demilitarized zone. Dreams of a vibrant nation faded again as disgruntled intellectuals turned against the appeasement of the Japanese by the Guomindang, and the Communists began to create large and apparently viable rural governments based on their own radical mix of land reform and guerrilla armies.

For a brief period in the mid-1930s, Japan was the spur to Chinese national renewal as well as its gravest enemy. The Chinese Communists, driven out of their largest and best base, the Jiangxi Soviet, by Chiang's repeated and sustained assaults, retreated to the barren north in the Long March. But once there, they could appeal successfully to a public wearied by the constant spectacle of internecine warfare between Chinese. When Chiang Kai-shek was kidnaped by mutinous troops, the chance offered itself of once again declaring a united front, of reforging a single nation that would withstand the invader. Despite the terrible sufferings of so many Chinese people during the long years of fragmentation and reform, the idea of the nation had remained alive.

CHAPTER 12

The New Republic

Experiment in Democracy

The state of China as the last Manchu emperor abdicated in February 1912 bore many parallels to China's position when the last Ming emperor hanged himself in April 1644. The national finances were in disarray, with a depleted treasury in Peking and little money coming in from the provinces. Groups of scholars and bureaucrats had expressed a wide range of dissatisfactions with the defunct regime, and this discontent now had to be addressed. The army troops occupying Peking were numerous but hard to control, of doubtful loyalty, and liable to mutiny or desertion if their pay fell too long in arrears. Natural disasters had devastated the countryside, causing ruined harvests and starvation, and creating masses of refugees just when financial shortages made it difficult for local governments to offer famine relief. Many supporters of the defeated ruling house remained loyal and could be the focus for future trouble. Foreign pressure was intense, the possibility of invasion imminent. In the macroregions of central, western, and southern China, there was a strong chance that independent separatist regimes would emerge, further weakening central authority.

There were also, of course, numerous differences between the two transitional periods, of which four were probably the most significant. First, in 1912 there were at least seven predatory foreign powers with special interests in China, not just one, and China was already heavily in debt to them. Second, in 1912 the entire economic infrastructure of the country was being dramatically transformed by new modes of communication, transportation, and industrial development. Third, the significance of Confucianism as a

central philosophical system with answers germane to all Chinese problems had been called into question. And fourth, although in 1912 many Chinese still favored a strong, central authority, the entire institution of the emperorship along with the compromise arrangement of a constitutional monarchy had been rejected by most educated Chinese. The most influential forces in the country sought to impose some type of republican government.

In this period of heightened tension, violence was unpredictable and common. Two men who were to become China's pre-eminent leaders in the second quarter of the century, and whose battles with each other were to affect the shape of the Chinese revolution, both had their first taste of violent conflict and political activity at this time. Mao Zedong, born in 1893 to a farming family in Hunan province, served with local student volunteer forces in the area of Changsha. He witnessed the speedy collapse of the Qing armies at firsthand, cut off his queue, and had the grim experience of seeing the murdered bodies of the two most prominent Revolutionary Alliance leaders lying in the city street. They had been killed not by Qing troops, but by republican supporters of the provincial assembly president Tan Yankai, who sought a more moderate path for China. Mao served briefly as a private in the Hunan republican army, and there came across pamphlets by the socialist thinker Jiang Kanghu, who founded the first Chinese Socialist party in November 1911. But Mao's own political stance was still cautious: he later told an interviewer that he had hoped for a government with Sun Yat-sen as president, Kang Youwei as premier, and Liang Qichao as foreign minister. Once the fighting ended, Mao embarked on a course of self-directed study of political and economic writings as preparation for playing a direct role in the reform of Chinese society.

The second man, Chiang Kai-shek,* had been born in 1887 to a salt-merchant family near the foreign treaty port of Ningbo in Zhejiang province. Following the route of many ambitious young Chinese of some means, he had gone to Japan to study in a military academy, where he stayed from 1908 to 1910. Chiang joined the Revolutionary Alliance, through which he became a close associate of the Zhejiang leader Chen Qimei; when Chen became military governor of Shanghai during November 1911, Chiang was promoted to be one of his regimental commanders. He served courageously in the attack on Hangzhou and in the effort to win the city over to the revolutionary cause. According to various accounts, Chiang's baptism of personal violence came when he instigated or performed the assassination

*This was the common romanization of his name. Drawn from the local dialect, it was used throughout his life by virtually all Western writers. Hence it is retained here.

of a dissident member of the Revolutionary Alliance who opposed both Sun Yat-sen and Chiang's mentor Chen Qimei.

The restoration of order to China required that Yuan Shikai link his Peking base and Beiyang army support to the Revolutionary Alliance and the Nanjing forces. It also hinged on the integration of the New Army units and the provincial assemblies into a national polity bound by a legitimate constitution. The first steps toward these goals were halting ones. Since his troops were no match for Yuan's, Sun Yat-sen, hailed by his supporters as provisional president on January 1, 1912, relinquished claims to the title just over a month later, on February 13, the day after the Manchu abdication; Yuan Shikai assumed the office in Sun Yat-sen's place. Leaders of the Revolutionary Alliance and their supporters had stipulated that Yuan Shikai govern from Nanjing, which would move him from his northern military base and mark an important symbolic step toward the formation of a viable civilian regime. But Yuan chose to remain in Peking, claiming that the unstable military situation demanded his presence there. A series of mutinies and outbreaks of violence in Peking, Tianjin, and Baoding during March 1912 seemed to confirm his view, although some cynics observed that it was probably Yuan who had instigated the trouble in the first place to prove his indispensability. Sun Yat-sen, for his part, showed the sincerity of his interest in a revitalized China by traveling to Peking, at Yuan's invitation, and drawing up a vast (and visionary) blueprint for the transformation of China's railway system.

The task now was to create a meaningful constitution, under which valid elections would be held across China for the new two-chamber parliament. The initial step toward this goal had been the convening of the National Assembly in Peking in October 1910. This was a one-chamber house, with its members either elected by the provincial assemblies or selected by the Manchu regent. The National Assembly at once joined with the provincial assemblies to press for the convening of a full parliament before the date of 1917 originally envisioned by Empress Dowager Cixi. In November 1910, the Manchu court agreed that a fully elected parliament should be convened in 1913.

Although a creation of the Qing court, the National Assembly swiftly moved to a position of importance for the future of constitutional government in China. On October 30, 1911, as the Manchus fought for survival, they authorized the National Assembly to draft a constitution, and the assembly produced the first version on November 3. Five days later, the assembly elected Yuan Shikai as China's first premier, conferring a form of democratic legitimacy on his rule.

Overlapping with these developments in Peking, however, came the

meetings, at the instigation of the Revolutionary Alliance, of various groups of provincial delegates—first in Shanghai, then in Hankou, and finally in Nanjing. These delegates were formally convened as the National Council in Nanjing on January 28, 1912, with three delegates from each province. Their role was essential to the healthy growth of Chinese democracy, since Sun Yat-sen had stipulated that the National Council would ratify Yuan's election as provisional president. Yuan responded punctiliously by sending the council a formal message stating that "a republic is the best political system" and "we should never allow the Monarchic system to be restored in China."[1] At Sun's urging, the Nanjing council unanimously elected Yuan Shikai as China's provisional president on February 14.

Yuan Shikai's ascent to the top of the republican structure had come with dizzying speed. Born in 1859 into a lineage that had produced several successful officials, Yuan Shikai did not take the state examinations; instead he purchased a minor official title in 1880, a practice followed by many young men in the later Qing. Thereafter he served for over a decade in various military and commercial posts in Korea, during which time he had ample experience with Japan's expansionist aims in that country. After the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895, Yuan Shikai was appointed by the Qing to train the officers for China's first new modernized army corps, which gave him an important nucleus of military protégés. It is almost certain that he helped the empress dowager overthrow Emperor Guangxu and the Hundred Days[1] reformers, but he also successfully suppressed the Boxers in Shandong. After 1901, as governor-general of the Hebei region, he built the Beiyang army into China's finest fighting force (five of its seven divisional commanders and all the other senior officers were his protégés), and showed a real interest in reforms that strengthened his region, including development of local self-government, education, and a police force. Yuan's achievements in late Qing political life offered hope that as leader of the republic he might respond successfully to the challenges confronting China.

In his own letter of resignation as provisional president, Sun wrote that "the constitution of the provisional government was to be prepared by the Council, and the new president must obey it."[2] In accordance with these procedures designed to ensure the formation of a legitimate republican government, the council promulgated a new draft of the provisional constitution on March 11, 1912. It guaranteed all Chinese and minority peoples equality and protection of persons and property under the law, as well as freedom of worship and assembly, and stipulated that a full parliament must be convened within ten months. At that time the council would be dissolved, and Yuan would resign so that new presidential elections could be held. The same council, with its representatives now increased to five

from each province, voted on April 5 to move the provisional government to Peking, making China a united republic for the first time in word as well as deed. The old Qing national assembly had now been superceded.

Under the rules of this provisional constitution, the Chinese began to prepare for their first national elections. There were to be two chambers in the Parliament: one, a Senate, would comprise 274 members serving six-year terms, chosen by the provincial assemblies, with ten members from each province and the remainder representing the overseas Chinese; the other chamber would be a House of Representatives with 596 members serving three-year terms, and drawn more or less proportionately according to population on a basis of one delegate for each 800,000 people.

With the Qing dynasty at an end, Sun Yat-sen directed that the Revolutionary Alliance transform itself into a centralized, democratic political party that would run candidates for office in the December 1912 elections. The organization of this now renamed National People's party (Guomindang,* 國民黨) was placed in the hands of Song Jiaoren, one of Sun's most capable lieutenants during the years of exile. Song, only thirty years old in 1912, proved a naturally skillful political organizer, although his arrogant self-confidence alienated many. His main interest was to ensure that the powers of the president be limited and that the powers of the Parliament, with its elected representatives, be properly protected. It was clear to most observers in mid-1912 that Yuan Shikai completely dominated the cabinet he had named and wished to assert overweening presidential power. Traveling to many parts of China in 1912, Song Jiaoren made this point vehemently and in terms that often seemed to be directly critical of Yuan Shikai's ambitions. Song and other members of the Guomindang approached the December elections with an edge over their three main rivals: a group of loosely affiliated organizations known as the Progressive party (headed by Liang Qichao), the Republican party (which was strongly nationalistic in tone), and the Unification party. There were over three hundred other small political groups or parties that contested one or more seats in the elections.

Although the national elections drew more attention, political developments in the countryside were equally important. In the general discussion over local self-government during the last years of the Qing, there had been worries that the reform councils would merely serve to entrench the conservative gentry, who would now add official administrative power to the influence already conferred on them locally because of their education and landholdings. This fear was borne out in the months after the Manchu abdication, as old scores were settled and powerful local incumbents took

*Until recently romanized as Kuomintang and abbreviated as KMT.

over a range of new posts designed to bring the authority of the central government much deeper into the countryside than the old Qing magistrates had ever been able to do. Unless this trend were checked, it could undermine hopes for a working democracy in China. But in the excitement of the national race, this problem seemed peripheral and was not directly addressed by the Guomindang or their rivals, although the Guomindang platform did include remarks about the need to develop structures of local self-government.

New electoral regulations promulgated in 1912 gave the vote to Chinese males over twenty-one who held property worth $500 or paid taxes of at least $2, and held an elementary-school graduation certificate. Approximately 40 million men—around 10 percent of the population—could meet these requirements. Illiterates, opium smokers, bankrupts, and those of unsound mind were not allowed to vote. Chinese women had also failed to win the right to vote, despite their growing assertiveness in the late Qing, the support of several prominent intellectuals, the participation of many women as members and financial supporters of the Revolutionary Alliance, and the experiences of some as soldiers with the revolutionary armies or as nurses on the front lines. In 1912, the Peking suffragist Tang Junying led several women to the National Council in Nanjing, where they lobbied vigorously for the insertion in the new constitution of a statement on the equality of men and women, and on women's right to vote. Rebuffed, the women forced an entrance into the meeting chamber, shouting and breaking windows; they were unceremoniously evicted, neither of their requests granted.

The results of China's first national election were announced in January 1913, and they spelled a clear victory for the Guomindang. In the House of Representatives the party won 269 of the 596 seats, with the remainder divided up among the other three main parties. (In this initial election, many politicians maintained allegiance to several parties, so the seats claimed cumulatively by all four parties far exceeded 596.) In the Senate, of the 274 incumbents, 123 were Guomindang members. Under the provisional constitution, the Guomindang would now have a dominant role in selecting the premier and cabinet, and could proceed to push for the election of the president in a fully supervised parliamentary setting.

In the spring of 1913, China's newly elected representatives began to travel by rail, road, river, and sea to the Parliament in Peking. The victorious party leader, Song Jiaoren, went with his friends to the Shanghai railroad station on March 20. As he stood on the platform waiting to board the train, a man walked up and shot him twice at close range. Song was taken at once to the hospital but died two days later—two weeks before his

thirty-first birthday. It was widely believed that he would have been named China's premier. It was also widely believed that Yuan Shikai was behind the assassination, since the trail of evidence led to the secretary of the cabinet and to the provisional premier. But the main conspirators were either themselves assassinated or else disappeared mysteriously, and Yuan was never officially implicated.

When the other Guomindang delegates had assembled in Parliament, they pressed to gain control over Yuan, to develop a permanent constitution, and to hold a full and open presidential election. The Guomindang members, in particular, were intensely critical of Yuan's handling of national finances: instead of addressing tax-collection problems directly, he had taken out another huge loan—a so-called "reorganization loan"—of over £25 million (approximately $100 million) from a consortium of foreign banks. Yuan interpreted these bitter protests as personal attacks and resolved to strike back. In early May 1913, he dismissed the leading pro-Guomindang military governors. In heavy fighting that summer, troops loyal to the Guomindang were routed by Yuan's forces, and in September, Nanjing was taken for Yuan by the reactionary general Zhang Xun, whose troops still wore their Manchu queues. In October, Yuan forced the members of Parliament to elect him president for a five-year term. (It took three ballots before he won a majority, however.) Finally, calling the Guomindang a seditious organization, he ordered the dissolution of the party and the eviction of its remaining members from Parliament. At the end of November, Sun Yat-sen left China for Japan, driven once more into exile from his own country, his republican dreams in ruins.

THE RULE OF YUAN SHIKAI

The foreign powers watched developments in China closely. They had realized that there was no sense in continuing the effort to keep the Qing dynasty alive in order to preserve the treaty rights they had won since 1842. As a result they followed a policy of strict neutrality in 1911 and 1912, while alerting their troops and ships to protect foreign nationals in China and guard a corridor from Peking to the sea to prevent any recurrence of Boxerlike antiforeign outbreaks. The main priority of the foreign powers was to protect their investments in China, which had totaled almost $788 million in 1902 and reached $1.61 billion by 1914. Foreigners were, therefore, likely to accept any government that created a favorable economic climate.

Foreign Investments in China, 1902 and 1914[3]

	1902		1914	
	Millions of U.S. dollars	*Percent of total*	*Millions of U.S. dollars*	*Percent of total*
Great Britain	260.3	33.0	607.5	37.7
Japan	1.0	0.1	219.6	13.6
Russia	246.5	31.3	269.3	16.7
United States	19.7	2.5	49.3	3.1
France	91.1	11.6	171.4	10.7
Germany	164.3	20.9	263.6	16.4
Others	5.0	0.6	29.6	1.8
Total	787.9	100.0	1,610.3	100.0

Although foreign investments were concentrated mainly in Shanghai and southern Manchuria, they covered a wide spectrum of enterprises. Britain's approximately $608 million stake in China included the Hong Kong–to–Canton railway, shipping, public utilities (gas, electricity, and telephone), tramways, coal mines, cotton mills, sugar refineries, silk filatures, a rope factory, cement works, and real estate. Japan's $220 million investment (385 million yen) covered a similar range. American interests were much smaller, but nevertheless were estimated at around $49 million in 1914. The bulk of this was in mission properties (including hospitals and schools) and in Shanghai real estate, although when the first American chamber of commerce opened in Shanghai in 1915, thirty-two American firms took out membership right away.[4]

Japan and the European powers were initially skeptical about Yuan Shikai's new regime and held off from diplomatic recognition of the republic. In the United States, however, opinion was more favorable both to Yuan and to the idea of the new republic. A large number of American missionaries in China had been sympathetic to the republican movement, and many of the more reform-minded Chinese had been educated in mission schools. Sun Yat-sen was a Christian; and Yuan Shikai, even though he was no Christian, cleverly played on pro-Christian sentiments by asking American Protestants to pray for China in their churches as the new Chinese parliament convened in April 1913. The request made the headlines in American newspapers and received favorable attention from President Woodrow Wilson as well as his cabinet. Wilson observed that he did not know when he had been "so stirred and cheered," and his secretary of state, William Jennings Bryan, called Yuan Shikai's appeal "the most remarkable official document

that had been issued in a generation." The *Christian Herald* compared Yuan's action to Constantine's and Charlemagne's "in subjecting pagan nations to the yoke of Christ."[5]

Although America's laws prohibiting the immigration of Chinese laborers were still in force, there was a large and vocal prorepublican group of Chinese students in the United States. Their numbers had recently swelled because of the American decision in 1908 to remit much of the money due by the terms of the Boxer indemnity, and to apply the balance to a scholarship fund for Chinese to study in American universities. Many American politicians believed their country had a "special relationship" with China, based on what they considered their own comparative altruism in the imperialist scrambles of the later nineteenth century, especially as represented by their attempts to modify international behavior through the open-door policy. In the election year of 1912, the Democrats decided to capitalize on the China issue and to push for full diplomatic recognition, embarrassing the Republican incumbent, President William Howard Taft. Soon after Wilson won the election, he proceeded to withdraw the United States from the international consortium making the reorganization loan to Yuan Shikai, on the grounds that its terms were exploitative. In May 1913, the American minister in Peking called on President Yuan, and full diplomatic recognition was extended to Yuan's government.

The British minister in Peking considered the American action "outrageous" since Yuan had not yet given formal guarantees on the preservation of foreign rights and investments. Britain was also anxious to ensure the autonomy of Tibet, which Yuan claimed—following late Qing precedent—was a Chinese dependency. Britain's intransigence on the matter was resented by the Chinese; but on October 7, 1913, Yuan did acknowledge Tibetan autonomy, although his decision was not ratified by either the cabinet or Parliament. The same day Britain extended diplomatic recognition to the Chinese republic. Japan extended recognition after China agreed to further large-scale railway deals, and Russia did the same after China acknowledged the autonomy of Outer Mongolia.

The fact that Yuan Shikai had now won foreign recognition for his regime did not mean that his government was secure. China's constitutional arrangements were in a shambles. As a prelude to purging the Guomindang members from the Parliament in late 1913, Yuan had ordered his police to conduct house-to-house searches of those representatives and senators believed to be Guomindang affiliates. The searches yielded up 438 members with Guomindang party cards, and these members were henceforth banned from the Parliament. Since the Parliament now lacked a quorum, in late November the speakers of both houses announced an indefinite

adjournment; in January 1914, Parliament was formally dissolved, and in February similar dissolution orders were issued for the provincial assemblies and for local government organizations.

To give a semblance of legality to his regime, Yuan now convened a body of 66 men from his cabinet and from various posts in the provinces, and these men produced, on May 1, 1914, a "constitutional compact" to replace the provisional constitution. The compact gave Yuan as president virtually unlimited power over war, finance, foreign policy, and the rights of citizens. In explaining his action to one of his close advisers, Yuan observed: "Parliament was an unworkable body. 800 men! 200 were good, 200 were passive, 400 were useless. What had they done? They had not even agreed on procedure."[6] It was a suitably sardonic comment on the destruction of China's democratic hopes.

Deprived of any mass base of financial support, Yuan's government lived largely on loans. At the beginning of his presidency, the state had an annual income of around 260 million yuan (Chinese dollars), with three basic categories of taxes—on land, on salt and tea, and the dues on internal transit—each yielding 45 million yuan. By 1913 only 2 million yuan or less were coming in from provincial land taxes, and the government was running a deficit of 13 million yuan each month. The revenue from tariffs on foreign trade was also mainly out of Yuan's reach, since in response to the unrest of the revolution, the Imperial Maritime Customs (now under Robert Hart's successor, Hart having died in 1911) deposited the customs revenues in foreign banks so they could be used to pay off the interest on China's rapidly accumulating foreign debts. China thus lost not only the income, but even the banking profits on this revenue. Many of the ad hoc taxes of the late Qing remained in place, swollen with new ones to meet the demands of economic development, but little more reached Peking. Even the salt taxes were now under foreign supervision; they were either used to pay off debts or manipulated to put political pressure on Yuan.

Despite this trickle of funds, Yuan Shikai was ambitious, both for his country and for himself. Even as he subverted the constitution, paradoxically he sought to build on late Qing attempts at reform and to develop institutions that would bring strong and stable government to China. To prepare some of his reforms, he relied on a team of talented foreign advisers that included an Australian foreign-policy expert, a Japanese railway specialist, a French military attaché, and a Belgian jurist; most of these advisers, however, were by their own admission overpaid and underused.

Yuan continued to work for the development of an independent judiciary for China, not because he had any abstract love of justice, but because a firm, impartial system of courts would be China's best tool for ending the

hated system of extraterritoriality. China's new Supreme Court—established in 1906 by the Qing dynasty—took vigorous steps forward in such areas as commercial law and married women's rights. All but three provinces had higher courts, as did many prefectures, although Yuan did not encourage county courts, preferring that judicial power at that level reside with local administration rather than special judges. To reform China's penal system, Yuan authorized an active prison-building program, the improvement of sanitary conditions in prisons, provision of work facilities for prisoners, and attempts at moral reform of criminals. In education, Yuan pushed for the nationwide expansion of primary schooling for males, which would be compulsory and free, and supported experimentation with alphabetized manuals and with teacher retraining. Yuan nevertheless insisted that, along with the new skills needed by China's citizens, the primary curriculum should include study of Confucius.

To develop the economy, Yuan ordered attempts at raising crop yields through irrigation and flood control, developing new strains of livestock, promoting afforestation, and speeding distribution of goods through low-interest loans and reduced railway freight rates. A national survey of China's geological resources was also begun under the direction of a Chinese scientist trained in Britain. The national currency was centralized, minting controlled, and millions of depreciated banknotes in the provinces recalled. Yuan Shikai also made an intensive effort to maintain the suppression of opium smoking and production that had begun in the late Qing. So effective was this plan—all county magistrates were evaluated according to their success at opium suppression—that opium dealers retreated into the foreign-concession areas, where they would be protected by foreign law.

It was to Yuan's initial advantage as he built his dictatorship that the First World War had erupted in Europe in August 1914, leaving France, Britain, Germany, and Russia too distracted to press for any more gains in China. But unfortunately for Yuan, Japan was more than ready to pick up the slack. With formal ties of alliance to Great Britain that dated back to 1902, Japan had declared war on Germany in August 1914 and had immediately followed up by attacking the German concession areas in Shandong province. China argued that Chinese troops should be used against the Germans and tried to get the British to concur. But the British were content to allow the Japanese to go ahead with this planned expansion on Chinese soil.

In January 1915, Japan dealt China an even harsher blow when it issued Yuan's government the Twenty-one Demands. In these, the Japanese demanded far more extensive economic rights for their subjects in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia; joint Sino-Japanese administration of the huge

Han-Ye-Ping iron and coal works in central China; nonalienation of any Chinese ports or islands to other foreign powers; the stationing of Japanese police and economic advisers in north China; and extensive new commercial rights in the region of Fujian province. Chinese hostility to these moves was expressed in nationwide anti-Japanese rallies and in a boycott of Japanese goods that was far more extensive and successful than the anti-American boycott of 1905. Still, Yuan felt he had to yield, although he did modify slightly some of Japan's conditions.

As Yuan's prestige and popularity sagged, his own intransigence hardened. His critics were harassed or silenced under the terms of censorship regulations imposed in 1914 on all newspapers and other publications; these regulations carried stiff penalties for anyone printing material "harmful to the public peace."[7] To build up additional support for his authority, Yuan had already begun to reinstitute elements of Confucian belief as China's state religion. As president, Yuan assumed the role of chief participant in important rituals at the Qing Temple of Heaven, to which he now drove in an armored car. By deliberately evoking Qing state religious observances, Yuan took on the trappings of emperor; in late 1915, Yuan indeed moved firmly in that direction, floating rumors that people wanted him to revive the institution. By August, official pressure to make Yuan emperor had taken on national dimensions, and in November a specially convened "Representative Assembly" voted—allegedly with the astonishing unanimity of 1,993 votes in favor and none opposed—to beg Yuan to become emperor. On December 12, 1915, Yuan accepted, inaugurating his new regime as of January 1, 1916. He placed an order at the former imperial potteries for a 40,000-piece porcelain dinner set costing 1.4 million yuan. He also ordered a large jade seal and two imperial robes at 400,000 yuan each.

Yuan Shikai and his advisers (one of them, Frank Goodnow, an American professor from Columbia University and former president of the American Political Science Association) believed that China was yearning for a symbol of central authority transcending the president and that, therefore, the restoration of the emperorship would be welcomed. But they had miscalculated. Many of Yuan's close political allies abandoned him, and the solidarity of his Beiyang clique of former military protégés was shattered. Throughout China there were mass protests matched by open actions in the provinces. The military leader in Yunnan declared that province's independence in December 1915; Guizhou followed in January 1916, and Guangxi in March. The foreign powers were aloof or openly hostile to Yuan and did not give him any of the support he expected. In March 1916, Yuan Shikai responded to the outcries by declaring that he would cancel the monarchy, but his prestige was now shattered, and province after province continued

to declare independence of Peking. Yuan died of uremia—compounded, many thought, by anger and humiliation—on June 6, 1916, at the age of fifty-six.

The successor to the now tarnished presidency was Li Yuanhong, the reluctant ally of the Wuhan revolutionaries in October 1911 who had been serving since 1913 as the ineffective and equally reluctant vice-president. Li's power base was far weaker than Yuan's, and he had no Beiyang army standing behind him—only a sea of disaffected or independent provinces and an almost bankrupt treasury. Li's most important acts were to recall the members of the Parliament (who had been recessed over two years before) so that China might once again have representative government, and to reaffirm the provisional constitution of 1912 as the binding force on the nation. But both these steps were controversial: since the representatives elected in December 1912 had been voted in for three years only, it was not clear that any of them were now legally members; and since the 1912 provisional constitution had been replaced by Yuan's of 1914, it was not certain that it still had priority.

Li Yuanhong had been in office just over a year when a new military coup occurred, linked to yet another attempt at restoring the emperorship. This time the instigator was General Zhang Xun, who had been a fanatical supporter of the Qing ever since he had served as military escort to Empress Dowager Cixi at the time of the Boxer Uprising. Zhang had fought loyally for the Manchus at Nanjing in 1911 and had remained a Manchu loyalist throughout Yuan's presidency, even ordering his troops to keep their queues in Manchu style. It was Zhang who had seized Nanjing back from the Guomindang troops in 1913, and despite the savagery of his army in looting the city after its capture, Yuan had named him a field marshal and inspector general of the Yangzi provinces. Allegedly acting as mediator between President Li Yuanhong and other feuding generals, Zhang led his army into Peking in mid-June 1917 and declared the restoration of the abdicated Qing emperor Puyi, now a boy of eleven. As bemused Peking residents searched for old Qing imperial banners to hang outside their houses, and the international diplomats tried to decide how to handle this new development, a small group of former Qing officials and scholars—among them the late emperor Guangxu's loyal supporter, Kang Youwei—hurried to the Forbidden City in official robes to serve the new emperor.

But the restoration never got off the ground. Other generals in the Peking region marched on the palace, and two aviators—in what may well have been China's first aerial action—dropped a bomb on the Forbidden City, killing three men. In mid-July, the troops of rival generals stormed Peking and defeated Zhang Xun, who was given political asylum in the Dutch

legation and took no more active part in politics. Emperor Puyi was deposed once again, although not penalized, except by the order of the new president that he be given a modern education under Western tutors. (He continued to live in style in the Forbidden City until 1924, when another warlord evicted him from the palace and forced him to seek safety in the Japanese concession area in Tianjin. The Forbidden City was thereafter made into a public cultural and historical museum.)

With the collapse of General Zhang's insurrection at the hands of a group of other, rival generals, all pretense of real strength in the central government was gone. From now on both the presidency and the Parliament became the playthings of the militarists; and although able, intelligent men continued willing to serve in the government, they rose and fell at the behest of these outside forces. Democracy had vanished, and the era of "warlordism" had begun.

Militarists in China and Chinese in France

The men known as "warlords," who now controlled much of China, had a wide range of backgrounds and maintained their power in different ways. A large number had risen through the ranks of the Beiyang army and had once been protégés of Yuan Shikai; many others had served in the provincial armies and had risen to positions as military governor or senior officer in late 1911 or early 1912. A number were simply local thugs who had seized an opportunity to consolidate a local base. Some dominated whole provinces and financed their armies with local taxes collected by their own bureaucracies; others controlled only a handful of towns and got their money from "transit taxes" collected at gunpoint or through confiscation. Some warlords were deeply loyal to the idea of a legitimate republic, continuing to hope that one day they would be reintegrated into a valid constitutional state; others believed that Sun Yat-sen and the Guomindang represented China's legitimate government. Out of choice or necessity, a number worked closely with foreign powers, whether it was the British in Shanghai, the Japanese in Manchuria, or the French in the southwest. Some controlled extensive lengths of railway line, drawing their revenues from passenger and freight services, and from the commerce of cities on the line. Some reinstituted opium growing in their domains and tapped the greatly expanded drug trade for revenues. Opium use once more began to attain the scale it had before the suppression campaigns of the late Qing and of Yuan Shikai's early presidency.

In character as well, the warlords differed greatly. Many, like the warlord who for a time dominated Shandong, were capable of a ferocious and erratic cruelty or of extremes of sensual indulgence, but many others were educated men who tried to instill in their troops their own vision of morality. This might be a kind of modified Confucianism, Christianity, socialism, or the curious amalgam concocted by the warlord of Shanxi, Yan Xishan, who drew on a wide array of heroes from Europe and the United States in pursuit of his ideal image. As Yan stated proudly, he had constructed a virtually perfect ideology to run Shanxi province, one that combined the best features of "militarism, nationalism, anarchism, democracy, capitalism, communism, individualism, imperialism, universalism, paternalism, and utopianism."[8]

No matter whether individual warlords were cruel or generous, sophisticated or muddleheaded, the fragmentation of China that was now beginning was to make any further attempts to unify the country even harder than it had been for those who inherited the mantle of leadership from the Qing. Nevertheless, a certain apparent coherence adhered to China's government because the warlords in north China never completely destroyed what remained of the presidency and the premiership. Instead, they placed their own supporters in these positions so that whatever prestige the offices preserved would redound back to the warlords themselves.

One man who assumed leadership under these conditions was Duan Qirui, who became premier of China in 1916. Born in 1865, the year after the suppression of the Taiping rebellion, Duan in 1881 was among the first group of cadets to enroll in the new Beiyang military academy. Graduated top of his class, he was spotted by Li Hongzhang and sent to Germany for advanced study in military science. His next sponsor, Yuan Shikai, made Duan head of the New Army's artillery battalion. Duan served with Yuan in Shandong during the Boxer Uprising and was given command of a division of Beiyang army troops in 1904. His appointment as head of the staff officers' college in 1906 provided him an admirable opportunity to build up his own clique of loyal young officers, just as he had served as a member of Yuan Shikai's loyal group of protégés. He commanded the Second Army Corps in Hubei during the 1911 revolution and was named military governor of Hunan and Hubei as a further reward for his loyalty to Yuan. In 1912, he was appointed to Yuan's cabinet as minister of war and served as acting premier during the 1913 purge of the Guomindang from the Parliament. With Yuan's death in 1916, Duan—who had opposed Yuan's imperial-restoration attempt—became premier, given crucial backing by other senior commanders from the old Beiyang army clique.

As Duan consolidated his complex civil and military power base in China,

World War I began to reach its most crucial stage in Western Europe. Although there was no historical precedent for China's taking an active role in global events far from its shores, it fell to Duan to inaugurate a new era of overseas involvement. He and his advisers were intrigued by the possibilities of joining France and Britain in their fight against Germany, arguing that if Germany were defeated, then the strategically important German concession areas in Shandong province around Qingdao could be reclaimed by China. Duan was further pressured toward an anti-German declaration from two directions. One was from the United States, which in early 1917 was preparing to enter the war in response to German submarine attacks against neutral shipping in the Atlantic; the other was from the Japanese, who had abandoned various attempts to encourage separatist regimes in Manchuria, Mongolia, and southern China, and had decided to try to bribe Duan Qirui's regime into recognizing Japan's standing in north China at Germany's expense.

The Japanese backed their pressure with a 5-million-yen loan of gold to Premier Duan in January 1917. In March, Duan persuaded the restored Parliament to break diplomatic ties with Germany, but he had a tougher battle over issuing a formal declaration of war since President Li Yuanhong and the Parliament thought that they, not the premier, should make such a decision. Only in August, after Zhang Xun's coup—prior to which Parliament had yet again been disbanded—and the return of Duan to office as premier and minister of war following Zhang's defeat, did Duan persuade the cabinet to join him in issuing a formal declaration of war. Over the following year, the Japanese lent Duan an additional 140 million yen (about $70 million at the exchange rates of the time).

China's military strength was trivial compared to that of the European belligerents or of the United States, which had entered the war on the side of Britain and France in April 1917, but China had one crucial resource that the Allies lacked—namely, manpower. The slaughter in the European battlefields had been terrible: the British and French had lost over 600,000 men at the Battle of the Somme alone in 1916, and the following year the British lost 250,000 more at the Battle of Ypres. In constant need of new men for the front, the Allies realized that if Chinese laborers could be used on the docks and on construction projects in Western Europe, it would free more European males for active combat.

Pursuing this harsh but accurate line of reasoning, the British and French had begun to negotiate with the Chinese as early as the summer of 1916. Well before the Chinese declaration of war, the result was the establishment of a processing plant for Chinese laborers in Shandong province, near the British naval base of Weihaiwei, with a second one added later at the port

of Qingdao. Sarcastically referred to by the British as their "sausage machine,"[9] the processing system worked swiftly and smoothly. There were tens of thousands of Chinese volunteers, driven by the poverty of the region and China's political uncertainties, and lured by the generosity of the wages offered by the British. Each volunteer received an embarkation fee of 20 Chinese dollars, followed by 10 dollars a month to be paid over to his family in China; the volunteers were provided with clothing and meals as well. The Chinese were given medical examinations and checked specifically for trachoma (a contagious viral disease of the eyelids, especially common in Shandong), tuberculosis, and venereal disease. If accepted—and about 100,000 made it through the screening—they were issued dog tags with serial numbers, which were sealed with metal rivets on bands around their wrists. Then they were sprayed from head to foot with disinfectant and urged to remove their queues, which many had chosen to keep despite the revolution in 1911.

An initial boatload of Chinese laborers, traveling across the Indian Ocean and through the Suez Canal in 1916 on contract to the French government, had been sunk by German submarines in the Mediterranean; 543 Chinese lives were lost. New recruits were thereafter shipped over the Pacific to Canada, across Canada by train, and then reshipped in fleets accompanied by antisubmarine patrols for the final journey across the Atlantic. Although their employment had been protested by many French and British, particularly by labor-union members, the Chinese were soon at work, most of them in northern France. They were given such tasks as unloading military cargoes at the docks, building barracks and hospitals, digging trenches, and handling ammunition in the railway marshaling yards. They worked ten-hour days, seven days a week, with some time off allowed at the traditional Chinese festivals. The Chinese laborers remained nonbelligerents even after China's declaration of war, since there was no way Duan's regime could finance an army in Europe.

The presence of so many Chinese men in France—54,000 by late 1917, 96,000 by late 1918—created complex social problems and opportunities. The Chinese worked in unsanitary, dangerous conditions even before China's declaration of war. Some of their camps were bombed by German planes or shelled, and on occasion they retaliated for their dead comrades by killing German prisoners of war. Some Chinese were blown up by unexploded mines or shells when cleaning battlefields or digging trenches. Many fell ill from the strange diet and the intense damp and cold, and on occasion they mutinied against their French and British employers or ransacked local restaurants in search of food. Sample sentences from a Chinese phrase book prepared by the British army for use by its staff in the camps hint at

the levels of irritation or discrimination the Chinese labor corps experienced: "I want eight men to go over there quickly." "Why don't you eat this food?" "The inside of this tent is not very clean." "You must have a bath tomorrow." "This latrine is reserved for Europeans and is not available to Chinese."[10]

The most significant response to the bleak conditions came from representatives of the YMCA, who saw here a major opportunity for service. They focused especially on recreational activities and on problems of public education among the Chinese, designing special vocabularies and teaching techniques to spread literacy among the workers. Especially influential was James Yen, a native of Sichuan, who received some higher education in Hong Kong before traveling to the United States and graduating from Yale University in 1918. As well as helping to formulate a thousand-character vocabulary, Yen designed a periodical, the *Chinese Workers' Weekly,* to use only those characters, and wrote letters home to China for hundreds of workers. Astonishingly, with the aid of such educated Chinese staff, as many as 50,000 letters a month were mailed from France to China, where they were read and reread aloud to the villagers. Brief, simple in vocabulary, and censored for military secrets by the Allies, these letters are nevertheless important signs of the growing literacy that had been a goal of Yuan Shikai's and was later to be central to Communist educational programs. One surviving letter ran as follows:

> For the inspection of my elder brother. I have come many ten thousand li* since I saw you. I am doing well and you need not have anxiety about me. I am earning three francs per day, but as living is expensive I cannot send many home yet. As to my quarrelling with you, that day at Yaowan, before I left, forget it! I did unworthily. Please take care of our parents and when I return in three or five years, I will bring enough money to help support them the rest of their days.[11]

The Chinese contribution to the war was not without its cost. In addition to the 543 lost at sea, almost 2,000 Chinese workers died in France and Flanders, and were laid to rest in a number of special cemeteries. There the long lines of gravestones, each neatly incised with the characters of their Chinese names and the serial numbers given to them by their Western employers, still bear mute testimony to China's first involvement in such a global conflict. More complex was the legacy of the tens of thousands of workers when they returned to China, literate and wise in the ways of the world, often with a decent balance of cash stored up safely with their families. They would be in a position to play a new kind of active role in Chinese politics, as some Chinese socialists observed.

*A *li* is one-third of a mile.

After the armistice of November 11, 1918, ended the war with Germany's defeat, anticipation in China ran high. There were triumphant parades in Peking, and an exuberant crowd demolished the memorial that the Qing had been forced to raise in honor of the Germans killed by the Boxers. The Peking government was now headed by yet another Beiyang-faction president and premier; Duan Qirui had resigned in October 1918, but before doing so had used the huge Japanese loans to enhance his own military power and had continued to build a network of secret deals with the Japanese. The Chinese delegation to the postwar treaty negotiations at Versailles, sixty-two members strong, was headed by five capable diplomats who had never been fully briefed on what to expect. They were greeted at Versailles by the shattering announcement of the chief Japanese delegate that early in 1917, in return for Japanese naval assistance against the Germans, Great Britain, France, and Italy had signed a secret treaty ensuring "support [of] Japan's claims in regard to the disposal of Germany's rights in Shandong" after the war.[12]

As if that were not bad enough, the Japanese also announced that they had come to secret agreements with Duan Qirui in September 1918, while he was still premier. These agreements granted the Japanese the right to station police and to establish military garrisons in Jinan and Qingdao, and mortgaged to Japan, in partial payment for its loans to China, the total income from two new Shandong railroads the Japanese planned to develop. The Chinese delegates seem to have been genuinely unaware of these humiliating secret agreements. President Woodrow Wilson, who had earlier been sympathetic to China's desire to recover its Shandong rights, now felt that Japan had staked out a firm claim to them on the basis of international law. On April 30, 1919, he agreed with David Lloyd George of Britain and Georges Clemenceau of France to transfer all of Germany's Shandong rights to Japan.

As the nature of this new betrayal grew clear, urgent telegrams flew between Paris and Peking, and the Chinese public was aroused as rarely before. China's delegates at Versailles were bombarded by petitions and protests from political and commercial groups, from overseas Chinese communities, and from Chinese students at universities abroad. On May 1, the news reached Peking that the Chinese delegates acknowledged their case as hopeless because of the prior agreements. This news triggered mass protests in Peking on May 4, which were followed by demonstrations in cities all over China. While the government dithered, pressure on the Versailles delegates not to sign the treaty was unrelenting. With typical indecision,

the Chinese president did at last telegraph an instruction not to sign, but the telegram was sent too late to reach Versailles before the June 28 deadline. However, Chinese students and demonstrators, by surrounding their nation's delegation in their Paris hotel, had forcibly prevented the delegates from attending the signing ceremonies. The Versailles treaty ended up without China's acceptance.

A new generation of Chinese activists was henceforth to direct probing questions at the nature of Western moral values, disgusted as much by the bloodshed of which Western nations had proved capable as by their duplicity. And the date of May 4, the day in 1919 on which the citizens and students of Peking protested publicly in the streets against the Versailles treaty, was to give its name to a new movement in China, one in which the juxtaposition of nationalism and cultural self-analysis took the Chinese people in yet another new direction.

The Political Thinking of Sun Yat-sen

During the period he led the Revolutionary Alliance—from 1905 to 1912—Sun Yat-sen had not formulated a detailed or consistent ideology; he gave voice to vigorous anti-Manchu and pro-republican attitudes, broad socialist principles, and a general hope for developing the institutions to make China a strong modern state. He was usually vague on the specifics of his program beyond suggesting that democracy should come only after a period of military stabilization and proper tutelage for the masses. After the Guomindang was organized in 1912 under Sun's direction, the party program remained flexible. The idea that democracy required periods of preparation was dropped for the elections, and the party's emphasis shifted to the need to curb presidential power and to assure an active role for the national Parliament in China's future.

It was only when he settled in Japan in December 1913, after the expulsion of the Guomindang by Yuan Shikai, that Sun began to develop his views on the kind of program he favored for China and the kind of political organization he thought could attain that program. Despite his failures, his faith in himself and his mission was undimmed, and he determined to impose on his supporters a more sharply defined sense of his role as leader.

His first task was to decide what kind of political party to build and what to call it. Disappointed by the disasters of 1913, Sun adopted a more radical stance than that projected by the Guomindang and named his new organization the Revolutionary party (Gemingdang). The party was officially established in Tokyo in July 1914, and Sun issued its first manifesto in September. He admitted that his fellow exiles were "discouraged" and that "the revolutionary spirit and organization of twenty years are almost down to their last breath,"[13] but claimed the new party would restore China's revolutionary momentum. Under himself as "Director," party members would take an oath of loyalty, confirmed by affixing their thumbprint to the written pledge. The party would remain a secret organization, not an open political party.

Like so many before him, Sun Yat-sen had come to feel that China was not yet ready for democracy. Accordingly, he returned to his three-stage idea, insisting that the Revolutionary party, after attaining power, should lead the Chinese people through military rule and into a period of tutelage under the party's guidance. Once a measure of wisdom and sense of responsibility had been achieved by the people, they could move into a period of genuine self-rule under the republican constitution. The tutelary period between the first and third stages would be termed that of "revolutionary government," and Sun left its duration unspecified.

Sun determined that the Revolutionary party would have an elaborately hierarchical structure, with members divided into three groups. Founding members would perform executive and legislative functions in the government; those who joined the party in the military period could vote and hold office; late-joining members would have the vote only. All those outside the party would be excluded from full citizenship and would receive their full civil rights only after the constitutional period had begun. The party-government would comprise five departments, all heads of which would be appointed by Sun as director of the party. The Executive Department would have five bureaus for the running of day-to-day military, economic, and party affairs. Four other departments would prepare members for future government service in the areas of legislation, the judiciary, political control, and recruitment through examinations.

Sun had considerably changed his concept of nationalism since the late Qing. With the Manchus now out of the picture, he seemed willing to play down the issue and, in fact, moved with more energy than good judgment to find foreign backing wherever he could. He repeatedly approached the Japanese government for support for his campaigns against Yuan Shikai, offering them significant economic and political concessions, rather as Duan Qirui had done. Sun was willing to give a Californian financier vast franchises on China's railways, industries, and retail outlets, promising him half ownership of all the lines and large profits from the other operations. He also had contacts with the German government, which offered him $2 million dollars to overthrow the anti-German Duan Qirui. But most of the

time, Sun was desperately short of funds and relied, as before 1911, on the generous gifts of overseas Chinese.

Sun Yat-sen faced immense difficulties in formulating a coherent and effective ideology, organizational form, and strategy for his political party. The social, economic, and political dimensions of Chinese life were all in flux, and the fragmentation of the country under militarists' rule made coherent planning almost impossible. The persistent tension between central and local power in China was especially keen at this time. One aspect of Yuan Shikai's reform, for instance, had been the attempts to standardize local administration by restoring the posts of county magistrates, and to recruit civil servants through examinations geared to test bureaucratic skills and general knowledge. But these rural incumbents often took office in an atmosphere of violence and terror, as Yuan's troops or those allied to him ruthlessly hunted down suspected supporters of his Guomindang enemies. The Qing elites of local landlords and scholars were, in many cases, able to enhance their economic and social power bases in these years. With China still overwhelmingly rural—at least 75 percent of its estimated 450 million people lived in small villages, with little access to new technologies of transportation, production, or information—members of the elite could spread their influence via networks of alliances and local associations based in the larger cities. Thus, they strengthened their hold over local businesses and politics, and could exploit the new economic growth that was taking place. Such growth was steady, despite the chaos of the times: whereas in 1913 there were about 700 Chinese-owned factories using mechanical power, capitalized at Ch. $330 million and employing some 270,000 industrial workers, by 1920 over 500,000 workers were employed in 1,700 factories with a capitalization of over Ch. $500 million.[14]

Sun Yat-sen, even in exile, managed to heighten the disorder in China by attempting to link his Revolutionary party to the formidable bandit leader known as "White Wolf." White Wolf's roving bandit forces employed little ideology beyond anti-Yuan sentiment and nostalgia for the Qing. Yet they sought and found thousands of recruits among despairing peasantry, demobilized soldiers, and victims of official repression. Like the Nian rebels in the 1860s, White Wolf's troops roamed southern Henan and Anhui, and for a time found a base in Shaanxi, until they were suppressed late in 1914.

Sun's own leadership was challenged by former supporters who protested his personal power, resented the thumbprinting required as part of the allegiance oath, and considered his plans inchoate. Many of Sun's critics found refuge among those overseas communities in Southeast Asia and the United States that continued to use the name Guomindang and would not acknowledge the Revolutionary party. The result was muddle and frustration in the anti–Yuan Shikai ranks. But in Japan with Sun were a group of talented men who were to continue to play a critical part in Chinese politics. Hu Hanmin, military governor of Guangdong for the Guomindang in 1913, concentrated on fund-raising for Sun in the Philippines and returned to Shanghai to coordinate anti–Yuan Shikai campaigns. Charlie Soong, one of Sun's earliest backers, moved to Tokyo with him and took along his daughters, who served as Sun's private secretaries. One daughter, Soong Ailing, married a friend of Sun's, the industrialist and YMCA director H. H. Kong; the second, Qingling, married Sun himself in October 1914, although he was twenty-six years her senior and was already married with fully grown children. The San Francisco–born Liao Zhongkai, who had managed Canton finances for Hu Hanmin, now took over financial details for the Revolutionary party and acted as director of the Finance Bureau.

When President Yuan Shikai died in the summer of 1916, Sun Yat-sen returned to Shanghai. For the next four years, living either there or in Canton, he played a visible but inconclusive role in Chinese politics. The constitutional shambles of China made much of his political planning seem valueless, although with his customary skill he adapted swiftly. For instance, when after Yuan's death President Li Yuanhong recalled the members of the 1913 Parliament, Sun could hardly push for the revolutionary first stage of military rule; instead he let the 40-odd members of his Revolutionary party who had previously been parliamentary delegates take their seats in Peking. At the same time, however, he did nothing to coordinate their votes on legislative issues. Nor did Sun control the many other members of Parliament who continued to use their old Guomindang label. But when, in 1917, the Parliament in Peking was disbanded again, Sun seized the chance to set up a new government in Canton, to which some 100 former members of Parliament who followed him south gave a kind of overt legitimacy when they elected him "grand marshal."

Sun was driven out of Canton by feuding warlords in 1918. He returned to semiprivate life in Shanghai, where he lived comfortably in the elegant French concession. There he devoted himself to writing about democracy and its problems, and to analyzing the political and psychological obstacles that he believed prevented the Chinese people from attaining adequate constitutional government. In an attempt to clarify his own political organization, he phased out the Revolutionary party and formally resurrected the Guomindang (which many loyalists had never left), furnishing it with a new constitution in 1920. He sought to placate those who had opposed the Revolutionary party by dropping the extreme oaths of loyalty to himself as leader, abandoning the different levels and criteria of membership, and being less formalistic about the tutelage stage, which was now combined

with the military stage in the planning of a constitutional state. In private conversations, however, he continued to show that he believed in all these principles.

During the early 1920s, actual power in the city of Shanghai was divided between the foreigners who ran the main concession areas, where their businesses and houses were congregated under the protection of extraterritoriality, and a succession of warlords—usually bearing official titles as military governors of either Zhejiang or Jiangsu—who competed among themselves for control of Shanghai's Chinese city and its population of almost 2 million. Shanghai had become a turbulent place, its expanding new industries and bustling international harbor lending impetus to rocketing opium sales and addiction, rampant prostitution, and organized crime. The French had adapted to Shanghai's seamy politics by making one of the leading Chinese racketeers the chief of detectives in their concession area: his job was to keep out all other hoodlums except for those connected with the city's most powerful criminal group—the "Green Gang." There were undercurrents of connections between these men and Sun Yat-sen, although they remain murky. Chiang Kai-shek, for example, who had been living in Shanghai on the edges of the criminal world during those years when he was not in Japan with Sun, was connected to members of the Green Gang and had a police record in the British files. Chiang was close to Du Yuesheng, who had risen through the opium-smuggling rackets to become one of the most important syndicate leaders in the international settlements. When Sun tried to raise more money by speculating via the newly founded Shanghai Stock and Commodity Exchange, it was Chiang who acted as intermediary with various local financiers. The financiers and the underworld figures alike all kept a variety of contacts open with the local military strongmen.

Sun's position in Shanghai was tenuous, his political role in the country's life still far from clear. He played his part as a spokesman on various issues, protesting Zhang Xun's military restoration of the Manchu emperior Puyi in 1917 and lodging his own public protests over China's declaration of war on Germany later that year. He was a vigorous spokesman for Chinese rights during the 1919 Versailles negotiations. Sun also tried to involve the newly reorganized Guomindang in the growing world of China's new political magazines by founding his own, *Construction (Jianshe)*.

In his own manifesto for the magazine, published in August 1919, Sun Yat-sen tried to recapture some of his earlier fire. Claiming that 1911 had witnessed "the most civilized revolution that the world has ever seen," Sun argued that its gains had been lost because of unruly militarists, corrupt officials, and a population ignorant of the means of national reconstruction.

But henceforth, Sun wrote, "the multitude of the people will, with one heart, proceed to build the richest and happiest country in the world—a country of the people, by the people, and for the people."[15]

Twenty-five years had now passed since the eager young Sun had offered his services to Li Hongzhang in the effort to strengthen China, only to be ignored. Despite the brave words, it must have been apparent to him that his country was now weaker than it had ever been under the Qing, and that the way back to unity and strength was daily growing more difficult. It is a tribute to Sun Yat-sen's tenacity and optimism that he did not give up, and proof of his powerful personality that he retained enough supporters to feed his dreams.

CHAPTER 13

"A Road Is Made"

The Warning Voice of Social Darwinism

The fragmentation of authority under Yuan Shikai, the failure of the fledgling republic, and the betrayal of Versailles—all served to deepen a fear that had been latent among Chinese since the late Qing: that China was about to be dismembered, that it would cease to exist as a nation, and that the four thousand years of its recorded history would come to a jolting end. At the same time, analytical tools for probing China's plight had been made available by the spreading popularity of Western Social Darwinism; and even if the theories gave little solace to Chinese thinkers, these ideas nevertheless helped to bring some sense of method into a despairing debate.

The evolutionary theories of Charles Darwin, whose *Origin of Species* was first published in England in 1859, explained how the adaptive processes of natural selection determined which species managed to thrive and which were doomed to extinction. From the huge range of observations that he had made while sailing on the *Beagle* to the Cape Verde Islands, Chile, the Galápagos Islands, New Zealand, and Australia, Darwin came to realize that those organisms that were best fitted to survive in the constant struggle for the limited resources that made existence possible were the ones that did survive, and that in doing so they slowly ousted those less well fitted. Through the laws of heredity, furthermore, the degree of adaptation achieved by a species would be maintained or improved.

The British sociologist Herbert Spencer made his own creative adaptation of these theories. In *The Study of Sociology,* published in 1873, Spencer

applied Darwinian theories to the development of human societies, arguing that the "survival of the fittest," a phrase Spencer coined in 1864, governed social as well as biological evolution. He declared that human societies evolved from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous and hence to a stage of increasing individuation. Societies were further divided between military ones obtaining cooperation by force and industrial societies in which voluntarism and spontaneity rose from the acknowledgment of individual consciousness. Spencer's theories were then reanalyzed and contested by the scientist Thomas Huxley, and encapsulated in 1893 in his book *Evolution and Ethics;* Yan Fu, a product of China's naval-school system during the self-strengthening period and later a student in England, read Huxley's book at the time of the Sino-Japanese War and translated it into Chinese in 1896—with his own added commentary and interpretations—under the title *On Evolution.* Partly because Yan Fu chose to give the work a nationalistic emphasis not evident in the original, it had an immense impact on Chinese scholars in the late Qing and early republic.

The message that came across from Yan Fu was that Spencer's sociological writings were not merely analytical and descriptive, but prescriptive as well, offering means to transform and strengthen society. Yan Fu summarized Darwin as follows:

> Peoples and living things struggle for survival. At first, species struggle with species; then as [people] gradually progress, there is a struggle between one social group and another. The weak invariably become the prey of the strong, the stupid invariably become subservient to the clever.[1]

Spencer, Yan Fu continued, "based himself on the theory of evolution to explain the origins of human relations and of civilization." Other late Qing thinkers were quick to see the significance of these ideas. In advocating the 1898 reforms, Liang Qichao observed hopefully that evolutionary theories allowed "the possibility of influence and change that can cause the species to steadily improve." Liang noted how heredity and education acted on human "thought, intelligence, physique and habits," and that the Chinese could strengthen their race to engage in the struggle for survival: "All countries that wish to have strong soldiers insure that all their women engage in calisthenics, for they believe that only thus will the sons they bear be full in body and strong of muscle."[2]

Social Darwinism inevitably led the Chinese to ponder problems of race and racial strength, and many Chinese combined the new theories from the West with the writings of seventeenth-century anti-Manchu nationalists like Wang Fuzhi. Writers reflected on whether there was an inherent Chinese

essence and, if so, when it had developed. If all Chinese were descendants of the Yellow Emperor, had that noble progenitor sprung from peoples who had migrated to what was now China from somewhere else? Was their past history, therefore, one of creative adaptation that had only recently slowed because of the Manchus, perhaps, or the savage force of the foreign powers? China might well be doomed to extinction unless the nation evolved new strengths; a measure of hope lay in the belief that with will power and awareness that task could be achieved. "A nation with spirit will survive," a Chinese scholar wrote just before the 1911 Wuhan uprising; "a nation without it will perish. But where does the 'national spirit' lie? In national studies."[3]

For those who saw a danger that national studies might lead in a reactionary direction, the translation of foreign literature seemed to offer the best chance of preparing Chinese consciousness for the bitter struggles ahead. This was the goal of the young Lu Xun when he gave up his medical studies in Japan in order to translate fiction and poetry, especially Russian, Eastern European, and German works. Lu Xun hoped to evoke "superhuman will power" in his readers, for "when the individual is exalted to develop his full capacity, the country will be strengthened and will arise."[4] But the reception of Lu Xun's translations was dismal. When published, after years of work, in Tokyo and Shanghai during 1908, they sold a grand total of twenty copies in each city.

The 1911 revolution briefly raised hopes that Social Darwinist ideas of harsh social competition were now discredited. Just before the 1912 elections were won by his reorganized Guomindang, Sun Yat-sen wrote:

> Before the twentieth century, the nations of Europe invented a newfangled struggle-for-existence theory, which for a time influenced everything. Every nation assumed that "the survival of the fittest" and "the weak are the meat of the strong" were the vital laws on which to establish a state. They even went so far as to say that "might is the only right, there is no reason." This kind of theory in the early days of the evolution of European civilization had its uses. But, from the vantage point of today, it appears a barbaric form of learning.[5]

But by 1913, Sun was writing sadly of a world dominated by struggles for survival from which no government or industrial enterprise could be exempt. Yan Fu, too, lost his enthusiasm for the theories he had so much helped to popularize in China, writing that the failures of the Chinese republic and the bloodshed of World War I in Europe showed that "three hundred years of evolutionary progress have all come down to nothing but four words: selfishness, slaughter, shamelessness, and corruption."[6]

Such pessimism might well lead to a refusal to strive anymore for social change, as indeed happened among Social Darwinists in the United States. This possibility lent added urgency to China's radical thinkers. As Chen Duxiu, later a cofounder of the Chinese Communist party, wrote to a friend just after Yuan Shikai's death: "The majority of our people are lethargic and do not know that not only our morality, politics and technology but even common commodities for daily use are all unfit for struggle and are going to be eliminated in the process of natural selection."[7] If that happened, China would die.

Elements of these strains of thought came together in the mind of another future leader of the Chinese Communist party, Mao Zedong. In 1917, when he published his first essay, Mao was twenty-four years old. He had rebelled against his father, rejecting both the rural life on the family farm in Hunan province and the marriage his parents had arranged for him with the daughter of a neighboring family. Instead, after serving briefly in the anti-Qing army in 1911, he had plunged into a life of study in Changsha, haphazard and eclectic. Having made his own way through Yan Fu's translations of Mill, Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Spencer, as well as a wide range of Chinese political philosophers, Mao was accepted as a student at the well-known First Normal School in Changsha, where he studied ethics as his major field. This deepened his knowledge of the works of Spencer and Rousseau, and introduced him to Kant, as well as to the ways that such thinkers could be usefully compared to figures from China's own past.

Mao's first approach to the problems of China's weakness was a literal-minded one. If China was weak, it was because the Chinese were weak. If the Chinese were weak, it was because their culture concentrated on building up the the mind and neglected strengthening the body. Mao tempered his own physique by swimming and exercising; in his essay "A Study of Physical Education," published in the journal *New Youth* in April 1917, he urged his countrymen to do the same. "Physical education not only harmonizes the emotions, it also strengthens the will," he wrote. The trouble was that the Chinese traditionally hated violent exertion and cultivated "flowing garments, a slow gait, a grave, calm gaze." All that must change: "Exercise should be savage and rude. To be able to leap on horseback and to shoot at the same time; to go from battle to battle; to shake the mountains by one's cries, and the colors of the sky by one's roars of anger"—that was what Chinese should strive for.[8]

In another essay, written two years later for a Hunan provincial journal and entitled "To the Glory of the Han People," Mao urged collective action on the Chinese race as a whole, using some of the rhetorical flourishes that had made Zou Rong's anti-Manchu diatribes in *The Revolutionary Army* so

effective fifteen years before. If only the Chinese could truly combine, Mao wrote, if they could form a "union of the popular masses," then they could join the great tide of world change. This tide was "rolling ever more impetuously," and "he who conforms to it shall survive, he who resists it shall perish." If the Chinese people could so adapt, concluded Mao, "we should not fear the dead. We should not fear the bureaucrats. We should not fear the militarists. We should not fear the capitalists."[9]

Finally, in a series of nine articles he wrote for a local Changsha newspaper in November 1919, Mao showed that he had combined his thinking on the need for collective struggle with the kinds of reflections on women and their rights that had been advocated by Liang Qichao, Qiu Jin, and others in the late Qing. They had argued that the energy of China's women should be harnessed to strengthen the state, enabling China to face the world with its full complement of 400 million people, rather than with the political resources of only its 200 million males. Mao's newspaper articles "On the Suicide of Miss Zhao" addressed an event that had occurred in Changsha that same month. A young woman from the Zhao family had been betrothed without her consent to a young man from the Wu family. Such arranged marriages were the norm in China, but what was unusual about Miss Zhao was that she objected so violently to the marriage that she slit her own throat inside the sedan chair carrying her to the marriage ceremonies in her future husband's home. Her death was followed by a grim tussle between the Wu and Zhao families as each tried to give the other responsibility for burying the corpse.

Writing with both passion and acuteness, Mao observed that this tragedy could have been avoided if any of three conditions had been different: if Miss Zhao's family had been more sympathetic, if the Wu family had not insisted on the letter of their marriage contract, and if the society of Changsha (and, by implication, of all China) had been more brave and open. Miss Zhao's death mattered, wrote Mao. "It happened because of the shameful system of arranged marriages, because of the darkness of the social system, the negation of the individual will, and the absence of the freedom to choose one's own mate." Yet Mao could not condone the act of suicide, even in such a state of despair. If the Chinese were to refuse to confront reality, they would achieve nothing. People commit suicide because society has deprived them of all hope, Mao argued; but even in a position of complete hopelessness, "we should struggle against society in order to regain the hope that we have lost. . . . We should die fighting."[10]

"We should die fighting." The words were bold ones, but the real difficulty lay in deciding who was the main enemy. Was it just an apathetic local society? Was it the local warlords who controlled Hunan? Was it

corrupt politicians in Peking? Was it the gunboats of the voracious foreign powers, or the foreign businesses that were making ever further inroads into China? Or was it perhaps something even more complex: the whole structure of Chinese beliefs, and the economic system that went with it? For the young men and women of Mao's generation, the problems were baffling, but they had somehow to come up with a program for solving these difficulties if China were not to succumb to despair.

The Promise of Marxism

Before the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 in Russia, the Chinese had not shown much interest in Marxism. Almost none of Marx's work had been translated into Chinese, except for sections of *The Communist Manifesto.* Even Sun Yat-sen's socialist ideas came from a different tradition—that of Henry George, who had influenced British socialists by advocating state expropriation of all surplus value that accrued to landholders in the form of higher rents, which George saw as the unearned result of general social progress. At first, Marxism did not seem a useful analytical tool for China: Marx had shown little interest in China itself, apart from his writings on the Taiping, and his view of a passage for human societies from primitive communalism through an era of slavery to feudalism and capitalism did not appear to fit China's historical experience. And since China could hardly claim to be a capitalist society even in embryo, Marx's theory that the overthrow of capitalism was a prerequisite for the new era of socialism seemed to make that transition indefinitely remote.

So despite Chinese press reports of the victories of the Petrograd workers' soviet led by Trotsky, the overthrow of the liberal Kerensky government, and the formation of Lenin's revolutionary Soviet government, the news did not initially attract much attention. But slowly the Chinese began to realize that the events in Russia went beyond the experiences of France in 1789, and for many observers it was electrifying to see how the entrenched Russian autocracy, with all its embedded institutions, had turned out after all to have contained the seeds of the Soviet Union. A Guomindang newspaper in Shanghai took the lead in praising the Bolsheviks in January 1918, and Sun Yat-sen sent a personal message of congratulation to Lenin shortly afterward.

As the seriousness of the Bolsheviks' ongoing struggle with the conservative White Russian forces became apparent, and as hostile reactions from the Allied powers became more open once Lenin had made peace with Germany, greater numbers of Chinese began to reflect on the significance

of what had occurred and to try and draw lessons from it for their own society. At the vanguard of this attempt was the head librarian at Peking University, Li Dazhao. Born in 1889 to a peasant family in Hebei province, Li had sold what little property he owned to go to a modern school, and from 1913 to 1916 he studied political economy in Japan, earning a reputation there as a fine writer and editor. Because of these skills, in February 1918 he was appointed librarian of what had become China's most prestigious university.

Li Dazhao's initial salutation to the Russian Revolution was published in June 1918 against a backdrop of chaotic warlord politics, with Zhang Xun's restoration of Emperor Puyi only a few months in the past and with China's declaration of war on Germany still a burning issue in Peking. Li saw in the Soviet Union the promise of a new, third civilization rising to mediate between the East and West. Because of its geographical location, Russia had inevitably been influenced by both East and West; but now, wrote the euphoric Li, "we have only to raise our heads to welcome the dawn of the new civilization of the world, and turn our ears to welcome the new Russia that is founded upon freedom and humanism, and to adapt ourselves to the new tide of the world." Li felt that Russia was approaching a great surge of development: Britain and France had risen to splendid heights and were now sinking; Germany was at its peak and would soon, too, begin to fade; but Russia, "just because of its comparative slowness in the evolution of civilization," had "surplus energy for development."[11] Might not China also make such a leap?

Within six months, Li had established an informal study group at his library office in the university at which a dozen or so students and faculty would meet to discuss political developments. By the end of 1918, this group had acquired a semiformal identity as the "Marxist Research Society," with Li leading analytical discussions of Marx's *Capital.*

As interest grew, Chen Duxiu, who was dean of Peking University* as well as editor of the most influential Chinese journal of the day, *New Youth,* decided to run a special issue on Marxism to be published on May 1, 1919, with Li Dazhao as general editor. Most of the articles were scholarly analyses of specific Marxist concepts, and several were critical of Marx's methodology. But Li's essay, "My Marxist Views," gave the most careful analysis of the concept of class struggle and the problem of capitalist exploitation that had yet been published in China; and because of the journal's popularity, the message was immediately spread to an influential readership across the country.

*In March 1919 he was forced to resign by conservative opponents.

Sympathy for the fledgling Soviet Union reached a new level when the Russian deputy commissar for foreign affairs, L. M. Karakhan, announced in July 1919 that the new government rejected the past policies of tsarist imperialism. Henceforth the Soviet Union would relinquish its special rights in Manchuria, cancel all former tsarist secret treaties with China, Japan, and the European powers, renounce all further indemnities due from the Boxer Uprising, and make no further claims on the Chinese Eastern Railway, returning the lines to the Chinese without any demands for compensation. This was in such marked contrast to the behavior of the other Western powers and Japan that the Soviet Union appeared as China's truest friend. Even though the Soviets later changed their mind and denied they had made the offer to return the railways without compensation (they claimed that this clause had been inserted by error in a French translation of Karakhan's message), the admiration for their earlier gesture was not much affected. The Chinese remembered Karakhan's generous words: the Soviet goal was to "free the people from the yoke of the military force of foreign money which is crushing the people of the East, and principally the people of China."[12]

By 1919, Li Dazhao's study group had attracted a broad circle of students. Some were wealthy, urban members of Peking University's elite student body, but others came from different backgrounds. Mao Zedong attended often; although he was not a student at the university, Mao had moved to Peking and taken a clerical job in the library to be near his former Changsha ethics teacher, who was now a professor at the university. Another regular was Qu Qiubai, a young student from Jiangsu province who was a devout Buddhist and a fine classical scholar. Qu had become aware of the world's injustices after his mother—driven to distraction by an ineffectual opium addict of a husband and an uncaring clan—had committed suicide. Too poor to go to Peking University, he enrolled at the Russian language institute of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was not only tuition-free, but even offered Qu a small stipend. A third was Zhang Guotao, son of a Hakka landlord from the Jiangxi-Hunan border. As a teenager, Zhang had smuggled guns for Sun Yat-sen's revolutionary organizations and later became an activist against Yuan Shikai.

Despite the initial enthusiasm these young men and other students showed for Bolshevism and Marxism, the need remained, if Marxism was to have any relevance to social conditions in China, to reformulate certain basic Marxist premises. Most vexing was the problem of the central role Marx ascribed to the urban proletariat and to the Communist party as the vanguard of that class, since China had such a small industrial sector. But it was encouraging that Russia had hardly fitted any Marxist model either;

and by a certain intellectual sleight of hand, Li Dazhao developed an interpretation that brought China firmly into a Marxist arena of dialogue as a "proletarian nation." China, he observed, was at the mercy of foreign imperialist forces that had exploited all the Chinese people in ways similar to those in which capitalists exploited their workers—by owning the means of production and seizing the workers' surplus value for themselves. Therefore, Li concluded of China that "the whole country has gradually been transformed into part of the world proletariat."[13]

These ideas were published in January 1920. By the following year, Li had developed his thoughts about a corollary of this interpretation, which held that because of the international source of their oppression, the Chinese suffered *more* than those oppressed only by their own capitalist class:

> The contemporary world economy is already moving from capitalism to socialism, and although China itself has not yet undergone a process of capitalist economic development such as occurred in Europe, America, and Japan, the common people [of China] still indirectly suffer from the direct capitalist oppression in a way that is even more bitter than the direct capitalist oppression suffered by the working classes of the various [capitalist] nations.[14]

As Li Dazhao was rethinking Marxist theory, he was urging his students to go out into the Chinese countryside and investigate the conditions of life there, for Li also believed in some of the fundamentally populist views that lay at the heart of the earlier phases of the Russian Revolution. By going to the peasants, Li said, the students would emulate their Russian predecessors who used their blood and sweat to "spread the principles of humanism and socialism." But this had even greater significance for China than for Russia, said Li, making a bold intellectual leap:

> Our China is a rural nation and most of the laboring class is made up of peasants. If they are not liberated, then our whole nation will not be liberated; their sufferings are the sufferings of our whole nation; their ignorance is the ignorance of our whole nation; the advantages and defects of their lives are the advantages and defects of all of our politics. Go out and develop them and cause them to know [that they should] demand liberation, speak out about their sufferings, throw off their ignorance and be people who will themselves plan their own lives.[15]

Li Dazhao also wrote powerfully on the need for intellectuals to dignify themselves through labor and to escape from the corrupting powers of city life by working alongside the farmers in the fields. He suggested that the

presence of educated youth in the villages could gradually repair the wreckage of the constitutional system, for these urban students could explain to peasants the significance of the vote and the options within local government, and could look into the ways in which absentee financial interests dominated and exploited the local scene. By early 1920, Peking University students who had established a "Mass Education Speech Corps" were traveling to villages in the neighboring countryside, trying to live out Li's ideas.

The experience was not a mere academic exercise. In 1920 and 1921, much of Hebei province, along with the adjacent provinces of Shandong, Henan, and Shanxi, as well as Shaanxi to the west, were caught in a devastating cycle of famine caused by severe droughts in 1919. In farm villages where the average density of people per square mile was 1,230, the combination of withered crops and inadequate government relief was disastrous: at least 500,000 people died, and out of an estimated 48.8 million in these five provinces, over 19.8 million were declared destitute. Houses were stripped of doors and beams so that the wood could be sold or burnt for warmth; refugees crowded the roads and railway lines, and many lost limbs or were killed trying to force their way onto overcrowded trains; tens of thousands of children were sold as servants or, in the case of girls, as prostitutes and secondary wives. In one village, sixty homes out of a hundred had no food, and villagers were reduced to eating straw and leaves. Epidemics—typhus being the most dreaded and the most prevalent—decimated those already too weak to fight back.

The idea of examining conditions in the countryside spread to intellectuals and students in Shanghai, Canton, and elsewhere. Many of those who were later active in the Communist party had some such experience, or else met with workers in reading clubs to discuss labor conditions and national and international politics. One student from Li Dazhao's study group, Qu Qiubai, had the unique experience of visiting the Soviet Union to see developments there at firsthand. Encountering in the Moscow of 1920 the harshness and the poverty that characterized Soviet life in these early days of revolution, Qu was uplifted rather than depressed, for it seemed to him that a nobleness now graced the Russian character that had not been there before, and that the Soviet world was bathed in a new light. Since Qu was technically on assignment for the Peking newspaper *Morning News (Chenbao),* he sent home a stream of observations, varying from factual reports on social issues to rhapsodies on the revolution. As he wrote in one of these, "Now I am happy, for I have seen the lighthouse of the mind's sea. Even though it is but a single red ray, weak and indistinct, it is possible to see in it the approaching infinite progress."[16] This ray of socialist light could not be found in China, which, Qu felt, was a land of "darkness" where "[I had]

almost lost my powers to see." Qu was in touch with Russian luminaries of the time, even if fleetingly, and this added to his excitement. He heard Lenin address a group of delegates, listened to Chaliapin sing settings of Pushkin poems, talked with Commissar Lunacharsky about "proletarianized education," attended the anarchist Kropotkin's funeral, and strolled with Tolstoy's granddaughter around the great writer's estate.

Although Qu fell seriously ill for a time, probably from the tuberculosis that had afflicted him earlier, exacerbated by the cold climate and malnutrition, he stayed on in Moscow and in early 1922 joined the Communist party there. The possibilities of somehow grafting Soviet socialism onto Chinese life were becoming more real. Li Dazhao had told the youth of China that the roots of Marxist socialism could be looked for "in three aspects of our psychology":[17] through knowledge, the Chinese would come to see socialism as a valid critique of the existing order; through feeling, they would understand socialism as an emotion that made possible the replacement of the current order with a new one; through will, they would achieve that transformation by exerting their efforts on the objective world. This fusion of knowledge, feeling, and will was apparent in Qu's commitment to revolution for China. But in a vision of the flood of light returning to his own country, which he penned on the dawn of New Year's Day in 1922, the aspect of pure feeling overwhelmed the others: "Moscow has suddenly moved nearer to the Far East. Look at the Far East, how bright the purple and red flames shine forth as they spin! The blazing clouds, just sprouting, how roaringly they shoot towards the firmanent."[18] All one had to do, it seemed, was ride with this unpredictable yet dazzling force.

The Facets of May Fourth

Both the growing discussion of Social Darwinist ideas and the rise of interest in Communist ideology were symptomatic of a cultural upheaval that was spreading throughout China. This upheaval is often called the May Fourth movement, since in important ways it was intricately connected to the events that occurred in Peking on May 4, 1919, and to the effect that those events had on the country as a whole. The term *May Fourth movement* is therefore both limited and broad, depending on whether it is applied to the demonstrations that took place on that particular day or to the complex emotional, cultural, and political developments that followed.

Student representatives from thirteen area colleges and universities who met together in Peking on the morning of May 4, 1919, drew up five resolutions: one protested the Shandong settlement reached at the Versailles

conference; a second sought to awaken "the masses all over the country" to an awareness of China's plight; a third proposed holding a mass meeting of the people of Peking; a fourth urged the formation of a Peking student union; and a fifth called for a demonstration that afternoon in protest of the Versailles treaty terms.

The fifth resolution was acted on at once. Defying a police order forbidding the demonstration, about 3,000 students assembled at Tiananmen Square, in front of the Forbidden City palace complex, and began to march toward the foreign-legation quarter. At the head of the procession fluttered two funeral banners on which were written the names of the most hated pro-Japanese members of the cabinet. As they marched, the students handed out broadsheets to the watching citizens, written in easy-to-read vernacular Chinese, explaining that the loss of the Shandong rights to Japan meant the end of China's territorial integrity, and calling on Chinese of all occupations and classes to join in protest. Barred from the legation quarter by foreign guards and Chinese police, the students marched instead toward the home of the minister of communications, who had been responsible for negotiating huge loans with Japan. Although the minister was away, some students broke into his house and set it afire while others accosted another prominent politician and beat him into unconsciousness. There were several violent clashes with police; one student, badly injured, died in a hospital three days later, the only fatality. The demonstrators had almost all dispersed by early evening, when police reinforcements arrived, arresting thirty-two of those still in the streets.

In the days that followed, the Peking students and some of their teachers proceeded to implement the rest of the resolutions that had been passed on the morning of May 4. They moved swiftly to establish a Peking student union that combined the middle-school and high-school students of the city with the college and university students. An important aspect of this new union was that it included women and gave formal support to the principle of coeducation as an alternative to separate girls' schools and women's colleges. (The first female students were admitted to Peking University in 1920.) The idea of broad-based student unions spread swiftly from Peking to Shanghai, Tianjin, Wuhan, and other cities. In June 1919, delegates from student unions in over thirty localities across China formed a Student Union of the Republic of China.

The student protesters were also successful in spreading their message to a wide circle of Chinese, once more reasserting the prestige of the scholarly elite that had been such a central part of Confucian-oriented education under the Qing dynasty, though now it was clothed in modern garb. The rash of student strikes and mass arrests led to a wave of national sympathy

for the students' cause. Support came from the merchants and businessmen grouped in chambers of commerce in the major cities, from individual industrialists, from shopowners, and from the industrial workers. Although there was no central labor union organization at this time, and precise figures are hard to find, as many as 60,000 workers in 43 enterprises staged some form of work stoppage or sympathy strike in Shanghai alone. Work actions took place in textile plants, print shops, metal works, public utilities, shipping concerns, paper mills, petroleum works, and tobacco factories. Much of this radical activity was stimulated by numerous socialist clubs and study groups that had spread across the country during 1919.

Tied to the spreading protest against China's international position was the growth of a large number of new periodicals and newspapers that reached across China. Often written in simple vernacular style accessible to those with little education, they carried articles about a wide range of social and cultural problems, and pointed to the growth of a new force within China that bridged class, regional, and occupational lines, and drew millions of people together in a search for coherence and meaning in an apparently fragmenting world. Although many of these "May Fourth" journals did not last, their names still echo the excitement of the time: *The Dawn, Young China, New Society, People's Tocsin, The New Woman, Plain People, Upward, Strife.*[19]

The romantic poet Guo Moruo, recently returned from Japan, seemed to express all the explosive excitement of China's youth with the lines he wrote in 1919:

> I am the light of the moon,
> I am the light of the sun,
> I am the light of all the planets.
> I am the light of *x ray,*
> I am the total *energy* of the entire universe.

In his Chinese verse the words "x ray" and "energy" were printed in English script, giving the requisite touch of exoticism to the flamboyantly personal message.[20]

It was as if the far-off events at Versailles and the mounting evidence of the spinelessness of corrupt local politicians coalesced in people's minds and impelled them to search for a way to return meaning to Chinese culture. What did it now mean to be Chinese? Where was the country heading? What values should one adopt to help one in the search? In this broad sense, the May Fourth movement was an attempt to redefine China's culture as a valid part of the modern world. In the attempt, not surprisingly,

reformers followed different avenues of thought and conduct. Some May Fourth thinkers concentrated on launching attacks against reactionary or irrelevant "old ways" such as Confucianism, the patriarchal family, arranged marriages, or traditional education. Some focused on reform of the Chinese writing style by using contemporary vernacular speech patterns in works of literature, thus putting an end to the inevitable elitism that accompanied the mastery of the intensely difficult classical Chinese. Some had a deep interest in traditional Western art and culture, while others looked to the avant-garde elements of that culture, such as surrealist and cubist painting, symbolist poetry, graphic design, realist drama, and new fashions in dress and interior decoration. Some sought to reinfuse Chinese traditional arts with a new spirit of nationalism by borrowing a selective range of Western painterly techniques.

Some writers advocated a problem-solving approach, developing techniques from such disciplines as sociology, economics, history, and philosophy in order to analyze China's problems and suggest ways to address them. Others took a similarly pragmatic approach, but thought the answer was to develop a sophisticated awareness of the achievements of Western science, engineering, and medicine. The pragmatists clashed with those who held a more ideologically oriented view of the world that drew inspiration from socialist, Marxist, and feminist critiques of society, and sought to change the world swiftly by radical activism. And some sought a complete liberation of the human spirit, the realization of all human potential through a kind of promethean leap of romantic faith, in the face of which all barriers to love and progress would fall away.

Most of these reformers shared a central patriotic ground: they wished for a rejuvenated, unified China that would have the means to cope with the three great problems of warlordism, an exploitative landlord system now often described as "feudal" in nature, and foreign imperialism. The respect of reformers for Western technological power blended (rather as it had sixty years before in the minds of the Confucian scholar-officials of the Tongzhi Restoration) with a yearning to retain some essence of Chinese culture.

Although the May Fourth movement in this broad sense was a country-wide phenomenon, the formative thinking that lay behind the movement originated to a surprising degree with the faculty and students at Peking University. In the early years of the Chinese republic, Peking University had risen rapidly to prominence as China's leading center of learning, research, and teaching. This rise was attributable in part to the courageous leadership of the scholar-translator Yan Fu, who had served as the first president of the modernized institution in 1912. When the university faced severe bud-

get cuts that year, Yan Fu had persuaded the relevant government ministries to maintain funding at a high level: "In today's world, every civilized country has many universities ranging in number from tens to many hundreds. If we cannot preserve even one, especially one already in existence, it is unfortunate indeed."[21] Yan Fu's success can be gauged by examining the lives of three men who achieved special prominence as May Fourth movement leaders and thinkers: Yan Fu's successor as president of the university, Cai Yuanpei; the dean of the university, Chen Duxiu; and the professor of philosophy, Hu Shi. Although no single person can encapsulate the turbulence and excitement of the movement, the backgrounds and activities of these three provide a useful index to a China in flux, show how widely perceptions of China's priorities varied, and demonstrate how the West could be both distrusted and revered, depending on the elements in view.

Cai Yuanpei, the oldest of the three, was the most distinguished: he had earned the classical *jinshi* degree in 1890, when he was only twenty-two, and been a member of the Hanlin Academy. In the last years of the Qing he had served as an educational official in his native Zhejiang, and then as a teacher and sponsor of radical schools and anti-Qing societies. He joined the Revolutionary Alliance, but was studying philosophy in Germany when the Wuhan uprisings began. Returning to China in 1912, he served briefly as the minister of education under both Sun Yat-sen and Yuan Shikai before traveling again to Germany (where he wrote a study of Kant) and to France, where he helped establish a work-study program for Chinese students. Appointed president of Peking University in 1917, Cai took a brave line with the military and civilian leaders who controlled the Peking government. He defended the rights of his faculty and students to speak out, claiming that they were all seeking "education for a world view" and that the function of a university president was to be "broad-minded and encompass tolerance of diverse points of view."[22] Four days after the May 4 demonstration, Cai resigned in protest at the arrest of his students. He was reappointed in late 1919 and continued as president of the university until 1922, guiding its students and faculty through stormy years and remaining a staunch defender of human rights and freedom of intellectual inquiry.

Chen Duxiu was of a different nature—volatile and emotional, an intuitive rather than an intellectual supporter of the underdog. Born to a wealthy official family in Anhui in 1879, Chen trained initially as a classical scholar but failed the province-level *juren* exams in 1897, later writing a caustic and amusing memoir about the filthy physical conditions, the dishonesty, and the incompetence that he felt pervaded the traditional examination system. He spent two extended periods of study in Japan, where he helped found radical political societies; he refused, however, to join Sun Yat-sen's Revolutionary Alliance, which he regarded as narrowly racist. Prominent in opposition to Yuan Shikai's imperial ambitions, he founded the journal *New Youth* in 1915 and joined the Peking University faculty as dean in 1917 at Cai Yuanpei's invitation. As editor of *New Youth,* which rapidly became the most influential intellectual journal in China, he espoused bold theoretical investigation, a spirited attack on the past, and a highly moralistic approach to politics through the cleansing of the individual character.

In leading an all-out attack on Confucian vestiges through the pages of *New Youth,* Chen argued that the key flaw in Confucianism was that it ran counter to the independence of individuals that lay at the center of "modern" life. To build a new state in China, said Chen in late 1916, "the basic task is to import the foundation of Western society, that is, the new belief in equality and human rights. We must be thoroughly aware of the incompatibility between Confucianism and the new belief, the new society, and the new state."[23] In other writings Chen urged the abandonment of the classical Chinese language in favor of the vernacular form, and espoused two concepts that he termed "Mr. Democracy" and "Mr. Science" as the key opponents to Confucian traditionalism. Chen was swiftly caught up by the enthusiasms of the May Fourth student demonstrations, and was jailed for three months by the Peking authorities on a charge of distributing inflammatory literature. The pamphlets he was circulating at the time of his arrest demanded the resignation of all pro-Japanese ministers and the guarantee of the rights of free speech and assembly. After his release Chen left Peking for Shanghai, becoming ever more interested in Marxism and eager for swift social change. In 1920 he was to become one of the first members of the new Chinese Communist party.

Hu Shi, the youngest of the group, had originally been a close friend and collaborator of Chen Duxiu. But though Hu also urged China to embrace the two concepts of "Science and Democracy," he later came to see Chen as an extremist who rejoiced in "isms" of all kinds without giving them adequate thought. Hu, also from an Anhui official family, studied in Westernized schools in Shanghai and traveled to the United States in 1910, when he was nineteen, on one of the scholarships that the Americans had established with Boxer indemnity money to bring bright young Chinese to U.S. schools. Hu took his B.A. in philosophy at Cornell University (he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa) and then enrolled at Columbia University to study philosophy with John Dewey among others. He began a thesis on the development of logical method in ancient China, but had not completed the dissertation when he returned to China in 1917 and was named by Cai Yuanpei to be a professor of philosophy.

Back in China, Hu became a strong backer of the movement to write in

the vernacular cadences of ordinary speech. He also became an accomplished scholar of literary history, investigating the novels of the past as a source for narrative clarity and flexibility in language. In the early 1920s this work was climaxed by his pioneering study of the eighteenth-century novel *The Dream of the Red Chamber* by Cao Xueqin. Hu showed, among other findings, how the rich social fabric of the novel derived in part from the author's family, who had served Emperor Kangxi faithfully for many years and had lived in magnificent splendor in Nanjing before being disgraced and impoverished by Kangxi's son, Yongzheng.

Intellectually and emotionally, Hu Shi hewed to a difficult road. He clung to his belief in the advantages of Western methodology, and rejected Buddhist fatalism as he had rejected the Christianity he had briefly espoused in 1911. Emotionally, Hu was also cramped, feeling that he was a member of a transitional generation that had obligations both to the past and to the future, and was doomed to make sacrifices for both. His boldness in some cultural and historical matters existed side by side with his caution over speedy solutions. He followed the pragmatist philosopher John Dewey in seeking an "ever-enduring process of perfecting" rather than perfection. In the summer of 1919, he wrote a celebrated attack on Chen Duxiu and other radical intellectuals, which he entitled "Study More Problems, Talk Less of 'Isms.'" As Hu put it:

> We don't study the standard of living of the ricksha coolie but rant instead about socialism; we don't study the ways in which women can be emancipated, or the family system set right, but instead we rave about wife-sharing and free love; we don't examine the ways in which the Anfu Clique* might be broken up, or how the question of north and south might be resolved, but instead we rave about anarchism. And, moreover, we are delighted with ourselves, we congratulate ourselves, because we are talking about fundamental "solutions." Putting it bluntly, this is dream talk.[24]

Hu Shi stayed on at Peking University after the May Fourth demonstrations. He grew more politically conservative in the early 1920s, however, and tried to find a democratic middle way between competing factions. But Hu, like other May Fourth intellectuals, still found it difficult to resolve the tensions inherent in his visions of a new China. On the one hand, Hu Shi stayed with the wife he had acquired in an arranged marriage, even though he seems to have had no great affection for her and confessed that on occasion he found release by visiting prostitutes; on the other hand, he

*A corrupt group of militarists and politicians who played a prominent role in Peking politics at this time.

pressed for freedom from marriage constraints for others, and he acted as the interpreter for the famous American feminist and exponent of contraception techniques, Margaret Sanger, when she visited China on a lecture trip in 1922.

Sanger's visit highlighted the new issues that were constantly impinging on China. But she was only one of many foreigners whose visits to China in this period had enormous influence on May Fourth thinkers. The British philosopher Bertrand Russell traveled extensively in China in 1920 and 1921, even reaching cities like Changsha, far inland in Hunan province. Russell's brilliant expositions of mathematical logic enthralled his audiences, while his ideas on the importance of pacifism also found ready listeners. John Dewey lived in Peking during 1919 and 1920, taught several courses, traveled and lectured widely, and later wrote an influential account of China's intellectual life during the May Fourth movement. En route to Japan, Albert Einstein visited China in late 1922, just after completing his first work on general relativity theory. A little later, in 1923, Rabindranath Tagore, the Nobel Prize–winning Indian poet, gave a Chinese lecture tour to present his views on aesthetics, nonviolence, and the construction of rural communities based on principles of self-sufficiency and cooperative labor.

Through the force of such characters and ideas, the May Fourth movement brought changes in consciousnesses that in turn opened new possibilities for life and action in China. Another powerful influence in this regard was the work of the Norwegian dramatist Henrik Ibsen, whose plays were widely performed and admired in China at this time. In 1918, a special issue of *New Youth* that was devoted to Ibsen made a generation of young Chinese aware of the playwright's fundamental criticism of bourgeois hypocrisy and his powerful advocacy of women's emancipation. A full translation of Ibsen's play *A Doll's House* was printed in the 1918 issue, and the central figure of Nora, who decides at the play's end to leave her husband and go out into the world to find her own destiny, became a cultural and personal symbol to young Chinese women. Their mothers had unbound their feet and had begun to struggle for a basic education; *they* would go off to universities in other provinces and live with the young men or women of their choice. And many of them did so, attempting to live out a vision of romantic freedom as teachers, writers, journalists, artists, and political activists.

Bertrand Russell's companion in China, Dora Black, had been astonished that the girls she talked to in the Peking Girl's Normal School "would put to her every kind of question about marriage, free love, contraception, etc."[25] Lu Xun, observing what he called "the Nora phenomenon" with sympathy but also with some anxiety, addressed a woman's college on the theme "What Happens after Nora Leaves Home?" He warned his listeners not to

forget the realities of the society in which they were still living. Women could overthrow some of the shackles of marriage and home; but until they gained a level of economic independence and equality, their sense of freedom would be a sham. For their part, men would not yield their economic control lightly, he pointed out. "I have assumed Nora to be an ordinary woman," Lu Xun added shrewdly. "If she is someone exceptional who prefers to dash off to sacrifice herself, that is a different matter."[26]

Lu Xun had unquestionably emerged as the most brilliant writer of the May Fourth movement, and his words were guaranteed an attentive audience. After so many years of apparently failed endeavor—as a medical student and a translator in Japan, as a minor bureaucrat and antiquarian in his native Zhejiang province and in Peking—he found his full voice in 1917, when he was thirty-five years old. Most of his greatest stories were published between that same year and 1921, including the famous "True Story of Ah Q," which portrayed the 1911 revolution as a muddled and inconclusive event, one controlled by charlatans and issuing in the deaths of the ignorant and the gullible. Lu Xun saw it as his task to direct the searching beam of his critical gaze onto the cultural backwardness and moral cowardice of the Chinese. He was harsh in his criticisms and often pessimistic in tone, even though his stories are full of compassion. He had come to understand his mission as a writer, he told a friend, through this image: he was a man standing outside a great iron box in which the people of China had fallen asleep. If he did nothing, they would all suffocate; if he banged and banged on the outside of the box, he would awaken the sleepers within, who might then be able to free themselves. Even if they could not escape, they would at least be conscious of their fate. The central idea here was not far from Mao Zedong's in his essays on Miss Zhao. But whereas Lu Xun believed that through his work the Chinese at least would die thinking, Mao had insisted that they die fighting.

Lu Xun hated the Confucian legacy and attacked it with bitter satire. He constantly reiterated the "Ah Q" theme, that the so-called "revolution of 1911" had changed nothing of significance in the Chinese character but had just brought a new set of scoundrels into office. He felt that revolutionary political activism might one day bring about constructive social change, but he feared that the admixture of progressive thought with superstition and apathy made that possibility problematic. He regretted bitterly the difficulties in China of speaking across class lines, and of keeping any hope alive in such a fragmented world. In the beautiful ending to one of his finest stories, "My Old Home," published in 1921, he mused aloud that "hope cannot be said to exist, nor can it be said not to exist. It is just like roads

across the earth. For actually the earth had no roads to begin with, but when many people pass one way, a road is made."[27]

This was as much a central statement of May Fourth movement thinking as Hu Shi's, although more ambiguous and perhaps more pessimistic. But Lu Xun, like the other prominent figures in the movement who were aged thirty or older, largely confined his actions to the domain of words. When Chen Duxiu began passing out forbidden words with his hands and was arrested for it, this marked a new activism, a second stage. Younger students with a bolder vision of the future seized on this activist strain and claimed the need to expand it into a third stage. For them, it was gratifying that their predecessors had believed they could "overturn the earth with their pens." But for these younger radicals the true meaning of May Fourth lay in the recognition that the time had come "to struggle against the forces of darkness with our bare fists."[28]

The Comintern and the Birth of the CCP

If China's youth were going to fight the forces of darkness with their bare fists, they would need a carefully thought out plan of attack. The outlines for one such plan were slowly becoming visible through the labors of the Communist party of the Soviet Union, even though the Russian revolutionaries had encountered difficulties enough to deter all but the most determined. Fighting against White Russian forces, especially in southern and eastern Russia, was bitter and protracted following the Bolshevik seizure of power in 1917. The hostility of many foreign nations was unremitting. Economically, the new Soviet Union was in chaos. Perhaps most disappointingly, workers' movements in Germany, Hungary, and Turkey were savagely suppressed by those countries' governments, and there was no succeeding wave of socialist revolutions elsewhere in the industrial world, as many theorists had posited there would be.

In an attempt to encourage socialist revolutions in other countries, Lenin established the Third International of the Communist party (the Comintern) in 1919, and its first congress was held in March that year.* Even though all the delegates were Russian or European, they issued a manifesto

*The Second Socialist International, with which Sun Yat-sen had been affiliated, had dissolved in 1915.

to the "proletarians of the whole world" in which they praised the Soviet form of government, urged other Communist parties to fight strongly against non-Communist labor movements, and expressed their support for all colonial peoples struggling against imperialist powers, including the Chinese seeking to resist Japanese encroachments. During this period when postwar territorial settlements were fueling nationalist movements in Europe and Asia, the strategic choice facing Lenin and the Comintern leaders was between supporting all efforts at socialist revolution overseas, even if that meant weakening a particular anti-imperialist nationalist movement, or supporting strong nationalist leaders, even if they were bourgeois reformers. At the second Comintern congress, held in July 1920, Lenin took the position that the capitalist stage of development need not be inevitable for backward nations if they were aided by the Soviet Union. Peasant soviets would be encouraged in such cases, along with "a temporary alliance" with bourgeois democratic parties.

Even before the second Comintern congress met, Lenin dispatched two Comintern agents—Grigori Voitinsky and Yang Mingzhai—to China to investigate conditions there and explore the possibility of setting up a Communist party. Voitinsky, aged twenty-seven, had been arrested by anti-Bolshevik troops in east Russia and imprisoned on Sakhalin Island; there he achieved fame leading a successful prisoners' rebellion, and was subsequently posted to the Siberian Comintern headquarters at Irkutsk. Yang was from a Chinese family that had emigrated to Siberia; he had spent the last decade of the tsarist regime living and studying in Moscow. Voitinsky and Yang reached Peking in 1920 and immediately contacted a Russian émigré who was teaching the Russian language at Peking University. On his advice they visited Li Dazhao, who in turn advised them to meet with Chen Duxiu.

After playing his leading role in the May Fourth demonstrations and subsequently serving a three-month jail sentence, Chen Duxiu had left Peking for Shanghai. He had settled in the French Concession and continued to edit *New Youth,* which had become politically leftist and been abandoned by many of its former liberal supporters like Hu Shi. When Voitinsky and Yang met Chen Duxiu in Shanghai that May of 1920, he was in a restless intellectual state, exploring a wide range of socialist options, including Japanese theories of model village formation, Korean-Christian socialism, Chinese proposals for "work-and-learning mutual assistance corps," and John Dewey's guild socialism. The Comintern agents gave Chen a clearer sense of direction and the techniques to bind together a political organization from the uncoordinated mixture of socialist groups that already existed in China. A nucleus of potential Communist party members met in May, drawn from

a spectrum of socialist, anarchist, progressive, and Guomindang groups, and they named Chen Duxiu secretary of their provisional central committee.

Over the next few months the movement took important steps forward. Two front organizations, a Sino-Russian news agency and a foreign-language school, were formed as covers for Communist recruiting activities. Yang and Mrs. Voitinsky, who had accompanied her husband to China, tutored a number of young Chinese in Russian; after gaining proficiency in the language, these young people were sent to the Soviet Union for advanced training as revolutionary organizers. The Comintern agents also formed a socialist youth league and founded a monthly socialist magazine. From these beginnings, the circles spread steadily outward. Under the direction of Mao Zedong, a Communist group was formed in Hunan; others were formed later that year in Hubei, in Peking, by Chinese students in Japan, and by the work-study students in France.

The French group was to be particularly important to the Chinese Communist party over the ensuing years. In 1919 and 1920, more than 1,000 young Chinese students volunteered for the work-study programs, which had grown out of a range of earlier programs (several developed by Chinese anarchists) that sought to mix advanced education with a morally rigorous, even ascetic, life-style. Among the group that traveled by sea to France in late 1919 were several of Mao Zedong's closest friends from the Changsha region of Hunan. They had been active in local labor agitations, in anti-warlord and anti-Japanese protests, and in local Hunanese follow-ups to the original anti-imperialist May Fourth demonstrations in Peking. Among those who went to France a year later was Zhou Enlai, leader of the Tianjin student protesters in the May Fourth movement, who had been jailed for his raid on a local government office earlier in the year. The youngest member of the French contingent was from Sichuan province, Deng Xiaoping, only sixteen but already a middle-school graduate who had spent a year in a special training school for Sichuan provincials planning to go to France.

In France, these students lived mainly in or near Paris, although others congregated at the university in Lyons. They studied French in special classes; when there were openings, some took jobs in factories—such as the Renault auto plant—where they were introduced to French labor organization and socialist doctrine. The most radical students, the ones from Hunan and Sichuan, ran their own underground journals (Deng Xiaoping was given the "honorary" title of doctor of mimeography for his efforts in this regard), attended demonstrations, and worked as political activists in other ways.

One of the Hunanese students in France, Xiang Jingyu, a young woman who had been a close friend of Mao's in Changsha, was active in the fight for women's rights as well as for socialism. Xiang contracted a "revolutionary" marriage with another Hunanese working in France: the two young lovers announced their union by being photographed together holding a copy of Marx's *Capital.* Xiang urged Chinese women to study science, argued that the government should not make women take the same exams as men since all women had been educationally deprived, and demanded equal numbers of women and men in the French work-study program.

The students were constantly plagued by financial problems and by arguments between rival ideological groups. A series of demonstrations outside the Chinese legation in Paris against low pay and poor work conditions had to be broken up by the police, and there followed in September 1921 an attempt by crowds of angry Chinese radicals to occupy the university buildings in Lyons. One hundred three protestors were arrested and deported. Among those who were able to stay on were Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping, both of whom joined the Communist party in France and recruited actively and successfully among the ranks of Chinese in Europe.

Mao Zedong himself might well have gone to France had he had the contacts or the money, but he had little of either. Instead, for much of 1920 he drifted around Peking and Shanghai, discussing the *Communist Manifesto* and other Marxist books that had just been fully translated into Chinese, and working for some months as a laundryman. Mao then returned to Changsha in the entourage of influential Guomindang officials, and was appointed director of the primary school there. He now had the money to marry his former teacher's daughter, Yang Kaihui, which he did that fall, the same time that he established a Communist cell. Mao began to play a prominent part in Hunanese politics as a writer, an editor, and a leader of those workers struggling to achieve better labor conditions through the city's traditional workers' guilds. Because his name was now well known to party leaders, he was invited to be the delegate from Hunan at the first plenary meeting of the Chinese Communist party (CCP), held in Shanghai in July 1921.

The dangerous political climate of the time forced the CCP delegates to meet secretly. At first they met in the French Concession, on the top floor of a girls' school that was closed for the summer. After suspicious visitors began snooping around, they moved to a boat on a lake in Zhejiang, where they continued their discussions. For various reasons neither Chen Duxiu nor Li Dazhao could attend the meetings; and since Voitinsky had left the country, the leading role was played by a new Comintern agent who had recently arrived in China, a man working under the pseudonym "Maring."

Maring and the thirteen Chinese delegates, who represented the approximately sixty CCP members in China, discussed the crucial issues of the day and worked to draw up a statement that would be in line with the Soviet Union's basic positions. If possible, they were also to develop an overall strategy for party development that could be applied to the "objective situation" that they had defined.

Probably because of Maring's influence, their final decisions on party role and organization took a conventional Leninist line. The delegates' summary of their discussions shows how a new type of political agenda had been transferred from the Soviet Union to China:

> In defining the tactics of the struggle in the transition period, it was pointed out that the Party not only cannot reject, but, on the contrary, must actively call on the proletariat to take part in and to lead the bourgeois democratic movement as well. The line was adopted demanding the organization of a militant and disciplined Party of the proletariat. The development of the trade union movement was put forward as a central task of the work of the Communist Party.[29]

On the question of a possible alliance with Sun Yat-sen there was protracted discussion. Some Communist delegates held that there should be no alliance with Sun because he was a "demagogue" and as bad as any of the Beiyang militarists. He and the CCP, therefore, "represented two diametrically opposed classes." This negative position was rejected by the majority of delegates, who declared that

> in general a critical attitude must be adopted toward the teachings of Sun Yat-sen, but his various practical and progressive actions should be supported, by adopting forms of non-Party collaboration. The adoption of this principle laid the basis for further collaboration between the Communist Party and the Guomindang and for the development of the anti-militarist and anti-imperialist movement.[30]

Chen Duxiu was elected secretary-general of the CCP *in absentia.* The delegates then returned to their hometowns to share the conclusions with their comrades, to implement their findings where feasible, and to recruit new members into their party cells. Since the thirteen delegates were drawn from a wide geographical range—Guangdong, Hunan, Hubei, and Shandong, as well as Peking and Shanghai—they were able to spread the word swiftly. Even so, the CCP remained a tiny force on the national scene. By 1922 it counted around 200 members all told, not including those overseas.

That same year many of the Chinese Communists in France returned to

their homeland, bringing welcome new strength to the CCP ranks. One of the returned Hunanese Communists, Xiang Jingyu, proved particularly adept at organizing women workers in China's factories. She thus brought a new dimension to the party's activities and identified another important source of party support, since the women (and child) laborers in the large spinning and weaving mills were among China's most cruelly exploited workers. But whereas her husband was swiftly elected to the newly formed Central Committee, she was only briefly appointed as an alternate member and then stayed in sideline positions connected with women's activities. Since Xiang also had two children—one born in 1922 and one in 1924—she could not devote all her attentions to party work; her case underlined the fact that CCP policies were directed almost exclusively by men.

In January 1922 the leaders of the Soviet Union thought it appropriate to invite about forty Chinese delegates to participate in a meeting of the "Toilers of the Far East" convened in Moscow. Qu Qiubai, who was still in the city and whose Russian was now fluent, was one of the interpreters for the group. Despite the terrible conditions in Moscow and a serious shortage of food, the representatives from China, along with those from Mongolia, Korea, Japan, Java, and India, met at least ten times in plenary session. They were addressed by Grigory Zinoviev as spokesman for the Comintern. He told them that only a united world proletariat could overcome the forces of the capitalist powers:

> Remember that the process of history has placed the question thus: you either win your independence side by side with the proletariat, or you do not win it at all. Either you receive your emancipation at the hands of the proletariat, in cooperation with it, under its guidance, or you are doomed to remain the slaves of an English, American and Japanese camarilla.[31]

When one Chinese delegate, who was in fact a member of the Guomindang, was rash enough to suggest that the Soviets seemed now to be saying what Sun Yat-sen had been saying for twenty years, he was scolded by a delegate from Soviet Turkistan. "The Guomindang has done great revolutionary work," he was told, but in essence it was a "national democratic movement." As such, it was essential to the "first phase" of the revolutionary movement, but its struggle was not the true "struggle for the proletarian revolution."

Nevertheless, the question of allying in some way with the Guomindang surfaced more and more frequently. Back in China, Maring pushed for the alliance, and it was adopted as part of the manifesto of the CCP at their summer 1922 congress in Hangzhou. Here the CCP announced they would

seek a temporary alliance with the Guomindang in order to fight "against warlords of the feudal type." Once the democratic revolution had been successful, however, the stage of alliance would be over and the proletariat would "launch the struggle of the second phase," which would seek to achieve "the dictatorship of the proletariat allied to the poor peasants against the bourgeoisie."[32] In the eyes of those making these dogmatic and provocative statements, the amorphous preoccupations and slogans of the May Fourth movement were taking on a specific shape and focus.

The Industrial Sector

The organizational methods provided by the Comintern now had to be fitted to the conditions of Chinese life. Abstract praise for the Chinese proletariat had to be replaced by active agitation in their ranks. The indices seemed encouraging to Chinese radicals, for by the early 1920s, despite the political fragmentation of the country, China's industrial economy had grown considerably from the level it had reached at the end of the Qing. This growth occurred in a number of ways: through the expansion of previously existing industries and the development of new industries by Chinese entrepreneurs; through the extension of railways with foreign loans; and by the development, on Chinese soil, of new heavy industry under foreign control. These developments in turn led to changes in the nature and recruitment of China's industrial labor force, and to new tensions in industrial management.

During the late Qing, industrial development had been most significant in the areas of mining, iron production, and cloth manufacture, and in all these sectors growth continued through the early republic and into the warlord period. Annual production figures show the steady growth in basic coal, iron, and steel output during the early republic, despite the vicissitudes of warlordism. The heart of this productivity lay in the Han-Ye-Ping company, in the Wuhan area, originally developed under the direction of the Qing governor-general Zhang Zhidong. Consisting of a major ironworks in Hanyang, iron mines at Daye, and coal mines at Pingxiang (on the western edge of Jiangxi province), the complex employed around 23,000 workers, and it was here that Mao Zedong and other CCP members gained their first significant experiences in labor organization. (The dip in steel production evident in the table below was caused by the closing of the Hanyang plant in 1922.) The Kaiping coal mines, to service which Li Hongzhang had authorized China's earliest stretch of governmentally approved railway, became but one part of an extensive group of north China collieries in

China's Annual Production of Coal, Iron, and Steel, 1912–1927[33]

Year	*Coal (1,000 M.T.)**	*Iron ore (1,000 M.T.)*	*Pig iron (1,000 M.T.)*	*Steel (1,000 M.T.)*
1912	5,166	221	8	3
1913	5,678	460	98	43
1914	7,974	505	130	56
1915	8,493	596	166	48
1916	9,483	629	199	45
1917	10,479	640	188	43
1918	11,109	999	158	57
1919	12,805	1,350	237	35
1920	14,131	1,336	259	68
1921	13,350	1,010	229	77
1922	14,060	859	231	30
1923	16,973	1,243	171	30
1924	18,525	1,266	190	30
1925	17,538	1,019	193	30
1926	15,617	1,033	228	30
1927	17,694	1,181	258	30

*M.T. = metric tons.

the Tangshan region that employed about 25,000 miners in 1920 and perhaps 50,000 by 1922. Although the mines were run allegedly by a Sino-British syndicate, the British came to dominate the mining group, and the Chinese lost active control.

Chinese-controlled areas of the cotton textile industry expanded in the same period, especially in Shanghai, where by 1919–1920 the mills employed around 100,000 workers, 60 percent of whom worked in Chinese-owned operations, the others in British or Japanese-run enterprises. Other centers of significant Chinese textile investment were in Wuhan, Canton, Changsha, and Tianjin. Peking had become a major center of carpet making, with 6,000 workers employed in 206 factories. The Chinese were also extremely active in the shipping business, which initially developed in the late Qing; they were especially committed on the inland waterway routes serving south and west China. The technical expertise needed to maintain and repair complex new machinery in all these industries—whether broken spindles, ships' engines, or severed steampipes—was also developed by Chinese firms specializing in machine tool work. Such mechanical expertise became essential during World War I, when foreign spare parts were not available.

The most significant new Chinese industry was cigarette manufacture.

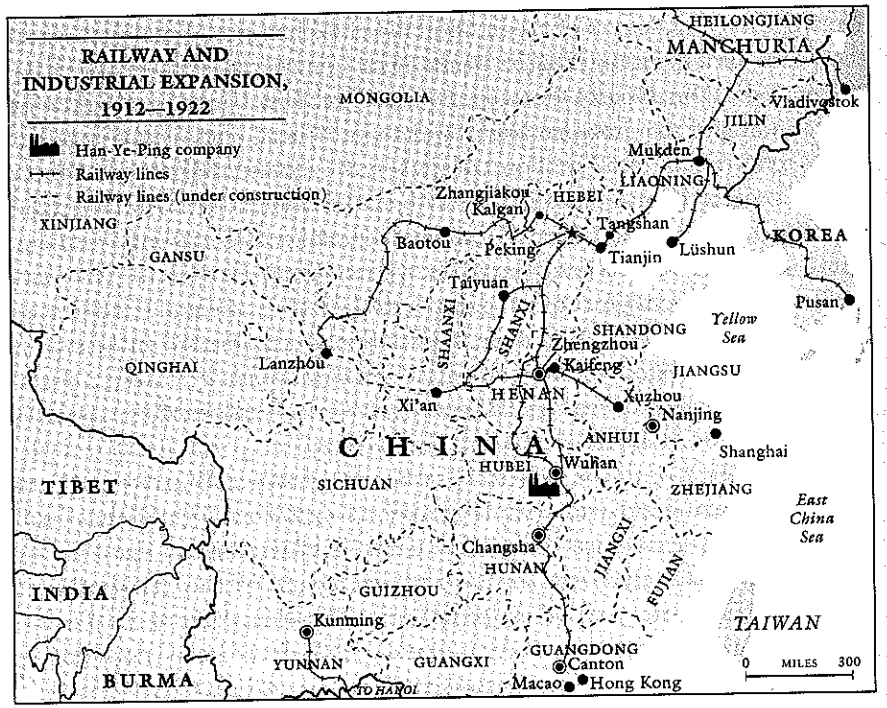
The Nanyang Tobacco Company was founded by the Jian family of Canton, whose capital was initially made in the shipping business. Between 1905 and 1915 they built up considerable sales of cigarettes in Southeast Asia. In 1915 they entered the main China market; by adopting machine-production methods developed by the Americans and the Japanese, they raised their annual sales from 930 million cigarettes to almost 2 billion by 1919, and almost doubled them again by 1920. The Jians were also among the first Chinese businessmen to make aggressive use of Western-style advertising techniques: they employed billboards, giveaways, cigarette cards carrying illustrations of figures from China's most popular traditional novels, and popular slogans to enhance their sales. They also realized the sales possibilities at religious, popular, and patriotic meetings, and exploited the issues of nationalism to boost their sales at the expense of American and British competitors. Borrowing an American image, they called their most expensive brand "Liberty Bell." The Nanyang Tobacco Company went public in 1919, and over the next four years it sold 15 million yuan of stock; the family retained 60 percent control of the company. Still it was not a wholly Chinese firm, since there remained a foreign dimension to the business: the Jians imported a great deal of American leaf and maintained some of their factories in Hong Kong.[34]

An important parallel development at the time came in Chinese banking. During the Qing, letters of credit and bills of exchange had mainly been in the hands of a group of Shanxi banks with branch offices in major cities. At the end of the dynasty the near-monopoly of these banks was broken by the founding of two national banks and six provincial ones, which together had a total capital of 37 million taels when the dynasty fell. By 1914 there were seventeen large Chinese banks with a total capital of 124 million yuan; by 1918 the figures had risen to thirty-seven banks and 179 million yuan. Some of these banks were completely mismanaged, or exploited by warlords who issued huge runs of paper notes with no adequate backing in specie. In 1920 a National Bankers' Association was formed to enforce standards, and the following year it passed regulations on currency reform. Gradually a variety of savings banks, postal banks, and credit cooperatives emerged to serve China's expanding economy.

The members of the Kong family of Shanxi province illustrate this process well. Starting out with simple pawnshops in the mid-Qing, they built up a series of remittance businesses in north China late in the dynasty before they became banking and distribution agents for the British Asiatic Petroleum Company and other large firms. The eldest son of the family, H. H. Kong, after earning a B.A. at Oberlin College and a master's degree in economics at Yale University, married Soong Ailing, Charlie Soong's

eldest daughter, in 1914. Thus was laid the basis of a financial empire, as all three of Ailing's brothers—two educated at Harvard and one at Vanderbilt—returned to China to take up business and, along with H. H. Kong, to serve the Guomindang as financial ministers or affiliated bankers. When Ailing's younger sister married Sun Yat-sen later in 1914, the political connections were neatly rounded out.

Despite the swift changes in Chinese government leadership throughout this period and the shaky prospects for long-term stability, foreign consortia continued to make loans to Chinese enterprises. As before, the largest of these loans tended to be for railway development. Between 1912 and 1920 over 1,000 additional miles of rail were laid in China, bringing the total up to 7,000 miles. About a third of this was in Manchuria, much of it built with Japanese funding. Of the other key stretches of track, that from Xuzhou in the east, through Kaifeng, and ultimately (it was hoped) through Xi'an in Shaanxi and on to Gansu province, was funded by European bankers. Work was completed in 1918 on the Wuhan-Changsha section of the main southern line to Canton, and in 1922 the Kalgan (Zhangjiakou)-Peking railroad was extended as far west as Baotou on the northern bend of the



Yellow River, thus linking a once completely isolated part of China to the capital. The funding for this construction came from a combination of American and Japanese sources.

On all these projects, a high percentage of the money designated for railway development was siphoned off by the Peking government, or by local warlords for their own military purposes. In some instances, such as the famous 120-million-yuan "Nishihara loan" of 1918—made by the Japanese government to the warlord-premier of the time, Duan Qirui, allegedly for railway and industrial development—the entire sum was misappropriated for special military and political purposes. On this occasion the Japanese accepted the situation, since the "loan" was in essence a bribe to persuade Duan to favor Japanese interests in China. Had it not been for such corruption, China's rail network would have grown even more rapidly. The railways nevertheless played an integral role in commerce and industry, and brought new elements to the labor force: the 55 percent of the rails that were incorporated into the national system employed about 73,000 workers.

It was, however, the continued prominence of foreign investments in China, especially in foreign-controlled industries, that marked the most dramatic economic aspect of the period. The world's industrial powers saw China as an almost boundless potential market as well as a generous source of cheap industrial labor. The Qing fall had brought no independence from foreign economic power. Between 1912 and 1923, as the Chinese economy expanded, the foreign share of total investments in shipping, for instance, remained around 77 percent, and in cotton spindles at 45 percent. The foreign share in coal mining, which had been 90 percent in 1914, did drop by 1922, but it still came to 78 percent. China's foreign trade comprised a broad array of goods, but from 1912 to 1928 it was consistently in a deficit position (see the tables below).

Although some firms appeared to dominate the scene—the British firm of Jardine, Matheson in banking, shipping, and textiles (formerly in opium); Germany's Carlowitz in heavy machinery and weapons (they were the agents for Krupp); Japan's Mitsui in insurance and shipping; the British-American Tobacco Corporation; the United States' Standard Oil and Singer Sewing Machine—in fact the variety was endless. According to a count made in 1918, there were nearly 7,000 various offices and branches of foreign firms in China, and they entered into many sectors of the Chinese economy. Even if this foreign component accounted for less than 10 percent of China's overall gross domestic product, the charges made by Sun Yat-sen and by the CCP concerning the power of foreign imperialism in China were on the mark. This economic power struck some Chinese radicals as verifying

COMPOSITION OF CHINA'S FOREIGN TRADE, 1913–1928[35]

	1913	*1916*	*1920*	*1925*	*1928*
Imports					
Cotton goods	*19.3	14.1	21.8	16.3	14.2
Cotton yarn	12.7	12.4	10.6	4.4	1.6
Raw cotton	0.5	1.6	2.4	7.4	5.7
Rice and wheat	3.3	6.6	0.8	6.8	5.7
Wheat flour	1.8	0.2	0.3	1.6	2.6
Sugar	6.4	7.1	5.2	9.5	8.3
Tobacco	2.9	5.8	4.7	4.1	5.1
Paper	1.3	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.4
Kerosene	4.5	6.2	7.1	7.0	5.2
Petroleum	—	0.2	0.4	0.9	1.4
Transport materials	0.8	4.0	2.6	1.9	2.3
Chemicals, dyes, and pigments	5.6	4.1	6.4	5.6	7.5
Iron, steel, and other metals	5.3	5.1	8.3	4.7	5.4
Machinery	1.4	1.3	3.2	1.8	1.8
All others	34.2	29.5	24.3	26.0	30.8
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Exports					
Silk and silk goods	25.3	22.3	18.6	22.5	18.4
Tea	8.4	9.0	1.6	2.9	3.7
Beans and bean cake	12.0	9.3	13.0	15.9	20.5
Seeds and oil	7.8	8.4	9.1	7.9	5.8
Egg and egg products	1.4	2.6	4.0	4.3	4.4
Hides, leather, and skins	6.0	6.0	4.3	4.0	5.4
Ores and metals	3.3	6.3	3.2	2.9	2.1
Coal	1.6	1.2	2.3	2.6	2.9
Cotton yarn and cotton goods	0.6	0.8	1.4	2.0	3.8
Raw cotton	4.0	3.6	1.7	3.8	3.4
All others	29.6	30.5	40.8	31.2	29.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

*Percent current value.

Lenin's theories in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism,* which he published in 1917. Lenin had argued that capitalists would exploit overseas sources of raw material and cheap labor in a last desperate attempt to placate their own workers at home by raising their living standards, but that such a practice was ultimately self-defeating and would only speed world revolution.

CHINA'S TRADE IMBALANCE, 1912–1928[36]

	*Value in current prices**			*Index of value of total trade 1913 = 100*
	Net imports	*Net exports*	*Import surplus*	
1912	473	371	102	86.7
1913	570	403	167	100.0
1914	569	356	213	95.1
1915	454	419	35	89.7
1916	516	482	34	102.5
1917	550	463	87	104.0
1918	555	486	69	106.9
1919	647	631	16	131.3
1920	762	542	220	133.9
1921	906	601	305	154.8
1922	945	655	290	164.4
1923	923	753	170	172.2
1924	1,018	772	246	183.9
1925	948	776	172	177.1
1926	1,124	864	260	204.2
1927	1,013	919	94	198.4
1928	1,196	991	205	224.6

*In millions haikwan taels, a tael being approximately two-thirds of a Chinese dollar or yuan.

The nature of China's industrial labor force was in great flux at this time and made CCP plans to organize workers difficult to achieve. Many Chinese were drawn as laborers to the burgeoning new industrial enterprises; their numbers should not be exaggerated, however, since the bulk of China's 450 million people still worked the land in traditional ways. Half a million or more farm workers a year temporarily migrated into Manchuria, where they produced such cash crops as soybeans on a gigantic scale for the world market, forming a kind of mobile rural proletariat. (The crops reached the coast via the new Manchurian rail network.) Most of the workers that we might term "industrial," furthermore, were artisans who used customary methods in traditional crafts and were either self-employed or loosely bonded into groups. Such work was supervised by guilds, again of a kind that had existed in the Qing; the guilds offered some wage guarantees, upheld standards of quality, and regulated the entry of workers into a given line of work. Other workers, such as the rickshaw pullers and barge coolies, can only tangentially be called members of the proletariat, although some did form organizations and attempt strikes.

Every year a significant number of Chinese—perhaps a quarter of a million by 1922—were leaving the land or artisanal careers to find work in the new factories, docks, or railways of China's industrializing cities. Such a work force naturally posed problems for employers. Many, still linked to the seasonal rhythms of agriculture in their home villages, might simply collect their wages and quit at harvest time or during the spring planting. Others found it difficult to adjust to the repetitive precision of industrial labor and made careless mistakes or suffered accidents. Some, with no knowledge of machine-geared production, could not learn the new techniques at all.

If the ineptness of some workers disturbed their employers, this was more than matched by the indifference or callousness that employers showed their workers. Wages were low, hours extremely long, and vacations sparse or nonexistent. Medical help and insurance were usually not available, and housing—often in lodgings supplied by the factory or mineowners—was ghastly. Workers were frequently identified by numbers rather than by their own names. Harassment and bullying by supervisors on the shop floor were constant. Wages were docked for trivial reasons, kickbacks often demanded. Women workers frequently outnumbered men, forming 65 percent of the labor force in some textile factories, and their wages were even lower than that of their male counterparts. In many industries, but especially in the weaving mills, child labor was common. Girls as young as twelve were often set to work at such tasks as plucking the silk cocoons out of vats of near-boiling water with their bare hands, which led to terrible skin infections and injuries.

The strikes that many workers called in 1919 in support of the May Fourth student activists marked an important new development in Chinese history. Thereafter protesters regularly made effective use of strikes as a tool against injustice, even if initially these strikes were on a fairly small scale. From mid-1921 onward the fledgling CCP occasionally got involved, but often independent groups of workers took action on their own behalf. The pattern of small-scale strikes was sharply interrupted by the massive work stoppage that occurred in January 1922 in Hong Kong and Canton: led by Guomindang activists, nearly 30,000 seamen and dockers struck, immobilizing over 150 ships that were carrying among them 250,000 tons of cargo. By March 1922, when the number of strikers—now joined by sympathetic vegetable sellers, tramway workers, and electricians—had risen to over 120,000, the owners capitulated. The seamen won raises ranging from 15 percent to 30 percent and, along with other material benefits, the recognition of their union's right to exist.

Shortly thereafter, in May 1922, two young Communists—Li Lisan (who had just returned from France) and Liu Shaoqi (who had been in the first group of Communist students sent to Moscow after the CCP first congress)—began forming "workers' clubs" as fronts for union organization among the Anyuan coal miners and the Daye steel foundry laborers. A host of similar clubs soon spread in scattered Chinese cities. Often with direct CCP leadership, these clubs were organized among lead miners, cotton balers, printers, powdered-egg makers, rickshaw pullers, and railway workers on the lines north and south out of Wuhan, to name just a few.

The costs of mounting a strike could be desperately high. Employers noted the names of strikers, who were often fired after their actions. Other strikers were threatened, savagely beaten, or killed in clashes with police. One grim example occurred among the strikers on the Wuhan-to-Peking railroad, which was controlled by the northern warlord Wu Peifu. Wu drew much of his income from freight on the line, as did the British who ran the Henan mines serviced by the railroad. The CCP had been actively encouraging the line's sixteen separate workers' clubs to solidify into one general union, which was achieved on February 2, 1923. Harassed by the police on Wu's orders, the new union called a general strike on the line on February 4, and effectively shut the railway down, After the workers ignored General Wu's orders that they return to work, on February 7 he ordered two of his subordinate generals to lead their forces against the strikers. Thirty-five workers were killed and many more wounded.

That same day the leader of the union's Wuhan branch, Lin Xiangqian—born in Fujian, a mechanic who had moved to Wuhan to work on the railway—was arrested at his home and told to order his union members back to work. When he refused, the workers were assembled on the platform, and he was beheaded in front of them. His head was hung on a station telephone pole. Despite a scattering of sympathy strikes from other unions, the railwaymen went back to work on February 9. This was a new kind of war.

CHAPTER 14

The Clash

The Initial Alliance

In the early 1920s, Sun Yat-sen barely managed to keep his hopes for political power alive as he shuttled between Shanghai and Canton according to the vagaries of the military situation. For a period in 1921 and 1922, under the protection of the Guangdong warlord Chen Jiongming, Sun was named "president" of a newly announced Chinese People's Government by surviving members of the old Peking Parliament who had moved south. But Chen disapproved of Sun's plans for using Canton as a base for a national unification drive and ousted him from that city in August 1922. Apparently Sun had fared no better than those early Qing predecessors who had tried to consolidate regimes in the same region—the Ming loyalist Prince of Gui or the southern Feudatory Shang Zhixin.

Although a fugitive yet again, Sun Yat-sen remained the head of his own political party. Having disbanded the Revolutionary party in 1919, he at once restored the National People's party (the Guomindang) and selected two of his long-time supporters, Hu Hanmin and Wang Jingwei, to draft new principles for reform of the party. One newly prominent figure in Guomindang circles was Chiang Kai-shek, who had emerged from the shadowy Shanghai period of his life to serve as a field officer with Chen Jiongming's southern army. Chiang subsequently helped Sun Yat-sen escape from Canton in the summer of 1922, when Sun's situation seemed desperate.

The Comintern agent Maring had visited Sun in 1921, as Sun was trying to coordinate his national reunification drive in the south. Although their talks led to no specific agreements, Sun seems to have regarded the new

economic policies launched by Lenin that year as a turn away from rigid state socialism on the Soviet Union's part, a step that he found promising. And Sun, who had long sought help from many other foreign governments and always failed to get it, was interested in the Comintern offer of financial and military aid. In the fall of 1922, with Sun settled in Shanghai, the Comintern dispatched more agents to China, and Sun agreed to allow Communists into the Guomindang. Finally in January 1923, Sun held extended meetings with a Soviet diplomat, Adolf Joffe. The two men issued a joint statement that, despite its guarded language, marked the emergence of a new policy both for the Soviet Union and for the Guomindang:

> Dr. Sun Yat-sen holds that the Communistic order or even the Soviet system cannot actually be introduced into China, because there do not exist here the conditions for the successful establishment of either Communism or Sovietism. This view is entirely shared by Mr. Joffe, who is further of the opinion that China's paramount and most pressing problem is to achieve national unification and attain full national independence, and regarding this great task, he has assured Dr. Sun Yat-sen that China has the warmest sympathy of the Russian people and can count on the support of Russia.[1]

Only a month later, so dizzying were the power shifts in warlord China that Sun was back in Canton, where a new consortium of militarists had ousted Chen Jiongming. This time Sun established a military government and named himself grand marshal, presumably in the hopes that this august title would give him ultimate leadership over his subordinate generals. Each of these militarists controlled men from his own native province, the most numerous being those from Guangdong itself, from Yunnan and Guangxi, and from Hunan and Henan. Sun's military government consisted of ministries for domestic and foreign affairs, finance, and national reconstruction. There was no longer any attempt to coordinate political decisions with the rump members of the old Parliament. Most of them had returned to Peking, where their presence was sought by successive presidents eager to acquire some legitimacy by convening a parliamentary quorum. By 1923 the parliamentarians were being paid $20 for each meeting they attended to discuss a new constitution, and a bonus of $5,000 if they agreed to stay in Peking and vote as requested.

To stabilize the Canton military government, Sun needed assistance, and the Soviet Union was happy to provide it. The strategic thinking behind this Soviet position emerged from the tension between its twin desires to foster world revolution and to ensure the safety of its own borders. In east Asia, the greatest danger to Soviet security clearly lay with Japan, a staunchly

anti-Communist society that had already defeated Russia in the war of 1904–1905 and was now becoming the dominant force in Manchuria, on the Soviet Union's southern frontier. Sun Yat-sen had expressed his support for joint Sino-Soviet management of the Chinese Eastern Railway, which ran straight across Manchuria and provided the main Russian link with Vladivostok. It was therefore in the Soviet Union's interest that China be strong enough to check Japan's ambitions. At the same time, the Soviet Union continued to conduct diplomatic negotiations with the various Peking regimes and with other northern warlords, winning diplomatic recognition by China in early 1924. But Soviet observers were not confident that there was anyone in the north strong enough to reunite the country. Indeed the manipulation of Duan Qirui by the Japanese, and the result of the Versailles negotiations, seemed to show that China was doomed to become Japan's pawn.

The CCP, which had around 300 members by 1923, was still in a formative stage and clearly too weak to lead the country. The fate of the railway workers who went on strike against Wu Peifu demonstrated that all too well. Among the CCP's four priorities for China—national reunification, organization of the urban proletariat for socialist revolution, redress of the terrible poverty and exploitation in China's countryside, and eradication of the forces of foreign imperialism—it made sense for the party to address the national-reunification problem first, in order to give China some chance of proceeding with the other three. So the Comintern made the decision to work with the already existing Guomindang organization, which had national prestige because of Sun Yat-sen's name, and to strengthen it. Members of the CCP would keep their own party membership and also join the Guomindang, so that at some future time they could use the latter organization for their own purposes.

The coalition strategy was made all the more feasible because, in 1923, senior Guomindang politicians were sympathetic to the Soviet Union. Hu Hanmin, for instance, who had been made chief counselor to the Canton military government by Sun, felt that Lenin's anti-imperialist arguments formed an admirable basis for nationalist ideology. Hu also applauded the materialist conception of history and criticized Li Dazhao for not accepting the doctrine that all elements of a society's superstructure—political, intellectual, and spiritual—are merely reflections of the underlying economic base and modes of production. Furthermore, Hu had attempted to find precedents for aspects of Marxist-Leninist ideology in earlier schools of traditional Chinese thought. In the draft manifesto that Hu and Wang Jingwei wrote for the Guomindang at Sun's request in late 1922, they spoke of "the unequal distribution of property" as the critical defect in American and European societies, and pledged that China would "share in the new world era ushered in by the revolutionary changes in the rest of the world."

The CCP leader Chen Duxiu was more nervous about the alliance. He was just getting the CCP off the ground, and was skeptical of how useful or trustworthy the Guomindang might be as an ally, even though Maring insisted that the Guomindang "was not a party of the bourgeoisie, but the party of an alliance of all classes." Chen remarked that "an alliance between the parties would confuse the class organizations and restrain our independent policy."[2] Li Dazhao, however, backed the alliance: he was less confident than Chen about the presence of a large Chinese urban proletariat ready for socialist revolution; he had also been expanding his concept of China as a "proletarianized" nation to one in which race was a central issue. Li felt that "the class struggle between the lower-class colored races and the upper-class white race is already in embryonic form," and that at such a moment Chinese solidarity against white imperialism was essential.[3]

The cementing of the alliance and the reorganization of the Guomindang were both achieved by the Comintern agent Borodin, who reached Canton on October 6, 1923, and was named "special adviser" to the Guomindang a week later by Sun. Borodin (his original name was Mikhail Gruzenberg), was born to a Russian Jewish family in 1884, grew up in Latvia, and began to work secretly for Lenin in 1903. Exiled after the failed 1905 revolution, he moved to the United States, took courses at Valparaiso University in Indiana, and became a successful schoolteacher for immigrant children in Chicago. After Lenin's seizure of power in 1917, Borodin returned to his homeland and undertook a number of secret assignments for the Comintern in Europe, Mexico, and the United States. By 1923 he was a veteran operative, and the new China assignment gave him a chance to prove his true mettle.

Borodin negotiated skillfully with all concerned. He convinced the CCP leaders that the policy of joining the Guomindang was in their own long-term interests and in the short run would allow them greater flexibility in organizing both urban and rural workers. At the same time, taking advantage of the imminent danger that Chen Jiongming's troops might recapture Canton, Borodin tried to push Sun Yat-sen to take a more radical stance. Workers and peasants would swiftly rally to Sun's armies, argued Borodin, if Sun backed a clear program for an eight-hour day and a fair minimum wage, and promised to confiscate landlords' holdings and redistribute them to the peasantry.

Sun did not dare alienate key allies by making such bold statements, but he did give Borodin the go-ahead to work on party reorganization and to summon an all-China Guomindang congress. Sun's basic justification for

this was that Borodin understood the importance of nationalism in making revolution, and that the experience Borodin had gained in the Soviet Union was invaluable. The simple fact was that the Russian people were now free from foreign domination: "What our party and they advocate are the three Principles of the People: the ideologies are similar. But our party still lacks effective methods and should study theirs."[4] When overseas supporters cabled Sun that he was being subtly "Sovietized," he answered that if the CCP were not allowed to cooperate with the Guomindang, then he himself would join the CCP. When others tried an anti-Semitic line of argument by asking if he knew Borodin's "real name," Sun replied that it was "Lafayette." And when Lenin's death was announced at the Guomindang conference in January 1924 (165 delegates had come, of whom about 15 percent were Communists), Sun delivered a public eulogy, calling Lenin a "great man" and exclaiming, "I wish to proceed along the path pointed out by you, and although my enemies are against this, my people will hail me for it."[5]

Borodin proceeded to strengthen Sun Yat-sen's position and the general disciplinary structure of the Guomindang. Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles of the People—anti-imperialist nationalism, democracy, and socialism—were declared the official ideology, and Sun himself was named party leader *(zongli)* for life. Borodin introduced the Soviet concept of "democratic centralism," under which any Guomindang decision, once reached by a majority of members of the relevant committees, would be wholly binding on all party members. He expanded the Guomindang party's organization into major cities, and actively recruited new members by coordinating operations of the regional party headquarters. Under the Central Executive Committee of the Guomindang he formed bureaus to deal specifically with rural and urban recruitment and policies, with youth, with women, and with the military. Special staff began compiling data on Chinese social conditions. Union organizing especially was intensified, and Communist members of the Guomindang began to propagandize actively among the peasantry in the countryside.

Of equal importance was the Soviet decision to strengthen the Guomindang military, so that it could become a vigorous force in Chinese politics. The island of Whampoa, ten miles downriver from Canton, was chosen as the site for a new military academy, and Sun's friend Chiang Kai-shek, who had just spent several months in Moscow studying military organization as a member of a special Guomindang delegation, was appointed as its first commandant. Borodin cleverly kept a balance between Guomindang and CCP influences in the academy by having the Communist Zhou Enlai, who had just returned from France, named director of the political department there. The first cadets were mainly middle-class youths from

Guangdong and Hunan (at least a middle-school graduation certificate was required for admission, which excluded nearly all workers and peasants); using good modern equipment, they received rigorous military training from highly skilled veterans like the Soviet adviser Vasily Blyukher.

The Whampoa cadets were also given a thorough indoctrination in the goals of Chinese nationalism and in the Three Principles of Sun Yat-sen. Although several of the cadets were already Communists or were recruited into the CCP—the young Lin Biao, for instance, a Hubei native who graduated with the cadets in 1925—the majority were not sympathetic to communism and became fiercely loyal to Chiang Kai-shek. This devoted group of tough young officers were to exert considerable influence in upcoming power struggles, and they gave the first proof of their efficacy on October 15, 1924. On that day the first class of 800, under Chiang's command and backed by local police and by cadets from other, smaller provincial military schools, routed a Canton force of the Merchant Volunteer Corps that had fired on Guomindang demonstrators and had tried to seize a shipment of confiscated arms.

The suppression of the Canton Merchant Corps made Sun deeply unpopular in the city, and when in November 1924 he was invited to join a "national reconstruction conference" in Peking, convened by the dominant warlord there, he consented. Traveling with his wife Soong Qingling and accompanied by Wang Jingwei and Borodin, he first visited Shanghai to talk with party loyalists. A side trip to Japan was abruptly terminated by illness, and he hastened to Peking. Doctors operated on Sun in January 1925 but found he had terminal liver cancer. He died in Peking on March 12, aged fifty-nine, leaving a brief, patriotic, and pro-Soviet last will and testament. Wang Jingwei was believed to have drafted this will for him, but it was not clear if Wang would inherit his mantle of leadership. Indeed it was unclear whether anyone could, since Sun's prestige had been a personal kind that accrued to him because of his long years building a revolutionary organization at the close of the Qing and during his exile in Japan.

Sun's death, along with that of Lenin, whom Sun had himself eulogized just fourteen months before, did not stop the momentum of the strategies they had developed. Even as Sun was dying, in February 1925, the Whampoa-led armies of Chiang Kai-shek, advised by Blyukher and supplied with recently received Soviet rifles, machine guns, and artillery, won a series of victories over the warlord Chen Jiongming near his main base of Shantou (Swatow), which Chiang's forces captured in March. Three months later, in another remarkable victory, they routed two other warlords who had tried to seize Canton; on this second occasion Chiang's troops took 17,000 prisoners and obtained 16,000 guns. They were now beginning to perform

like an army ready for national endeavors, and Blyukher's early claim that he could sweep across China with three or four elite divisions began to seem less bombastic.

Once again it seemed that a new spirit of patriotism and determination was in the air in China, a feeling heightened by events that erupted at Shanghai in May 1925. This particular crisis was sparked by a group of Chinese workers who had been locked out of a Japanese-owned textile mill during a strike. Angry at the lockout, they broke into the mill and smashed some of the machinery. Japanese guards opened fire, killing one of the workers. In a pattern that was now familiar in China, the death was followed by a wave of public outrage, student demonstrations, further strikes, and a number of arrests. On May 30, in the Shanghai International Settlement, thousands of workers and students assembled outside the police station in the main shopping thoroughfare of Nanjing Road. They were there to demand the release of six Chinese students who had been arrested by the British and to protest against militarism and foreign imperialism. The situation was an inflammable one. Initially the demonstration, though noisy, was not violent; but as more and more Chinese converged on the police station and began to chant—"Kill the foreigners" according to some witnesses, harmless slogans according to others—the British inspector in charge of a detachment of Chinese and Sikh constables shouted at the crowd to disperse. Just ten seconds later, before the crowd could possibly have obeyed his instructions, he ordered his men to fire. They did so, firing a murderously accurate salvo of forty-four shots that killed eleven of the demonstrators and left twenty more wounded.

The outrage at the massacre was immediate and spread swiftly around China. At least twenty-eight other cities held demonstrations in solidarity with the "May Thirtieth Martyrs," and in several of these there were attacks on the British and the Japanese. A general strike was called in Shanghai, prompting the foreign powers hurriedly to bring in their marines and form volunteer corps to patrol the settlements. The tragedy of May 30 was compounded by events in Canton the following month, when Communist and other labor leaders combined protests against the Shanghai killings with the launching of a major strike in Hong Kong directed at the British. On June 23 a huge rally of Canton protestors was fired on by British troops as the demonstration passed close to the foreign concession area on Shameen Island. The rally had been formed from over a hundred different contingents of college students and soldiers, industrial workers and farmers, schoolchildren and boy scouts, and Whampoa cadets. The indiscriminate firing from Shameen killed 52 Chinese and wounded over 100. One foreigner was killed when some of the Chinese fired back.

The rage all over China was immense, and the strike in Hong Kong—which was to last sixteen months—grew in anger and intensity, backed by a massive boycott of British goods. There were echoes of May Fourth in the way May Thirtieth also became a symbol and rallying cry; but now—in 1925—conditions were different from those in 1919. Both the Guomindang and the CCP, or the combination of the two, stood ready to channel the rage and frustration of Chinese into their own party organizations. Indigenous nationalism could now call on Soviet organizational expertise to build for meaningful political action. Perhaps that was Sun Yat-sen's true legacy.

Launching the Northern Expedition

In 1924, as the Guomindang-Communist alliance in Canton was beginning to produce its first impressive results, the situation in Peking also entered a new stage. The powerful warlord who controlled Manchuria, Zhang Zuolin, a free-lance soldier of the late Qing who had consolidated his power between 1913 and 1917, had for several years been involved in the north China fighting with various other warlords. Zhang was a tough, wily operator who had already shown the skills to maneuver between the Russians and the Japanese in order to protect his domain. In October 1924, after a coup in Peking had cut into the power base of his primary rival, Wu Peifu, Zhang Zuolin sent his troops south through the pass at Shanhaiguan. Although it appeared unlikely that he would be able to use the preliminary Manchuria-to-Peking thrust as the basis for conquest of the whole country—as Dorgon and the Manchus had—his forces swiftly advanced down the Tianjin-Pukou railway line into the Yangzi River region. This success, when coupled with Zhang's development of a Peking power base, gave the Guomindang forces, as nationalists seeking Chinese unification, an additional sense of urgency. Their concern was heightened after 1926, when Zhang tightened his hold over north China through a new alliance with his former enemy, Wu Peifu, and began to take a strong anti-Soviet stand. Wu Peifu, in turn, consolidated his hold in central China, southern Hebei and Hubei.

Many intellectuals now despaired of seeing an end to the chaos. The writer Lu Xun, a sardonic observer rather than a political activist, was among those deeply moved. He was teaching in Peking on March 18, 1926, when several of his students were shot and killed in a demonstration against the Chinese politicians who had taken the spineless position of accepting

Japanese demands for additional special economic privileges in northeast China. In all, forty-seven young people died that day, and Lu Xun, badly shaken, moved with his young wife first to Xiamen and then to Canton in search of some kind of security. As he wrote in a bitter essay: "I am always ready to think the worst of my fellow countrymen, but I could neither conceive nor believe that we could stoop to such despicable barbarism." He added sadly, "As for any deeper significance, I think there is very little; for this was only an unarmed demonstration. The history of mankind's battle forward through bloodshed is like the formation of coal, where a great deal of wood is needed to produce a small amount of coal."[6] Liang Qichao, who as a young man had been such a powerful spokesman for nationalism in the late Qing, and had continued to speak out for a strong China under the republic, now as a fifty-one year old mournfully watched these events from his home in Tianjin. Liang wrote to his sons, who were studying in the United States, that Peking was "like an enormous powder keg, just waiting for something to set it off."[7]

The problem of how to take effective action toward reuniting the country was widely discussed by the Guomindang, the CCP, and their Comintern advisers. If they launched a military campaign, they would face the fundamental problems of logistics, manpower, weaponry, and protecting flanks and rear in the advance. But theirs would also be a political campaign, and the problems of ideology and propaganda had to be considered with equal care. The Guomindang could not move too far to the Left politically or it would lose its main supporters, many of whom were landlords or industrialists and were not sympathetic to peasant demands for lower rents and taxes, nor to urban strikes for higher wages.

This lesson had been harshly demonstrated in the case of Liao Zhongkai, Sun Yat-sen's close friend, who by mid-1925 had become a member of the small Military Council that controlled the army, as well as minister of finance, governor of Guangdong, party representative to the Whampoa Academy, and head of the Guomindang workers' department. In this last capacity he had been largely responsible for organizing massive strikes and boycotts in protest against British abuses in both Hong Kong and Canton that summer. But on August 20, 1925, Liao was assassinated by a group of five or six gunmen as he arrived at a meeting of the Guomindang Executive Committee. Contemporaries speculated that the killers had been hired by anti-leftists in the Guomindang, perhaps in collusion with the British, or possibly by friends of Hu Hanmin, who was bitter not to have been given the title of "leader" of the Guomindang after Sun's death. The assassination remains unsolved.

Despite Liao's murder, Borodin's power and that of the Left in general seemed paramount in Canton. Indeed, with the protracted series of strikes against the foreigners, and the great number of armed workers' pickets patrolling streets and factories, Canton was called the "Red City" by some observers. Of 278 delegates at the second congress of the Guomindang, held in January 1926, 168 were leftists or Communists, with only 65 assigned to the center and 45 to the Right. With 7 of the 36 members of the Guomindang Executive Committee now Communists and another 14 on the Left, Borodin felt confident enough to placate the centrists by imposing a rule that would limit Communist spots on any given Guomindang committee to one-third.

Yet these appearances of leftist predominance were deceptive; at least four important indicators showed a countertrend. First, among the Whampoa cadets themselves a new group formed—the Society for the Study of Sun Yat-senism. This innocuous name initially concealed the fact that although the cadet members were nationalists and anti-imperialists, they were also strongly anti-Communist. Their view of a strong, united China did not draw on any Soviet model, and as they were appointed to their new posts they spread anti-Communist sentiment among other officers.

Second, the strongly leftist flavor of Canton after the middle of 1925 drove many businessmen and former Guomindang backers out of the city, to re-establish themselves in Shanghai or Peking.

Third, the success of the Whampoa-led armies in north and east Guangdong province began to bring newly surrendered warlord troops into the Guomindang's National Revolutionary Army, as their forces were called from 1925 onward. Most of these troops could not be suddenly converted from their warlord ways; they lacked discipline, training, even courage. They were prone to desert if sent on dangerous missions, and some were also opium addicts. Although their presence made the Guomindang force look stronger on paper, they weakened that dream for a dynamic, ideologically charged, and technically trained elite force that Blyukher had conjured up. The historical record was ambiguous on such incorporations of surrendered troops. In the past, similar moves had both strengthened and weakened the Manchu armies in the 1640s, the Taiping in the 1850s, and the Revolutionary Alliance forces in 1911–1912.

Finally, the disaffected members of the Guomindang formed their own faction in late 1925 to try and steer their party off its leftward track. Called the "Western Hills" group from the area near Peking where they first met, they vowed to get the Communists out of the party, oust Borodin, and move the party headquarters to Shanghai from Canton. They preferred Hu Hanmin, who had been moving steadily to the right politically, to any of the other current Guomindang leaders.

On March 20, 1926, another incident occurred in Canton that showed the frailty of the Communist position and the dangers inherent in the alliance. A gunboat, the *Zhongshan,* commanded by a Communist officer, suddenly appeared before dawn off Whampoa Island. No one ever learned who had ordered it there, but the move was interpreted by Chiang Kai-shek and some of his supporters as the prelude to an attempt to kidnap him. Chiang at once invoked his powers as garrison commander and arrested the *Zhongshan*'s captain, put Canton under martial law, posted loyal cadets or police in crucial buildings, disarmed the workers' pickets, and arrested the more than thirty Russian advisers now in the city. A number of senior Chinese Communist political commissars were held in Whampoa for "retraining," and the publishing of CCP-affiliated newspapers was suspended. Within a few days Chiang slowly eased the pressures, and by early April he declared that he still believed in the alliance with the Soviet Union; but no one was sure how to interpret these statements.

Borodin had been away from Canton since February, holding a series of secret conferences on Comintern strategy with Russian colleagues in Peking. In late April he returned, and over the next few days he and Chiang reached a "compromise": in the future no CCP members could head Guomindang or government bureaus; no CCP criticism of Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles of the People was permitted; no Guomindang members could join the CCP; the Comintern had to share its orders to the CCP with a Guomindang committee, and a list of all current CCP members was to be given to the Guomindang Executive Committee. Borodin accepted these terms because Stalin was just entering on a critical power struggle in Moscow and could not afford the blow to his prestige that would be caused by a complete eviction of the CCP and the Soviet advisers from Canton.

With a centrist position now staked out politically, Chiang and the other Guomindang leaders developed plans for a military campaign to unify China. The strategy for the Northern Expedition called for three armed thrusts: one up the completed sections of the Canton-Wuhan railway, or along the Xiang River, to the key Hunan city of Changsha; one up the Gan River into Jiangxi; and one up the east coast into Fujian. If all went well, the armies would then have two options: to push on north to the Yangzi River and consolidate in Wuhan; or to move east by river or railway to Nanjing and the rich industrial prize of Shanghai. A series of alliances would be worked out with various warlords along the way, and, where feasible, their troops would be incorporated into the Guomindang National Revolutionary Army.

Communist and Guomindang party members would move ahead of the troops, organizing local peasants or urban workers to disrupt hostile forces on the Guomindang line of march. This would have to be done, however, in such a way that it did not alienate potential allies, as had occurred in response to the efforts of Peng Pai, a Communist organizer on the coast above Canton in Haifeng County. Peng Pai created from 1923 onward a number of peasant associations that developed social services such as medical care, education, and information on agriculture, and he pushed for dramatic rent reductions—up to 25 percent in many cases. Peng also formed the peasants into self-defense corps to protect their territories against counterattacking landlords. But such policies had provoked a savage backlash from local landlords and were too drastic for most Guomindang supporters.

The Guomindang and Communists also had to plan to provide large numbers of transport laborers to carry the army's military supplies over the great areas of country where there were neither railways nor adequate roads. Many of these men were recruited from among the Canton strikers, others from the peasantry on the line of march who were wooed by decent treatment and a high daily rate of pay, inducements never used by rival warlord armies. Railway workers were also organized to disrupt service on enemy-controlled railroads, to prevent the removal of basic rolling stock by hiding crucial parts, and, where possible, to cut off the enemies' retreat by sabotaging the track.

Two other central components in the planning were money and military manpower. Money problems had been greatly eased by the skills of T. V. Soong, Sun Yat-sen's brother-in-law, who, after graduating from Harvard University and working three years at the International Banking Corporation in New York, had been made head of the Canton Central Bank in 1924. There he built up major reserves by skillful management; when he was promoted in 1925 to finance minister of the Guomindang government in Canton, he quadrupled revenues in the Guomindang-controlled areas. He relied on such devices as taxes on shipping and kerosene, which by late 1925 totaled over 3.6 million yuan per month. He also floated bond issues to raise money for the government.

As for manpower, 7,795 Whampoa graduates, mostly from well-off rural families, trained in both logistics and tactics, were ready for action by mid-1926. In a special report to the Guomindang congress in early 1926, Chiang Kai-shek estimated the number of men under arms and loyal to the Guomindang at 85,000. This figure included troops from Guangdong, Yunnan, and Hunan, many of whom were still led by the officers who had brought them to Canton but were now incorporated under the National Revolutionary Army. Another 30,000 Guangxi troops were soon added to this number, along with about 6,000 cadets still enrolled in the various military schools.

Chiang Kai-shek was named commander in chief of these hybrid forces

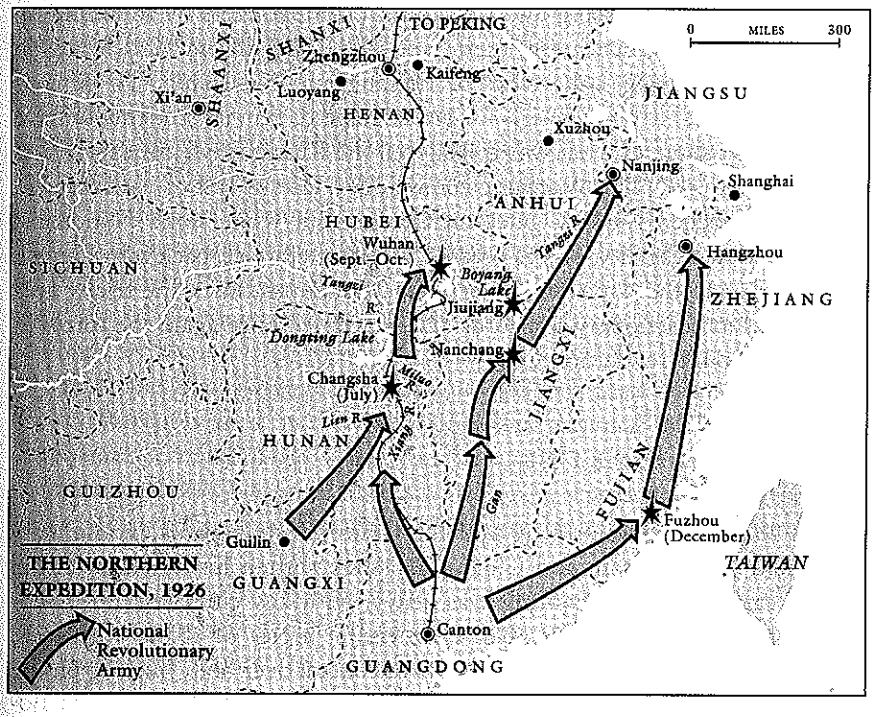
in June 1926, and the official mobilization order for the Northern Expedition was issued on July 1. The broad purpose of the expedition was defined as follows by the Guomindang Central Executive Committee:

> The hardships of the workers, peasants, merchants and students, and the suffering of all under the oppressive imperialists and warlords; the peace and unification of China called for by Sun Yat-sen; the gathering of the National Assembly ruined by Duan Qirui—all demand the elimination of Wu Peifu and completion of national unification.[8]

The obvious omission of Zhang Zuolin's name was presumably an invitation to that wily general to attack his erstwhile enemy from the north while the Guomindang advanced from the south. The Communists under Chen Duxiu were not happy over the timing of the Northern Expedition. Chen declared that the key goal should be to consolidate Guangdong itself against the "ruination from the force of the anti-red armies."[9] But it was impossible to reduce Chiang's forward momentum, and on Comintern advice the Communists muted these criticisms and actively participated in the campaign.

Profiting from dissension among the four warlord generals who controlled Hunan, the National Revolutionary Army—elements of which were already positioned on the Hunan border for the defensive reasons mentioned by Chen Duxiu—moved swiftly to the offensive. Fording the two rivers that could have been used as a defensive line by the Hunan generals, Chiang's troops marched straight for Changsha. The Hunan armies abandoned the city, which the Guomindang force occupied on July 11. Despite the floods, cholera, and transportation problems that hampered its progress, the National Revolutionary Army pressed northward until, in August, it caught up with the retreating Hunan forces along the Miluo River, which flowed into the east side of Dongting Lake.

With new troops drawn to the ranks of the Guomindang force from Guizhou warlords impressed by the army's success, Chiang and Blyukher—the Russian now recovered from illnesses that had kept him on the sidelines—decided on a bold strike across the river before Wu Peifu could send heavy reinforcements south to bolster his Hunan allies. In Chiang's words to his generals, the battle would decide "whether or not the Chinese nation and race can restore their freedom and independence."[10] Between August 17 and August 22 the National Revolutionary Army brought off the gamble. Cutting across the Miluo River in two places, they severed the Yuezhou garrison's rail links to Wuhan and surrounded the crucial tricity



area. Some Yuezhou troops fled by boat, but others were trapped, and all their supplies and weapons fell into the Nationalists' hands.

In extremely heavy fighting during the last week of August, the Nationalists seized the bridgeheads—heavily fortified with barbed wire and machine guns—that guarded the approaches to Wuhan. General Wu Peifu had now reached the front and tried to rally his men by making an example of those who had lost the bridgeheads. Using the technique proven three and a half years before against the striking railway workers, he publicly beheaded eight of his commanders in the presence of their brother officers. The tactic did not work. In early September the tricities of Wuhan, where Wu Peifu planned a determined stand, began to fall to Guomindang forces. Hanyang, with its huge arsenal, fell first, betrayed by its own commander, who joined the Nationalists. Hankou followed, with its prosperous businesses and its large foreign concessions (despite his anti-imperialism, Chiang pledged to protect all foreigners in the city).

While the Wuchang defenders held out behind that city's massive walls, the Nationalists suddenly faced the threat of defeat from the warlord who controlled Jiangxi. His well-armed troops not only won several victories,

but shattered Guomindang and Communist sympathizers by rounding up all known radicals, beheading them, and displaying the severed heads on stakes in the Boyang Lake cities of Jiujiang and Nanchang. To be considered "radical" it was enough for either male or female students to have cut their hair short in what was considered the Russian style. But these acts of terror backfired. The Wuchang commander, his city full of civilians near starvation, opened the city gates on October 10; while some Nationalist troops occupied the city, others pressed the counterattack back into Jiangxi. Fifteen years to the day after the original Wuhan mutinies, the tricity area had ousted its reactionary overlords and welcomed once again the forces of an unpredictable revolution.

Shanghai Spring

In late 1926, the Guomindang and the Communists began to consolidate their hold over Wuhan, and Chiang Kai-shek shifted his attention to the Jiangxi campaign. The fighting was heavy, with key cities lost and taken several times. By mid-November, however, at a cost of 15,000 casualties, the National Revolutinary Army had firm control over both Jiujiang on the Yangzi, and Nanchang, the key road and rail junction on the west of Boyang Lake. Here Chiang made his new base, joined by several members of the Guomindang Executive Committee. Other senior Guomindang leaders, however, especially the Communists and those sympathetic to the Left, settled in Wuhan, where antiforeign agitation and rapid gains in the urban labor movement offered the promise of social revolution.

The original Guomindang strategy for the Northern Expedition had called for three forward military thrusts, the last up the east coast. This offensive also proceeded successfully, partly through careful negotiations that induced various militarists to defect to the Nationalist side, and partly through military action. The coastal advance of the Nationalist armies was greatly aided by the defection to their side of key naval units that were able to cut off the enemies' retreat. Despite heavy fighting, in mid-December 1926 the troops of the National Revolutionary Army entered the Fujian capital of Fuzhou. The Nationalists now controlled seven provinces: Guangdong, their original base; Hunan, Hubei, Jiangxi, and Fujian, by conquest; and Guangxi and Guizhou, by negotiated agreements. The total population of these provinces was around 170 million. The world's view of these developments took dramatic shape when the British Foreign Office began to consider extending diplomatic recognition to the Guomindang government, and the British minister to China visited Wuhan in mid-December to hold talks with the Nationalist foreign minister. Until this moment the British had appeared to be firmly committed to Wu Peifu.

These victories brought the debate over the next phase of Guomindang strategy to a head. Chiang Kai-shek, at his Nanchang base, had decided on a drive to Shanghai by two routes—one east down the Yangzi, one northeast through Zhejiang—so that he could seize the industrial and agricultural heartland of China. The Guomindang leaders in Wuhan, agreeing with Borodin, who was ensconced there, supported instead a northern drive up the Wuhan-Peking railway. Their forces could then effect a junction with several northern warlords believed to be sympathetic to their cause, followed by a concerted assault on Peking and the final rout of Generals Wu Peifu and Zhang Zuolin. Tense arguments took place in January between the rivals, represented by the Provisional Joint Council in Wuhan and the Provisional Central Political Council in Nanchang. Chiang traveled to Wuhan on January 11, 1927, to state his case; instead he was not only rebuffed, but publicly insulted by Borodin and other leftists. He returned, angry, to Nanchang.

The spring of 1927 was henceforth to be dominated by the fate of Shanghai, but the outcome depended on the interconnections among a considerable number of factors: the reactions of various northern warlords to events in south China; the strength of the local labor movement; the nature of the antilabor forces in the city; the attitudes and actions of the foreign community and troops in the concessions; the position of the Guomindang leaders in Wuhan; and the long-range strategy for CCP action decided on by Stalin and relayed through the Comintern.

The speed of the Guomindang advance from Canton to the Yangzi gave pause to a number of the northern warlords. They had hitherto been engaged in complex maneuverings and alliances in the huge area stretching from Gansu province in the west, through Shaanxi and Hebei, and into Shandong and southern Manchuria. They had never formulated a common strategy or reached a binding agreement on how to carve up the territory, but all of them saw the Guomindang as a radical, even revolutionary, force, and they had to decide how to respond should the Guomindang seek to advance farther north. In the event, they remained divided. One of the three most powerful northern generals, Feng Yuxiang, decided after visiting Moscow to join the Guomindang and affirm his belief in its basic principles. From his base in Shaanxi, he pushed steadily into Henan province. Wu Peifu, smarting from the loss of Wuhan and the southern terminus of his railway empire, tried to shore up a new base at the railway-junction city of Zhengzhou, but he had been fatally weakened.

Zhang Zuolin, the Manchurian warlord who currently controlled Peking,

had begun to show a grandiose side, having yellow earth—symbolic of an emperor's prestige—strewn across the roads he traversed, and offering sacrifices to Confucius in person. But his Peking government was ineffective, given to extravagant parties and lavish ceremonial affairs ordered by Zhang, who concentrated most of his own efforts on the game of mah-jongg.* Most importantly, although he had mobilized an army of 150,000 to march south to the Yangzi in late November 1926 to stem the advancing Guomindang armies, he suddenly countermanded the order.

It is possible that Chiang Kai-shek had negotiated secretly both with Zhang and the Japanese to protect his flanks as he attacked Shanghai. In any case, the Wuhan Communists attacked Chiang for his "crimes" in this regard, and there is no doubt that Zhang Zuolin had become a fanatical antileftist: his Peking headquarters were festooned with the slogan "Absolutely Destroy Communism."[11] In early April 1927, Zhang ordered his troops to raid the Russian embassy in Peking, and arrested all the Chinese who had sought shelter there. Among them was Li Dazhao, the former librarian and cofounder of the CCP. Zhang had Li Dazhao hanged along with nineteen of Li's arrested companions.

Despite these losses in the north, the labor movement all over central and southern China had been making headway since the National Revolutionary Army's successes and the formation of a General Labor Union to coordinate workers' actions throughout China. By late 1926 seventy-three unions were listed for Wuhan, with a membership of 82,000, and hundreds of thousands of workers were organized in Shanghai, despite the hostility toward them of the local warlord there. In February 1927 the Shanghai labor leaders, with the help of organizers from the General Labor Union, called a general strike in support of the National Revolutionary Army columns that had just captured Hangzhou to the south. The strikers managed to bring Shanghai to a standstill for two days, closing docks, municipal services, cotton mills, silk-reeling factories, public transport, and commercial centers. The strike was broken by warlord forces, who beheaded 20 strikers, arrested 300 strike leaders, and disrupted all workers' gatherings.

Worker morale and political concern nevertheless remained extremely high, bolstered by the lingering effects of the May Thirtieth Incident of 1925 and by the persistent efforts of Shanghai-based CCP leaders such as Zhou Enlai and Li Lisan. The General Labor Union continued with plans for a second major strike, organizing 5,000 pickets, hundreds of whom were armed. In the huge metropolis of Shanghai, organized workers were a volatile force, possibly capable of setting up a revolutionary workers' government, an urban soviet that might then trigger similar uprisings and the formation of soviets elsewhere, as had happened during the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia.

*A complex Chinese game played with small decorated tiles, often for high stakes.

But there were plenty of people in the city anxious to defuse the strength of the labor movement. A loose confederation of factory owners and financiers, who had profited most from the dramatic expansion of the city as an industrial center and international port, stood to lose heavily if the waves of strikes continued. Some of these financial leaders were linked to the world of secret-society organizations such as the Green Gang *(Qingbang)*, which had grown rich by controlling prostitution, gambling rackets, and opium distribution. For a price, Green Gang leaders could assemble squads to break up unions and labor meetings, and even kill recalcitrant workers. Many Green Gang leaders were also successful businessmen with established positions in the community, and some had strong links with the Guomindang, or had known Chiang Kai-shek in his Shanghai days.

At the end of 1926 the head of the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce visited Chiang Kai-shek at his Nanchang headquarters and offered the chamber's financial support. In other secret meetings, Chiang's intermediaries negotiated successfully with the heads of the powerful Bank of China in the city. They also held discussions with the chief of detectives in the French Concession—a major underworld figure in close contact with the Green Gang—presumably concerning the suppression of labor agitation at a later date.

Since many wealthy Chinese businessmen lived in comfortable homes with gardens in the beautifully laid-out Shanghai foreign concessions, they had social contact with the foreigners and sometimes shared their business interests. The foreigners, few of whom spoke Chinese or knew or cared much about the details of the city's life, would often not be aware of the political or secret-society contacts of their Chinese acquaintances. Their main interest was to make sure that a reliable source of labor was available to work in their factories and on the docks, and that the social amenities revolving around their lavish clubs and the racecourse were not disturbed. They also wished to protect their investments—now approaching the $1 billion mark—from extremes of Chinese nationalist feeling that might lead to destruction of property or even confiscation.

But by early 1927 the foreign community in China was nervous. In January, fired up by the Communist party and Borodin, Chinese crowds had burst through barricades into the foreign-concession area of Hankou, causing considerable property damage and leading to the evacuation of all foreign women and children downriver to Shanghai; the men congregated in buildings near the shore, ready for swift escape. Similar disturbances took

place in Jiujiang the same month. And most dangerously, in March 1927, Nationalist troops who had seized Nanjing from the retreating northern warlord armies looted the British, Japanese, and American consulates, killing several foreigners from those three nations as well as from France and Italy. American destroyers and a British cruiser in return shelled the area around the Standard Oil Company headquarters to allow an evacuation route for the foreign nationals, leading to several Chinese deaths. The British had shown, in the May Thirtieth Incident of 1925, that they would fire on threatening crowds; now they and the Americans had shown that they would shell a Chinese city. What they, the French, or especially the Japanese might do in the face of armed Guomindang opposition was unclear. There were by this time around 22,000 foreign troops and police in Shanghai, and 42 foreign warships at anchor, backed by an additional 129 warships in other Chinese waters.

The Guomindang leaders in Wuhan were meanwhile seeking to strengthen their own position politically and economically. The regular troops they controlled were fewer in number than those under Chiang Kai-shek's command, and they could hardly afford to alienate Chiang so completely that he became an open rival. They focused mainly on radical social reforms in the Wuhan area, on pursuing an alliance with General Feng Yuxiang that might make possible further advances northward from Wuhan, and on public denigrations of Chiang Kai-shek for his attacks against labor organizations in Jiangxi, where he had been systematically suppressing the branches of the General Labor Union.

For Stalin, the stakes in the Chinese conflict had assumed a particular intensity. The reasons for this had more to do with Soviet politics than with events in China itself, for by early 1927 Stalin was locked in a bitter battle for power with Leon Trotsky. This battle was being fought in the ideological and bureaucratic arena rather than with troops, and the interpretation and direction given to the Chinese revolution were central to each man's arguments. Stalin insisted that the leadership provided by Chiang Kai-shek and his troops was critical in the "bourgeois-democratic" phase of the Chinese revolution. The CCP, by this reasoning, must "continue building up a four-class alliance of workers, peasants, intellectuals, and urban petty bourgeoisie within the Guomindang" in order to crush the feudal warlords and the foreign imperialists.

In remarks to the seventh plenum of the Comintern in November 1926, Stalin reiterated the anti-imperialist nature of this struggle, and emphasized that the CCP must therefore restrain the peasant movement until Shanghai was taken so as not to alienate Guomindang generals. Yet in clear contradiction to this statement, Stalin denounced Trotsky's suspicion of both the Guomindang and the existing peasant associations, and Trotsky's support for the swift formation of urban workers' soviets in China, as "skipping over the revolutionary-democratic stage of the movement" and as "forgetting the most important and decisive factor of all—the peasantry."[12] In practical terms this meant that the CCP leaders in China must continue to cooperate with Chiang and the Guomindang.

On March 21, 1927, the General Labor Union in Shanghai, under CCP direction, launched a general strike and an armed insurrection against the warlords and in support of the approaching Guomindang forces. Some 600,000 workers were involved, and again the city came to a standstill. Power and telephone lines were cut, police stations seized, and railway stations occupied, often after heavy fighting. There were strict orders not to harm foreigners, which the insurrectionists obeyed. The next day the first division of Nationalist troops entered the city, and on March 27 the General Labor Union, now with no need for concealment, held a public inauguration of its new headquarters in a former guild hall, with 1,000 delegates representing 300 union branches. In all, according to their released figures, there were now 499 unions in the city, representing 821,282 workers. There was also a workers' militia of 2,700 men, well armed with weapons and ammunition seized from the city's police stations and military depots.

Chiang Kai-shek himself entered the city at the end of March. He issued reassuring statements to the foreign community and praised the unions for their constructive achievements. While the CCP kept the union membership conciliatory and muted, pressed them to disarm, and withdrew their demands that the foreign concessions be returned to China, Chiang held meetings with wealthy Shanghai industrialists, centrist Guomindang figures like Wang Jingwei and former Peking University president Cai Yuanpei, and leading Green Gang and underworld figures. These Green Gang leaders formed a so-called Society for Common Progress, headquartered at the house of the chief of detectives in the French Concession. This was a front organization under cover of which a force of around 1,000 armed men was built up. At the same time, Chiang arranged for generous loans from Shanghai bankers, and transferred out of the city those army units known to be sympathetic to the workers.

At 4:00 A.M. on April 12, the men of the Society for Common Progress, heavily armed but dressed in civilian clothes of blue cloth with white arm bands, launched a series of attacks against the headquarters of all the city's large unions. These paramilitary anti-union groups operated with the knowledge (and at times the assistance) of the foreign-concession authorities, and as the fighting wore on through the day they were often assisted by troops from the National Revolutionary Army. Many union members

were killed, hundreds arrested, and the pickets disarmed. When Shanghai townspeople, workers, and students staged a protest rally the next day, they were fired on by Guomindang troops with machine guns and almost 100 were killed. Arrests and executions continued over the next several weeks, the General Labor Union organizations were declared illegal, and all strike activity in the city ceased. The Shanghai spring was over.

Wuhan Summer, Canton Winter

The news of the April 1927 events in Shanghai caused anguished self-examination in Wuhan. Borodin and Chen Duxiu had the difficult task of fitting the killings of Chinese workers into some kind of convincing ideological scheme. To help them, they had only Stalin's late April analysis of the situation. In this, the Russian leader declared that it had been his goal, ever since March 1926, to prevent Chiang Kai-shek from driving the Communists out of the Guomindang; at the same time, he had worked to propagate "the withdrawal or the expulsion of the Rightists from the Guomindang." In Shanghai, Chiang had shown his true colors: he had emerged as a representative of the "national bourgeoisie" and defied the Guomindang by forming his own government in Nanjing (on April 18, 1927). Thus, Stalin concluded, the events of 1927 "fully and entirely proved the correctness of this line."[13]

This meant that the CCP now had to work closely with the Wuhan faction of the Guomindang, which was declared by Stalin and his advisers to be the "Left" or "revolutionary" Guomindang, the true inheritor of the Chinese revolution. Stalin hoped that these Guomindang members would lead the "masses of farmers and peasants" to crush the militarists, gentry, and "feudal landowners." Although with hindsight this hope seems absurd, many of the non-Communist Guomindang leaders in Wuhan did have fairly radical political views, and one can certainly say that they were to the left of Chiang Kai-shek or Hu Hanmin. The most influential of these was Wang Jingwei, who had won fame as a young polemicist and revolutionary in the late Qing, and served Sun Yat-sen loyally in Japan and Canton. It was Wang who had attended Sun's death, and who had received the leader's final advice and instructions. As chairman of the government in Canton, he had sided with the Communists on many points, and had felt it wise to travel to France with his family after Chiang's *Zhongshan* gunboat coup of March 20, 1926. Wang had returned to China in April 1927 and issued a joint statement with Chen Duxiu reaffirming ties between the CCP and the Guomindang.

With Wang in Wuhan were such men as Sun Fo, Sun Yat-sen's son by his first marriage (he had no children from his second marriage to Soong Qingling). Sun Fo had political ambitions and a flair for city government. A graduate of the University of California, he had risen through the Guomindang ranks to become mayor of Canton and a member of the Central Executive Committee. Eugene Chen, a Trinidad-born Chinese whose father had originally fled to the West Indies after being implicated in the Taiping rebellion, was also a powerful force in Wuhan. He had been a confidant of Sun Yat-sen, served as foreign minister for the Canton regime, and had successfully negotiated the takeover of the Hankou and Jiujiang concessions from the British. And Sun Yat-sen's widow, Soong Qingling, who had dramatically flown by plane to Wuhan from Nanchang to show where her political loyalties lay, had not only the prestige of her prior relationship with Sun Yat-sen, but also natural intelligence, fluency in English, and a highly developed social conscience, all of which made her influential in Guomindang party discussions.

The main goal for the Wuhan-based Guomindang leaders continued to be the establishment of a firm political and economic base. They were not the only power brokers in Wuhan, let alone in Hubei and Hunan, and they had to deal with strong local warlords—nominally bound in alliances with the Guomindang—as well as with the industrialists and wealthy landlords of the region. In an attempt to win greater support for their regime, Wuhan's Guomindang government had also tried to take over the Japanese Concession area in Hankou. But the effort had been repulsed by machine-gun fire, and a mile-long line of foreign warships were now anchored in the Yangzi, ready to protect foreign property. The unrest in the city led to the closing of most foreign shops and factories, throwing thousands of people out of work. Needing 15 million yuan a month to run its offices and feed its 70,000 troops, who were involved in heavy fighting in north China, the Wuhan government could raise only a fraction of that sum and was reduced to printing paper money, which banks finally refused to accept.

The Communists, had they been given a free hand, might have been able to foment real revolution in the countryside. In late 1926 and early 1927 there had been notable signs of peasant unrest in China. In some areas the peasants had seized the land for themselves, formed "poor peasants associations" to run their communities, and publicly paraded, humiliated, and in many cases killed the more hated of the local landlords. Peng Pai had had dramatic success in forming radical peasant associations near Canton, until they were counterattacked by landlord forces. Mao Zedong, who had risen while in Canton to become director of the Guomindang's Peasant Movement Training Institute, also had several opportunities in 1925 and 1926 to

propagandize CCP views in the Hunan countryside, especially around Changsha. In February 1927, after the Northern Expedition had passed through the region, he took the time to study what was happening and wrote an excited report for a local CCP journal.

Mao was particularly impressed by the power of the poor peasants and their political consciousness. "They raise their rough, blackened hands and lay them on the heads of the gentry," he wrote. "They alone are the deadliest enemies of the local bullies and evil gentry and attack their strongholds without the slightest hesitation; they alone are able to carry out the work of destruction." The CCP, he noted, could take the initiative with these peasant stalwarts if it chose: "To march at their head and lead them? To follow in the rear, gesticulating at them and criticizing them? To face them as opponents? Every Chinese is free to choose among the three." But Mao implied that it would be folly to ignore this immense potential force. If one assessed the 1926–1927 "democratic revolution" on a ten-point scale, he observed, then the "urban dwellers and the military rate only three points, while the remaining seven points should go to the peasants in their rural revolution."[14]

But Mao's report was not practical in the context of Wuhan's political choices, and it did not fit the Comintern line of continued alliance with the petty bourgeoisie. Accordingly the Chinese Communists were told to dampen peasant ardor in order not to alienate the Guomindang and its remaining influential supporters, many of whom were landlords. Long, complex debates were held by CCP and Guomindang leaders in Wuhan, as they tried to decide on theoretical grounds what percentage of whose land should be confiscated. In these formal debates Mao Zedong did not take the dramatic stand for poor peasants' rights that one might have expected from his February Hunan report. He did, however, suggest that in Hunan, at least, it was becoming appropriate to shift strategy from "political" confiscation of land—aimed at enemies of the Wuhan regime—to "economic" confiscation, in which the state would take over all land that an individual did not cultivate himself, and redistribute it to the landless.

The final statement of the Wuhan-based Central Land Committee, issued in early May 1927, was the fruit of compromises among Wang Jingwei, Borodin, Chen Duxiu, Mao, and others. It proposed the establishment of self-government institutions at the local level to handle land redistribution problems, the guarantee of the land holdings of soldiers in the active pro-Guomindang forces, and—for soldiers with no such holdings—the promise of land once the war was won. The maximum size of a holding was to be set at 50 *mou* (each *mou* being one-sixth of an acre) of good land or 100 *mou* of poorer land. All those with larger holdings, unless they were revolutionary soldiers, would have the surplus confiscated.

Similar points were thrashed out in meetings of the CCP fifth congress, held in Wuhan a few days later, as Borodin, Voitinsky (who had narrowly escaped from the April massacre in Shanghai), M. N. Roy (a young Indian Communist recently elected to the Comintern presidium and dispatched to China by Stalin), and Chen Duxiu tried to decide what levels of peasant revolution to encourage. Roy and Borodin disagreed on how far or fast to go, and Stalin had insisted that in any case the land of pro-Guomindang militarists should be left alone, lest those militarists turn against the Guomindang and wreck the current revolutionary upsurge. Behind these debates lurked the continuing tensions in Moscow. "The bloc of Hankou [Wuhan] Leaders is not yet a revolutionary government," Trotsky protested to the Comintern leaders that same month. "To create and spread any illusions on this score means to condemn the revolution to death. Only the workers', peasants', petty bourgeois', and soldiers' Soviets can serve as the basis for the revolutionary government." Angry at the manipulation of China from Moscow, Trotsky added: "The Chinese revolution cannot be stuffed into a bottle and sealed from above with a signet."[15] But Stalin was adamant, objecting that "to organize the soviets of workers' and peasants' deputies now, let us say on the territory of the Wuhan government, would mean to create a dyarchy, to launch a struggle to overthrow the Guomindang left and form a new soviet authority in China."[16]

As it happened, local military leaders solved these knotty theoretical problems for the leftists. On May 18, 1927, the Guomindang-allied general who controlled the Changsha-Wuhan stretch of railroad mutinied and marched on Wuhan, cutting a swathe of destruction among the members of the peasant associations he encountered. Although he was defeated, after heavy fighting, by Communist and Guomindang troops, his defection freed others to do the same. On May 21 the garrison general in Changsha raided the major leftist organizations there, ransacking their files, and arresting and killing nearly a hundred students and peasant leaders. Allegedly acting to forestall an armed attack on the city by the mobilized peasant associations, he ordered his men into the countryside to round up and kill the peasant forces. Thousands were slaughtered, often with atrocious cruelty, as the recently humiliated landowners—many of whom had seen their own relatives killed not long before—joined with army troops and members of local secret societies to exact vengeance on the peasant expropriators.

Guomindang leaders in Wuhan responded by blaming Communist "excesses" for the disaster. Wang Jingwei claimed that the military acted

thus because they had been "backed into such a blind alley." Sun Fo argued it was the CCP's fault for "ranting and raving" about the possibility of a mass rural uprising.[17] When a peasant army did begin to form in order to attempt a counterattack against the militarists in Changsha, the gathering force was deflected by a cable from the Wuhan CCP asking it "to be patient and wait for the government officials in order to avoid further friction."[18] The "government officials" never arrived, and the peasant troops either disbanded or were killed.

The Wuhan Guomindang leaders seemed to acquiesce in this slaughter and to concentrate on strengthening their ties to those with military power. Still, Stalin responded to Trotsky's bitter mockery by proposing to deepen the CCP-Guomindang alliance, instead of proposing to abandon it and put new life into the peasant movement, so recently suppressed. He sent the Comintern agents Roy and Borodin a short cable, spelling out the need for the CCP to shift the Guomindang in a leftward direction while pretending to be firm backers of it. "Without an agrarian revolution victory is impossible," ran Stalin's message, received in Wuhan on June 1. "We are decidedly in favor of the land actually being seized by the masses from below." Since so many Guomindang leaders were "vacillating and compromising," large numbers of workers and peasants must be inducted into the party; "their bold voice will stiffen the backs of the old leaders or throw them into the discard." As if that were not enough, the CCP was also to mobilize 20,000 Communists and 50,000 "revolutionary workers and peasants" under student commanders into a "reliable army."[19]

Apparently thinking that this telegram would convince the Guomindang that the CCP was still a power to be reckoned with, and perhaps to steal a march on Borodin, M. N. Roy showed it to Wang Jingwei, Eugene Chen, and Soong Qingling. Wang, especially alarmed and startled, intensified his moves to dampen local revolution and curb CCP power, and began a series of negotiations to see if he could heal the rift with Chiang Kai-shek. In talks with General Feng Yuxiang, who now held a power broker's role in north China, Wang agreed to curb CCP power further in exchange for Feng's assistance. Later that month Feng also reached agreement with Chiang Kai-shek. Although the CCP issued a contrite statement promising to restrain labor and peasant activities even further, the Comintern agents could see the writing on the wall, and both Roy and Borodin began the long trek back by car and truck across the Gobi Desert to the Soviet Union. "The revolution extends to the Yangzi," said Borodin in a farewell interview with a foreign journalist; "if a diver were sent down to the bottom of this yellow stream he would rise again with an armful of shattered hopes."[20]

Stalin's response to these setbacks was similar to what it had been in

April after the Shanghai catastrophe: he declared that the correctness of the Comintern line had once again been proven, but that this time it was the "left-Guomindang" that had been exposed for the petty-bourgeois nationalists they always had been, and that it was now time for the CCP to deepen the revolution in the countryside in alliance with the "really revolutionary members of the Guomindang." Chen Duxiu was dismissed from his post as secretary-general of the CCP for having followed "an opportunistic policy of betrayal."[21] He was replaced by Qu Qiubai, the twenty-eight-year-old former Russian-language student who had lived in Moscow in the early 1920s. So shaky was the Chinese Communist position—even in the Wuhan area—that their Central Committee met in the French Concession of Hankou, while Qu and the other CCP leaders lived in the Japanese area.

Among those now assigned the task of stirring up revolution in the countryside was Mao Zedong, whose Hunan report had gained little notice and who had spent the summer—in obedience to Comintern orders—making sure that the militarists' lands were not expropriated. As a loyal party member he did his best to re-arouse the peasants who had seen many of their friends and families killed, their homes ransacked, and their crops destroyed. By early September, Mao had managed to recruit an army of around 2,000 in the countryside and launched attacks on several small towns near Changsha. But his army, composed of some peasants along with disgruntled miners and Guomindang deserters, was a pale echo of the dedicated force of 100,000 armed peasants he had hoped to raise for these "Autumn Harvest Uprisings," and they were swiftly suppressed by local peacekeeping forces, with considerable losses.

More ambitious, and initially more successful, was a major insurrection in Chiang Kai-shek's former Jiangxi base of Nanchang. Here, in early August, close to 20,000 troops led by Communist generals—one of whom had kept his Communist ties secret for several years awaiting just such an opportunity—seized the city and expropriated the banks "under the banner of the Guomindang left." But they were defeated by a neighboring general whom they had just optimistically invited onto their Revolutionary Committee. Retreating southward, they briefly captured Shantou, the prosperous coastal city that had been Chen Jiongming's base in his battles with Sun Yat-sen. Driven from there, the remnants of the Communist force settled in the Haifeng area, where Peng Pai had managed to hold onto his radical rural soviet despite attacks from the local landlords and their backers in Canton.

The melancholy roster of setbacks for the CCP continued into December. That month, the fifteenth congress of the Russian Communist party was meeting in Moscow, and Stalin wanted a definitive victory in China to prove the superiority of his planning over the criticisms of Trotsky, whom

he was hoping to crush once and for all. The Comintern passed the orders to the new CCP head, Qu Qiubai, that there must be an insurrection. Qu obediently directed the CCP to stage an uprising in the former revolutionary seedbed of Canton, where power was now held by the unlikely combination of the general who had suppressed the Nanchang mutiny and Wang Jingwei, who had retreated there from Wuhan. At dawn on December 11, 1927, Communist troops and Canton workers seized the police stations, the barracks, and the post and telegraph offices, and announced that authority in the city was now vested in a "Soviet of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies," just as Stalin and Qu had demanded.

But the organizers of this "Canton commune" were hopelessly outnumbered and outgunned by anti-Communist troops, who soon rallied. The commune lasted two days. Members of the Russian consulate who had let their building be used as a base for the insurrection were shot, as were all arrested workers and Communists who had joined in the "soviets." Many workers could be identified as radicals by the red marks left around their necks by the hastily dyed kerchiefs they had worn in their days of triumph. Finding that too much expensive ammunition was being wasted in executions, the local restorers of order had the rebels tied together in groups of ten or twelve, loaded onto boats, and pushed into the waters of the river below the city.

After an initial inclination to call this disaster a victory, Stalin and the Comintern accepted it as a serious blow to the CCP, but they also blamed the CCP for having caused it. The CCP, they charged, had not organized strikes properly, had overrelied on non-Communist workers, had not done adequate work among the peasants, and had not concentrated enough on subversion in the enemy armies. They must look at their strategy more carefully, they were told. As to the CCP itself, "its cadres, its periphery and its center" must all be strengthened. "To *play* with insurrections," they were chided, "instead of organizing a mass uprising of the workers and peasants, is a sure way of losing the revolution."[22]

CHAPTER 15

Experiments in Government

THE POWER BASE OF CHIANG KAI-SHEK

The Chinese bankers and industrialists of Shanghai would have been astonished had they known of Stalin's contention that Chiang Kai-shek had shown his true colors by allying with the forces of the national bourgeoisie. For in the months after his April 1927 coup, Chiang launched a reign of terror against the wealthiest inhabitants of the city. Initially he believed that this was the only way he could raise the millions of dollars he needed per month to pay his troops and maintain the momentum of the Northern Expedition. Chiang pressed the chairman of the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce to provide the bulk of a $10 million loan, and confiscated the man's property when he refused, driving him into exile. Businessmen were coerced into buying 30 million yuan of short-term government bonds, the bigger corporations each being assigned quotas of 500,000 yuan or more. Children of industrialists were arrested as "counterrevolutionaries" or as "Communists" and released only after their fathers gave "donations" to the Guomindang—670,000 yuan in the case of one cotton-mill owner, 200,000 in the case of a wealthy indigo merchant.

In June 1927, responding angrily to new Japanese pressures in Shandong, Chiang sponsored a League for the Rupture of Economic Relations with Japan and began to arrest and fine merchants for violating his boycott attempt. Fines as large as 150,000 yuan each were levied in the cases of one piece-goods dealer and one sugar merchant. Green Gang agents, moving at will through the Chinese city and the foreign concession areas, aided by thousands of beggars acting as spotters, made these arrests and acts of extortion

possible. Green Gang leaders also organized a Labor Alliance, run by their own personnel, to replace the former Communist-dominated labor unions. And through the Guomindang's newly created Opium Suppression Bureau, the racketeers and the Guomindang in fact divided up the profits from the sale of the drug and from the "registration fees" paid by known addicts. At the same time, the Guomindang as a political party was actively encouraging the formation of ideologically nationalistic merchant associations—often opposed to the chamber of commerce—which were especially strident in the anti-Japanese boycott and strongly against the attempts of foreigners to collect real-estate taxes from those with businesses in the foreign-concession areas.

The influx of money was still not enough, and the Northern Expedition inevitably suffered from the effects of the split between Wuhan and Chiang's Nanjing regime. In July, Chiang's troops were badly defeated by warlord forces at the battle for the strategic rail junction of Xuzhou, and this, combined with the persistent personal hostility of Wuhan leaders and perhaps his own personal exhaustion, prompted Chiang to relinquish his posts in August. Ironically, in view of the boycott of Japanese goods for which he had just pushed so vigorously, he traveled to Japan, the purpose of his trip being matrimonial rather than political. For Charlie Soong's widow was living in Japan, and after protracted conversations Chiang finally received her permission to marry her youngest daughter, Soong Meiling, a Wellesley College graduate of 1917, YWCA activist, and member of the Shanghai Municipal Council's child labor committee. Since Meiling's two elder sisters were respectively Sun Yat-sen's widow and the wife of the financier H. H. Kong, Chiang had now secured himself important new connections.

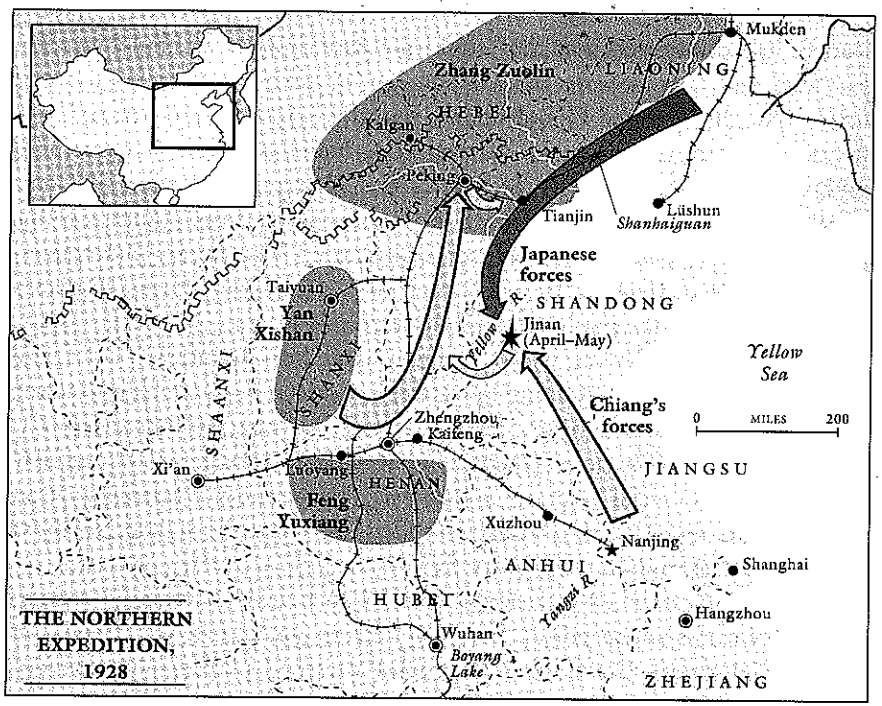
The Chiang-Soong wedding, celebrated in Shanghai in December 1927, was an event that encapsulated many of the crosscurrents roiling Chinese society. One traditional aspect of the event was that Chiang was still married to his first wife; their eldest son, by odd coincidence, was currently studying in Moscow. Although the Soongs were a Christian family, they apparently agreed to the bigamous marriage because Chiang promised "to study Christianity." In Shanghai, two ceremonies were performed. One, a Christian ceremony in the Soong home, was officiated by David Yui, a specialist in education who had received a Harvard University graduate degree in 1910, and then served as secretary to Vice-President Li Yuanhong before rising to be the highly successful general secretary of the YMCA in China. The Chinese ceremony was held in the grand ballroom of the Majestic Hotel, presided over by Cai Yuanpei, the scholarly anti-Qing radical and former president of Peking University, now minister of education for the Guomindang.

In the course of Chiang's brief visit to Japan, the other Guomindang leaders had discovered that they could not raise money without him. Sun Fo, who had moved from the Wuhan regime to Nanjing as minister of finance for the reunited Guomindang, found it impossible to persuade the financial community to make further huge loans, and had to be content with small sums grudgingly provided. The Shanghai Chamber of Commerce became independent again, bonds were not paid up, opium revenue dropped to zero, and a plan to get rents forwarded from the foreign-concession areas failed. Unpaid, troops barracked in Shanghai refused to march north to continue the battle with Zhang Zuolin's forces.

In January 1928 Chiang was once again named commander in chief, and also a member of the standing committee of the nine-man Guomindang Central Executive Committee. He brought in his new brother-in-law, T. V. Soong, to run the government's finances. By a mixture of strong-arm methods and financial acumen, Soong was able, without a formal government budget, to get Chiang what he needed to resume the stalled Northern Expedition: 1.6 million yuan every five days.

Now Chiang worked to reactivate an alliance with the two most powerful warlords sympathetic to his reunification goals: one was Feng Yuxiang, the formerly Soviet-backed general who had played such a pivotal role in the 1927 negotiations and who was now firmly based in Henan, where he had defeated Wu Peifu; the other was the independent warlord ruler of Shanxi province, Yan Xishan. The leading Guangxi generals, who had backed the Northern Expedition from its early days and played a critical role in the capture and purging of Shanghai, were now on campaign in Hunan and not disposed to shift their forces to the north.

Heavy fighting began in late March 1928, with the Peking base of the Manchurian warlord Zhang Zuolin as Chiang's ultimate goal. Chiang's troops entered Jinan in Shandong province on April 30, 1928, and it seemed that final victory would soon be his. But at this point a severe setback to the renewed northern expeditionary drive occurred. The Japanese had 2,000 civilians residing in Jinan, and remembering how their concessions had been attacked by Guomindang troops in Hankou and Nanjing, the Japanese cabinet decided to send 5,000 regular army troops to Shandong to protect their nationals until the campaign was over. Five hundred of these troops were already in position as the Nationalists entered the city. When Chiang arrived in person and asked the Japanese to withdraw, it seemed at first that they would. But on May 3 fighting broke out, and the skirmish grew into a devastating clash in which appalling atrocities, including castration and blinding of helpless prisoners, were committed by both sides. The Japanese ordered up reinforcements, and on May 11 the Chinese troops



were driven from the city. Appealing to the League of Nations, Chiang chose to duck any further conflict and instead rerouted his troops across the Yellow River west of the city and regrouped on the north bank. But a bitter sense of the hostility between Chinese and Japanese lingered after the confrontation.

The plans designed by Chiang and Feng Yuxiang called for an immediate joint attack on Tianjin to cut the railway that offered an escape route to the Shanhaiguan pass for Zhang Zuolin's Manchurian troops, stationed in Peking. But Tianjin was the site of five key foreign concessions with their accompanying investments, and the foreigners wanted no trouble there. Accordingly the Japanese took the lead in assuring Zhang Zuolin that if he abandoned Peking and retreated peacefully back to Manchuria, they would prevent the southern Guomindang armies from passing beyond the Great Wall or through the Shanhaiguan pass. After frantic attempts to think up other options, Zhang Zuolin gave in and on June 2 left Peking with his staff in a luxury railcar.

As he approached Mukden on the morning of June 4, a bomb exploded, wrecking the train and killing Zhang. The assassination was carried out by Japanese officers and engineers garrisoned in southern Manchuria who disagreed with the more measured policy of the government in Tokyo. Their goal was to provoke a general crisis that would lead to widespread mobilization and an extension of Japan's northeast China power base. Instead the Shanxi general Yan Xishan occupied Peking, as planned by the Guomindang, while one of his subordinates peacefully occupied Tianjin. The Guomindang then pressed for an agreement with Zhang Xueliang, who succeeded to his murdered father's rule in Manchuria. While yielding to Japanese demands that he maintain the "autonomy" of Manchuria, Zhang also accepted an appointment to the State Council of the new National government formally proclaimed at Nanjing on October 10. At the end of 1928 he pledged allegiance to the National government and raised the Nationalist flag. Sun Yat-sen's dream seemed to have been realized after all, and the Guomindang flag, with its white sun on a blue and red ground, flew from Canton to Mukden.

The Guomindang's task was now to establish a political and economic structure that would consolidate this achievement. Since Sun Yat-sen had already laid down guidelines for the period of "tutelage" that would follow the military consolidation of the nation, there was little need for Chiang to worry about the trappings of democracy. Chiang's own title, conferred on him in October 1928, was chairman of the State Council, the ruling body of sixteen that constituted the top level of government. Five of the council-members served as heads, respectively, of the five main yuan* (bureaus) among which government tasks were divided: the Executive, Legislative, Control, Judicial, and Examination yuan. These represented the "five-power constitution" propagated by Sun Yat-sen, although establishing them in this hurried way, without a true backing of elective or popular support, ran counter to some of Sun's deepest ideas about the value of the system.

The Executive Yuan was the most important of the five. Its functions included direction of the central ministries, economic planning, general supervision of the military, relations with the provinces, and appointment of local government officials. Under Tan Yankai, its first head until his death in 1930, it had real prestige. Tan had risen steadily since the days when he had headed the Hunan provincial assembly at the end of the Qing, and was a fine administrator. But as the government was then constituted, Tan still had to follow instructions from the State Council.

The Legislative Yuan also had an extensive role as a legitimizing device; the main job of its approximately eighty members was to debate and vote on new legislation. It also voted on proceedings of the Executive Yuan,

*The character for yuan (bureau) is quite different from that for yuan (dollar), but confusingly they are rendered the same in English.

especially as they pertained to budgets and foreign-policy matters. Under its first head, Hu Hanmin, it, too, had some prestige, but its ill-defined tasks and the erratic attendance of its members steadily reduced its power. The duties of the other three yuan, much like those of the former Qing Ministry of Punishments and related bureaus as well as the examination bureaucracy, were to supervise the selection and behavior of civil-service members and the proceedings of the judicial system.

Chiang Kai-shek's own power base remained in Nanjing, which was now officially named the capital of China in place of Peking.* This had been Sun Yat-sen's original goal in 1912, to lessen the power of Yuan Shikai and the northern generals. In Nanjing, Chiang established the Guomindang Central Political Institute and cadre training schools, the members of which would be firm in their personal loyalty to him, just as so many of the Whampoa cadets were. He entrusted the ideological molding of the students to the two Chen brothers, nephews of the same Chen Qimei who in 1911 had helped launch Chiang's career in Shanghai. (Chen Qimei himself had been assassinated in 1916, apparently on orders of Yuan Shikai, whose imperial ambitions Chen had opposed.) The basis of the training was an anti-Communist, anti-imperialist nationalism, into which was injected strong doses of a kind of reinterpreted Confucianism, a Confucianism concentrating on the virtues of order, harmony, discipline, and hierarchy. Since one Chen brother was in charge of the Control Yuan and the other of the so-called Investigation Division (i.e., anti-Communist counterespionage) of the Guomindang, the power at their disposal was enormous.

Regular income for the Guomindang government in 1928 remained as much a problem as it had been for Yuan Shikai. Chiang had financed the later stages of the Northern Expedition in part by ruthless exploitation of the Shanghai Chinese industrialists, but that could not be the basis for a permanent policy. T. V. Soong worked hard to convince others that China must establish a central financial authority; he called for a powerful and independent budget committee that would allocate funds to the different branches of the government. But since the final budgetary decisions were still to be ratified by the State Council, problems of jurisdiction and special influence were bound to remain.

Soong estimated initially that total annual revenues after debt payment would be 300 million yuan. Since current military expenses had rocketed up to 360 million yuan a year, military demobilization and reorganization would be essential. It would also be necessary to sort out national and provincial revenues, a task further complicated by the fact that as of 1928 only four provinces—Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui, and Jiangxi—could be considered fully under government control. Soong also served as the first head of the new Central Bank of China, incorporated in late 1928, with a capital of 20 million yuan. Its initial tasks were to pursue monetary reform and redeem bad notes issued by governments in Wuhan, Canton, and Nanjing itself. By vigorous negotiations with foreign powers, the Nationalists won full tariff autonomy in 1928 in exchange for abolishing internal transit taxes and a further range of special surtaxes that had been imposed since the Canton government of Sun Yat-sen. As a result customs revenues rose dramatically, from around 120 million yuan a year to 244 million yuan in 1929 and 385 million in 1931, far exceeding Soong's expectations.

Despite these attempts at reform, China's Guomindang government maintained a consistent budgetary deficit, as the accompanying table shows. There was no income tax, because of collection problems, until 1936. (An attempt in 1921 at a national income tax had yielded the Peking government only 10,311 yuan.) Nor was there a national land tax, since land revenues went to provincial authorities who were not controlled by the Guomindang. And since it was impossible to tax the foreign corporations beyond a certain level, the brunt of industrial taxes fell on Chinese entrepreneurs. The paradoxical result was that some previously resilient Chinese companies like the Jian family's Nanyang tobacco firm, which had success-

*Peking's name was changed to Peiping (Beiping), which means "northern peace" as opposed to "northern capital." For simplicity, I retain "Peking" here.

EXPENDITURES, REVENUES, AND DEFICITS OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT, 1929–1937[1]

Year ending June 30	*Expenditure excluding balances at end of the period, millions of yuan*	*Revenue, unborrowed, excluding balances at beginning of the period, millions of yuan*	*Deficit covered by borrowing*	
			Amount, millions of yuan	*Percentage of expenditure*
1929	434	334	100	23.0
1930	585	484	101	17.3
1931	775	558	217	28.0
1932	749	619	130	17.4
1933	699	614	86	12.3
1934	836	689	147	17.6
1935	941	745	196	20.8
1936	1,073	817	256	23.8
1937	1,167	870	297	25.4

fully competed with the mighty British-American Tobacco Corporation throughout the 1920s, were driven to virtual bankruptcy by constantly spiraling levies.

To achieve a stable political structure, it was imperative for the Guomindang government to re-establish effective administrative control over the countryside. This task had been too much for the late Qing rulers and for Yuan Shikai, and in the long run it proved too much for the Guomindang also. What they attempted to institute was a County Organization Law that maintained the old system of county *(xian)* units, governed by magistrates, and established within each county a group of wards consisting of ten to fifty townships. In each ward were clusters of villages *(cun)* or urban neighborhoods *(li),* and at the base of the pyramid a household-responsibility system similar to the old Qing *baojia.* In time, the community groupings were supposed to elect headmen and councils; in practice, these officials were appointed from above by the county magistrates. Parallel to the magistrates' offices, there were specialized bureaus controlled by the provincial governments so that a magistrate's control even over his immediate resources was limited.

This administrative system left fundamental problems in the countryside unsolved, and in many rural regions life was little different from what it had been in the Qing. Local administrators were often tyrannical or corrupt, and were more sympathetic to local landlords than to the peasants, who often lived in dire poverty. Local officials insisted on tax collection and rent payments even in times of natural catastrophe, and used police or military power to enforce their demands. Crops were still sown and harvested by hand, produce was carried to market on human shoulders, infant mortality was high, life expectancy low. Many girls were still made to bind their feet, the traditional practice of arranged marriage endured, village localisms were perpetuated, education was minimal or nonexistent.

In China's cities and towns, the contrast was stark. Medical care became more sophisticated, new hospitals were built, schools and college campuses featured sports grounds and laboratories. The extension of metaled roads capable of carrying trucks and automobiles opened up new levels of social and commercial exchange. New power stations brought electricity to urban China; steamer transport expanded on the rivers and along the coast, cheapening interregional trade; faster trains traveled new track, and air transport became possible on certain national routes. Cinemas established themselves as part of urban life; radios and phonographs appeared in the richer homes; and Chinese men began sporting business suits, derbies, or cloth caps, the younger women short skirts and high-heels. Cigarette smoking became a national fad. For the wealthier Chinese, life could be very

comfortable indeed, and foreigners found living in China as pleasant as anywhere in the world. "The years that were fat,"[2] one American writer called his reminiscences of living in China during this period.

But these were hardly fat years for China's peasantry. The worldwide depression of the late 1920s brought disaster to many peasants who had overconcentrated on certain cash crops, and hundreds of thousands—perhaps millions—died when the markets in such crops as silk, cotton, soybeans, or tobacco suddenly plummeted. The need was therefore all the greater for strong political initiative. Rural reform required a plan for crop diversification, with fair divisions of landholdings, reasonable prices paid for produce, some form of local credit structure, universal education, and a measure of representative government.

Guomindang leaders were aware of these needs and did address them in a sporadic way. But money was always short and the government distracted by foreign pressures and internal dissensions. Even in the areas he allegedly controlled, Chiang Kai-shek never held undisputed sway, and several times his supporters broke away to form their own temporary regimes: the Guangxi generals in 1929, Generals Feng Yuxiang and Yan Xishan in 1930, Hu Hanmin in 1931, a coalition of military and civilian forces in Fujian province in 1933. Perhaps not surprisingly, then, the main attempts at moderate land reform were carried out by dedicated individuals such as James Yen and Liang Shuming.

James Yen received his first challenge as a reformer and teacher working for the YMCA among Chinese laborers serving in France during World War I. Returning to China in 1921 he continued to work for mass literacy, concentrating his efforts in Ding County in Hebei. There, broadening his endeavors, he created a "model village" where the people were taught hygiene and agricultural technology in addition to the basic reading curriculum. By 1929, helped by international donations, James Yen had developed for over sixty villages and market towns in Ding County a fourfold program of reconstruction in the areas of education, public health, economic growth through light industry and agriculture, and self-government.

Liang Shuming, a noted Confucian scholar whose father had committed suicide in 1918 out of despair at China's plight, had gone on to become a professor of philosophy at Peking University during the May Fourth period. After experimental work in rural reconstruction in the south, Liang became director of the Shandong Rural Research Institute and attempted to develop Zouping and Heze counties as model communities. Here, in order to obviate the need for class struggle and draw the entire community into a self-governing enterprise, he concentrated on mutual economic assistance and educational projects that involved both the elite and the common people.

But these piecemeal efforts were not enough to bring peace and prosperity to China. And they could never be enough as long as the Communist party, shattered in 1927 but not completely destroyed, offered an alternative vision of dramatic and revolutionary transformation, and called on the peasantry to take their destiny into their own hands.

Mao Zedong and the Rural Soviets

Because of the failure of the Autumn Harvest Uprisings and his abandonment of the attempt to seize Changsha, Mao Zedong was censured by the CCP Central Committee. In November 1927 he was dismissed from his position on that committee, and even from his membership in the Hunan provincial committee. But Mao probably did not even learn of these chastisements for several months, since he had taken the surviving Autumn Harvest troops—perhaps 1,000 in all—and marched south of Changsha up into the isolated Jinggang Mountains on the border between Hunan and Jiangxi, which he reached in October 1927. Just as in the Qing, so in the 1920s the safest place for fugitives was in those border regions where different administrative zones met, inhibiting coordinated counterattacks by the forces of the state. In this case the "state" was still a fragmented entity, and Mao's enemies were a variety of warlord troops bound by various types of alliance to the Guomindang forces, as well as the Guomindang itself.

Mao's own actions during this period were often dictated by practical rather than theoretical considerations. Just before the Autumn Harvest Uprisings he had told the CCP Central Committee that he favored the immediate formation of strong peasant soviets, that such soviets should be bonded together in revolutionary solidarity by a thorough confiscation and redistribution of land, and that he wished to give up all pretense that he still had any loyalty to the Guomindang flag. These positions were angrily rejected by the Central Committee at the time, but by the end of 1927, following changes in Stalin's stated policies, the Central Committee endorsed all three positions and added that the party should also support an uninterrupted series of uprisings in the countryside. The purpose of these uprisings would not be to establish stable bases, but to keep the masses at a high pitch of revolutionary awareness and to instill that same awareness thoroughly in the armed forces involved.

By the time the Central Committee had come to these decisions, however, Mao's practical experiences in Jinggang had led him to abandon essentially all of them. Although he did form CCP cells in the five villages within the 250 kilometer circumference that he controlled, ordered some landlords killed, and tried to organize soviets, he ran into sustained resistance from the richer peasants and from the lineage organizations that exercised control over their poorer neighbors. In the face of this opposition he did not try to redistribute all land in relation to each person's work capacity. Mao instead buttressed his strength by joining forces with two of the area's tough bandit chieftains, who were members of secret societies affiliated with the Triads. With their 600 men added to his own troops, Mao now stood at the head of a force drawn from the ranks of the dispossessed and "classless" members of society. Mao had written about these people with his customary vividness the year before:

> They can be divided into soldiers, bandits, robbers, beggars, and prostitutes. These five categories of people have different names, and they enjoy a somewhat different status in society. But they are all human beings, and they all have five senses and four limbs, and are therefore one. They each have a different way of making a living: the soldier fights, the bandit robs, the thief steals, the beggar begs, and the prostitute seduces. But to the extent that they must all earn their livelihood and cook rice to eat, they are one. They lead the most precarious existence of any human being.[3]

Nevertheless, Mao had added, "these people are capable of fighting very bravely, and, if properly led, can become a revolutionary force."

Although the Jinggang forces were greatly strengthened by the arrival of Communist fugitives from the south China fighting of 1927, they suffered constant attacks by Guomindang forces, and often had to send precious troops out of Jinggang to aid in CCP battles elsewhere. This was in line with the policies endorsed by the sixth CCP congress, which had had to meet in Moscow in the summer of 1928 because conditions in China itself were so dangerous. That congress, echoing Stalin's instructions, had dogmatically stated that even though at present there was no revolutionary rising tide, there must still be armed insurrections and more soviets formed under the leadership of the proletariat. Such orders were essentially meaningless, since union members still loyal to the Communists now numbered fewer than 32,000 in the whole country, and only 10 percent of the CCP were proletarians, according to Zhou Enlai. By 1929 the figure had dropped to 3 percent.

At the end of 1928 the sustained level of Guomindang attacks forced Mao to abandon the Jinggang Mountains. After moving steadily eastward, first across Jiangxi province and then into western Fujian, the Jinggang fugitives finally settled in a new border region—the mountainous area between Jiangxi and Fujian provinces. Here they made the town of Ruijin

their new base and the center of a new regime, the Jiangxi Soviet, which was to endure until 1934.

It should not be imagined that Mao, with preternatural cunning, had seized on the two places in China where speedy formation of peasant soviets was possible, nor, on the other hand, that the whole of rural China was seething with the hatred of peasants against their landlords. It is true that during the 1920s and early 1930s there were thousands of incidents in which peasants—either in small or large groups—out of anger or desperation used violence against local authorities. But these attacks were mainly against the representatives of the state: the civil and military officials who gouged them with high taxes and unexpected surcharges, conscripted their labor without adequate compensation, compulsorily purchased their land for public-works projects, or forced them either to plant or uproot their opium-producing poppies, depending on the vagaries of the local and national drug trade. There were, comparatively, far fewer cases of violent action against landlords, although these did occur. Since most resident landlords depended for their rents on some degree of tenant prosperity and contentment, such anger was usually directed against absentee-landlords' managers or bailiffs when they tried to extract high rents in periods of natural disaster. The skill of Communist organizers like Mao lay in transforming a largely fiscal discontent into class warfare, so as to push effectively for revolutionary change under CCP leadership.

Now Mao's policies grew more sophisticated. The experience in the Jinggang Mountains had shown that an extremely radical land policy alienated the wealthier peasants, who were the real force in local rural society, and left the CCP with support from only the poorest and least-educated peasants or from the impoverished, landless laborers. So it seems (the details are not all clear) that in Ruijin, Mao initially followed a policy that carefully avoided alienating the wealthier rural families. But such a policy was difficult, and in an April 1929 letter to Li Lisan—the former student in France who had been so active in Shanghai in 1927 and had now replaced Qu Qiubai as CCP secretary general—Mao tried to reassure the party of his orthodoxy while forcefully presenting his faith in the peasants:

> It would be wrong to abandon the struggle in the cities, but in our opinion it would also be wrong for any of our Party members to fear the growth of peasant strength lest it should outstrip the workers' strength and harm the revolution. For in the revolution in semi-colonial China, the peasant struggle must always fail if it does not have the leadership of the workers, but the revolution is never harmed if the peasant struggle outstrips the forces of the workers.[4]

In late spring 1930 Mao Zedong greatly strengthened his knowledge of rural conditions in Jiangxi by undertaking a meticulous examination of one particular county—Xunwu. From his report on this experience we can see how far he had advanced in analytical sophistication since he wrote the excited Hunan report on the peasantry in February 1927 or the ambiguous letter to Li Lisan in 1929. Now, in the Xunwu of 1930, Mao probed for the details of everyday life and searched for precise gradations within the complex layering of rural work and landownership. Broad generalizations about "the proletariat" and "expropriation" gave way to detailed explorations of the variety of local businesses in small county towns, and of the income to be derived from them. Mao studied salt, cooking oil and soybean sales, butchers and wine makers, the sellers of herbs, cigarettes, umbrellas, and fireworks, the makers of furniture and bean curd, boardinghouse keepers and ironsmiths, watch repairers, and prostitutes. He observed the rhythms of local markets, the relative strengths of different lineage organizations, the distribution and wealth of Buddhist and Daoist temples and of a host of other shrines and religious associations, as well as the number of active Christian proselytizers (there were thirteen—ten Protestant and three Catholic).

Mao also tried to gauge levels of exploitation so that he could analyze class tensions more accurately. He computed the number of prostitutes in Xunwu city and discovered that there were about 30 in a total population of 2,684. He sought out poor peasants who had been forced to sell their children to pay their debts, and found out how much they got for the children and what ages the children were when they were sold. Boy children were sold for 100 to 200 yuan, and their ages when sold ranged from three to fourteen years old. (Mao found no cases in which girls were sold. This was probably because hard labor was the top priority in Xunwu, not domestic work or sexual services.) Mao noticed that when a child was sold to pay one lender, others rallied to the news. "On hearing that a borrower has sold a son, lenders will hurry to the borrower's house and force the borrower to repay his loan. The lender will cruelly shout to the borrower: 'You have sold your son. Why don't you repay me?' "[5] Mao also examined local landowning and tenancy practices, conveying his results in a detailed table with categories shrewdly based on rental income and means of subsistence rather than simply on acreage of individual holdings (see below).

In the past, temples, lineage organizations, and other groups owned 40 percent of Xunwu's land; landlords owned 30 percent; and the peasants themselves owned the remaining 30 percent. Mao showed an acute sense of the criteria that should be used in redistributing the land. While noting that in a revolutionary situation most land was redistributed simply on a per

Xunwu's Traditional Land Relationships[6]

Status	*Percentage in each group*
Large landlords	
Receive more than 500 dan* of rent	0.045
Middle landlords	
Receive 200–499 dan of rent	0.400
Small landlords	
Receive less than 200 dan of rent	
Of whom 1% are bankrupt families and 2% are newly rich families	3.000
Rich peasants	
Have surplus grain and capital for loans	4.000
Middle peasants	
Have enough to eat but do not receive loans	18.255
Poor peasants	
Insufficient grain and receive loans	70.000
Manual workers	
Craftsmen, boatmen, porters	3.000
Loafers	
No property	1.000
Hired hands	
Permanent and day laborers	0.300

*A dan was equal to approximately 133 pounds of rice or other grain.

capita basis, he was aware of the arguments for distributing some land on the basis of ability to work. He also recognized the special needs of women, who often contributed more than men to the land (and endured harder lives), the problems posed by ex-monks and other categories of the needy, and difficulties in deciding how to divide up houses, fishponds, and mountainous or forested areas.

In the area of military planning, too, Mao had been growing more experienced—and more canny. His main teacher was Zhu De, a Sichuanese soldier of fortune and former opium addict who had mended his ways and gone to study in Germany during the early 1920s before returning to China to command a Guomindang officer-training regiment. Zhu had kept his Communist affiliations secret until the Nanchang army uprisings in August 1927, when he had been defeated and forced to flee, eventually joining Mao in the Jinggang Mountains. The "Red Army," as the two had structured it, now became a fast-moving guerrilla force that performed with great courage against the attacks of the Guomindang. Although only about 2,000 Red

Army troops were left by early 1929, Mao and Zhu vigorously opposed the directive by Li Lisan that they fragment their forces further by scattering them across the countryside in tiny units to foster local uprisings. As they wrote proudly to Li:

> The tactics we have derived from the struggle of the past three years are indeed different from any other tactics, ancient or modern, Chinese or foreign. With our tactics, the masses can be aroused for struggle on an ever-broadening scale, and no enemy, however powerful, can cope with us. Ours are guerrilla tactics. They consist mainly of the following points:
>
> Divide our forces to arouse the masses, concentrate our forces to deal with the enemy.
>
> The enemy advances, we retreat; the enemy camps, we harass; the enemy tires, we attack; the enemy retreats, we pursue.
>
> To extend stable base areas, employ the policy of advancing in waves; when pursued by a powerful enemy, employ the policy of circling around.
>
> Arouse the largest numbers of the masses in the shortest possible time and by the best possible methods.[7]

Their very success in consolidating and then expanding the Red Army in Ruijin paradoxically led to the optimistic view of the Central Committee that their troops had grown strong enough to fight outside the soviet area in conventional positional warfare. So in 1930, not long after the Xunwu investigation was completed, Mao and Zhu received direct orders, which they could not disobey, to attack Nanchang. These orders were part of an ambitious plan by Li Lisan to move the Communist struggle back to a revolutionary crest; assaults against Wuhan and Changsha were planned at the same time. All three ventures failed, although Communist forces held Changsha for ten days before the Guomindang retook it. When Mao and Zhu, defeated at Nanchang, were ordered to help the Communist troops at Changsha recapture the city, they reluctantly agreed; but faced with the annihilation of their carefully nurtured forces, they withdrew from the battle without permission and returned to Ruijin.

As well as concentrating on aspects of economic and military change while he was in Jiangxi, Mao also paid attention to social reform in areas such as women's rights. Since his frank writings on the suicide of Miss Zhao in 1919, Mao had shown a continuing awareness of the economic and family pressures that prevented any semblance of equality between the sexes in China. He had reiterated these feelings near the end of his 1927 report on the peasant movement in Hunan, writing that although the men suffered under three forms of authority—political, clan, and religious—the women had to endure a fourth—masculine authority. Mao felt that masculine

authority was weakest among the poorer peasants, "because, out of economic necessity, their womenfolk have to do more manual labor than the women of the richer classes and therefore have more say and greater power of decision in family matters." Such women "also enjoy considerable sexual freedom." Mao hailed the formation of "rural women's associations" in parts of Hunan, which gave all women the chance "to lift up their heads."

So it was not surprising that one of Mao's important acts in the Jiangxi Soviet was to promulgate a new marriage law that forbade arranged marriages, encouraged free choice of spouses, and stopped "all purchase and sale in marriage contracts." Divorce was also made simple—to be granted at the request of either partner—although the language on continuing support was ambiguous: "On questions concerning divorce, it becomes necessary to protect the interests of women and place the greater part of the obligations and responsibilities entailed by divorce upon men."[8] An exception to the simple divorce rule was made in cases where the woman seeking divorce had a husband away on active military service.

One survey by Communist officials of two counties in the Jiangxi Soviet showed that in a period of three and a half months, 4,274 divorces were registered, 80 percent of them at the request of one spouse only, and that 3,783 marriages were registered for the same period. In nine cases the couple married *and* divorced on the same day. Mao's personal feelings may have played some role in this legislation, since he himself had separated from the wife he had wooed and won in the May Fourth period, along with their two children, and was now living openly with a second wife, He Zizhen, who had joined him in the Jinggang Mountains and followed him to Jiangxi.

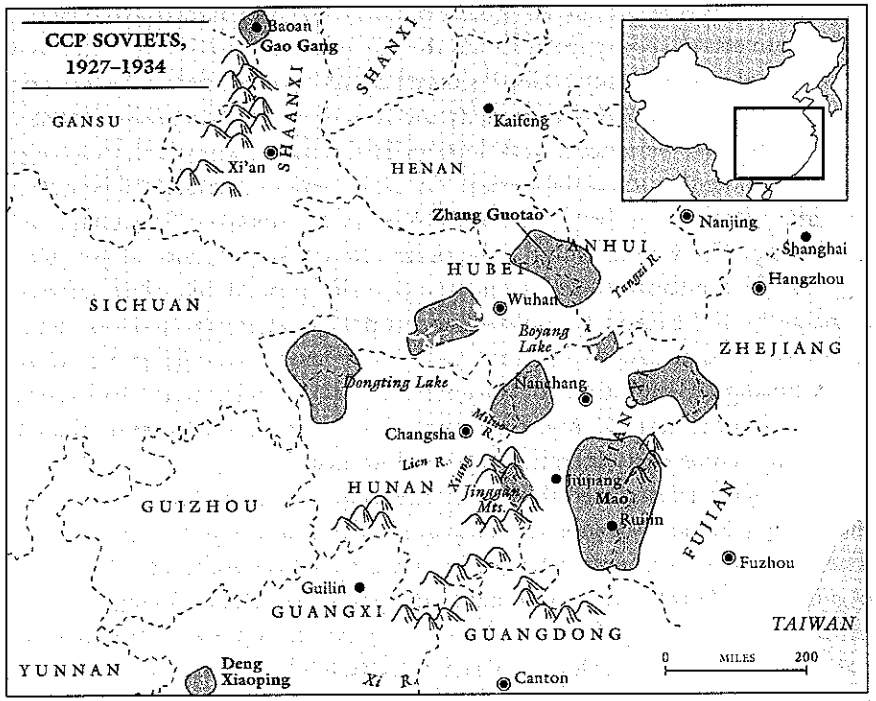
But Mao also had a commitment to the men in his army, many of them desperately poor, who looked to the Communist government to help them find the wives that they could never have afforded under the system of arranged marriages. The result was that the women in the Jiangxi Soviet were often coerced into "marrying"—or possibly having physical relationships with several men—against their will. Male party cadres also abused their powers. Many widows were reported to have been pressured into remarrying within a few days of their spouse's death. But Mao held firm that minimum marriage ages should be held at twenty for men and eighteen for women. "Teams of laundresses" dispatched to certain units and used in recruiting suggest also that the Communist authorities countenanced a fair amount of not very clandestine prostitution.

By 1930, the attacks by the Guomindang and its allies on the Communists in the cities were becoming more savage and more successful. The labor organizations were in disarray, infiltrated by Guomindang agents and

with their efforts at organized protest often wrecked by harassment or violence from secret-society members in the pay of the industrialists. Attempts at large-scale urban insurrections ordered by Li Lisan all failed. New leaders dispatched by Moscow to remedy the situation could do nothing. They were young, inexperienced, and doctrinally dogmatic, known sardonically in China as the "returned Bolsheviks." In 1931 a series of arrests and betrayals caused a growing number of senior Communists to abandon Shanghai altogether and join Mao in Ruijin. The more important "returned Bolshevik" leaders did the same in 1933, and temporarily pushed Mao into eclipse, accusing him of being too "rightist" in his policies of accommodation with the richer peasants. According to some sources, he was literally under house arrest during 1934 for his erroneous policies. (His obituary had already been published in the main Comintern journal in March 1930, suggesting that at least some senior party members wished him dead.)

Although it has received the closest attention because of Mao's role there, the Jiangxi Soviet was not the only rural Communist base at this time. There were at least a dozen regions in China where some form of CCP organization in the countryside held out against the Guomindang government or local military forces and tried to push through a variety of land policy and other social reforms. There were two other soviets at least partly in Jiangxi: one to the northeast of Ruijin, where the three provinces of Zhejiang, Fujian, and Jiangxi meet; and one to the northwest, where the borders of Hunan, Hubei, and Jiangxi converge. One of the largest of the other soviets was led by Zhang Guotao, like Mao a former member of Li Dazhao's Marxist study group who became a founding member at the 1921 CCP congress. Zhang's soviet was situated where the borders of Henan, Anhui, and Hubei meet, and flourished until fierce Guomindang attacks forced the retreat of the surviving troops into northern Sichuan.

One Communist general held onto another soviet base on the westernmost edge of the shared Hunan-Hubei border; and in the only far-northern soviet, situated in the Shaanxi town of Baoan, Gao Gang dominated an area of poor mountain country that stretched, dependent on his military fortunes, from Shaanxi to Gansu. Gao Gang had been trained in a Xi'an military academy by Deng Xiaoping after Deng's return from France. Deng, after leaving Xi'an, had worked in yet another soviet, this one in southwest Guangxi, equidistant from the borders with Yunnan and Vietnam. According to an interview Deng gave later, the Chinese there cooperated with the Vietnamese who were launching their "worker-peasant" rebellion against the French. The Chinese gave them sanctuary, in retaliation for which French planes bombed the Guangxi soviet area. In late 1930, probably on orders from Li Lisan, Deng marched many of his troops northeast to help



in the planned attacks on Changsha, Wuhan, and Nanchang. Having suffered heavy losses on the way, he arrived after the urban assaults were defeated, and his remnant troops were incorporated into Mao's and Zhu De's Jiangxi Soviet armies.

In the face of the Guomindang's military superiority, the CCP had begun to develop a successful new strategy for survival, one in which it temporarily gave up its urban bases and reliance on the proletariat, and reconsolidated deep in the countryside. Living among poor peasants, on whose support they now depended, CCP leaders had to adjust their thinking. Chiang Kai-shek also had to rethink his strategies and priorities. His Guomindang had won the cities, and defeated or allied with the strongest northern militarists. But to win over the countryside would take a massive and concerted military, political, and economic effort. As Chiang struggled toward that goal, the stances of the foreign powers would be critical. The British economic presence in China remained powerful and entrenched, but was less activist than in the past, as the British themselves rethought their imperial pretensions in the years following their terrible losses in World War I. The same was largely true of the French. The Russians, absorbed in their own economic and political crises, for the moment posed no threat. But the Americans, Japanese, and Germans, each in their own way, had considerable potential for affecting developments in China. Chiang Kai-shek's domestic policy, inevitably, was enmeshed with wider events taking place on the world stage.

CHINA AND THE UNITED STATES

In the chaotic decade that followed the end of World War I, important changes occurred in U.S. foreign policy toward China. The unfolding of events at the Versailles treaty negotiations had dramatically confirmed that Japan rather than China now played the dominant role on the international scene in east Asia. Ironically, in the negotiations President Wilson had been anxious to placate Japanese sentiment as much as possible because of his hopes for building a global league of nations that would guarantee lasting peace. But in 1919 and again in 1920, Congress refused to vote for U.S. entrance into the League, dooming Wilson's dream.

Cognizant of Japanese power, and uneasy at the expensive naval arms race that was developing, the United States decided to pursue new international agreements that would protect its own position in east Asia and the Pacific, cut back some of Japan's recent gains, and end the exclusivist British-Japanese alliance in Asia. Britain, equally worried about protecting her global empire with the diminished resources left her after World War I, was glad to join in discussions. So too were the Japanese, who were eager for further formal acknowledgment of their international status as a great power and all too aware that 49 percent of their budget was going for military expenditures.

The representatives of these three countries, along with France and five other states, met in Washington in November 1921 and continued their meetings until February 1922. The American goal of ending the exclusive alliance of Britain and Japan was met when a four-power agreement calling for "consultations" among the United States, Japan, Britain, and France in times of crisis was substituted for the former British-Japanese military-assistance treaty; all four powers agreed as well on the "nonfortification" of their Pacific islands. A follow-up Nine-Power Treaty (in which the above four states were joined by China, Italy, Portugal, Belgium, and Holland) condemned spheres of influence in China and gave rousing acclamation to the idea of maintaining the "sovereignty, the independence, and the territorial and administrative integrity of China."

In a third agreement, the navies of the three main signatories were fixed in relative size on a ratio of 5:5:3, measured in terms of tonnage of armored

capital ships. The United States and Britain would have five units each to Japan's three. The Japanese had originally pushed for a 10:10:7 ratio, but expressed satisfaction with this new calculation. Although at first glance this agreement seemed to relegate Japan to a second-rank position, in fact because so much of the other two powers' fleets had to be concentrated in the Atlantic (and, for Britain, in the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean), and because of the agreement by the two Atlantic powers not to build up major armed bases in the Pacific islands, the treaty was likely to assure Japan naval superiority in east Asia. Britain was content because the treaty did not affect her bases in Singapore, Australia, or New Zealand, and she had an advantage in gunnery on her existing ships. The Americans felt they had brought a new order and the possibility of peace to Asian international relations.

The Peking government had sent a strong delegation to Washington, headed up by Alfred Sze (Shi Zhaoji), former minister to the Court of St. James's in London and currently Chinese minister to the United States. Sze's career had been a varied one, another reminder of the new kinds of experiences becoming available to Chinese in the world arena. His well-off father, a resident of Jiangsu, combined the Confucian and commercial worlds by being both a *juren* degree holder and a buyer of silk for export. Sze, born in 1877, enrolled at nine in the Qing government's recently founded Peking language school, and then transferred to a western school, St. John's Academy in Shanghai. He served as an interpreter to Chinese missions in both St. Petersburg and Washington, attended Cornell University, where he graduated in 1901 and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa, and accompanied the late-Qing delegation of five officials when it traveled to study the constitutions of the United States and European countries. Thereafter he worked in railway management, in the Ministry of Finance, and as a senior delegate to the Versailles peace conference in 1919.

In Washington, Sze presented a "ten-point program" designed to define China's territory; win agreement to respect China's sovereignty, independence, and administrative integrity; end extraterritoriality, and return tariff autonomy to the country. These last two items were set apart by the other powers for handling at separate conferences, which was a blow to Chinese pride, but the powers could not be blamed for thinking that the "Peking government" represented by Sze did not really speak for the Chinese people as a whole. Sun Yat-sen had ordered the Guomindang to accept none of the Washington Conference decisions as binding on them, since he had not been recognized as spokesman for a legitimate government. And since Russia and Germany were not signatories, separate treaties would have to be signed by them.

Japan appeared to be surprisingly flexible at the conference. On the understanding that its special position in southern Manchuria was not to be disturbed, Japan agreed to pull back from the Russian maritime provinces and Sakhalin, where Japanese troops had been opposing the Soviets. With respect to China, Japan agreed to back off from the Twenty-one Demands of 1915, restore management of the Qingdao-Jinan railway to the Chinese, and restore the Jiaozhou "leased territory"—seized from Germany in 1914—to the Chinese government.

Throughout the middle and late 1920s, U.S. policy toward China remained low-keyed. The gains initially made by the Comintern were watched cautiously by American officials, and there was general approval when Chiang Kai-shek moved decisively to crush the growing Communist power. There was, however, obvious anxiety that extreme Chinese nationalism might be whipped up against Americans, as indeed it was in Hankou and Nanjing during 1927. Although the American chairman of the Shanghai Municipal Council, Stirling Fessenden, appealed strongly for U.S. military protection and the creation of local defense forces in the face of the Nationalist advance on Shanghai, Secretary of State Frank Kellogg showed no intention of intervening, and the American press in general was against any form of intervention. Fearing that "revolutionary interests" might encourage "mob violence" and lead to the wrecking of the Shanghai concession areas, Fessenden seems to have been among those who made it possible for Chiang Kai-shek to come and go at will in the concession areas so that he could make the necessary plans with the Green Gang and others for the April coup.

In the summer of 1928, T. V. Soong met in Peking with the American minister to China, and they signed a treaty in which the United States agreed to let China fix her own tariffs on foreign imports. The full revised tariff schedule, released later that year, raised rates to levels between 7.5 percent and 27.0 percent, bringing desperately needed revenue to the Guomindang government. In Washington's opinion, the signing of this treaty constituted *de facto* and *de jure* recognition of the Nationalist government; the ratification of the treaty by the Senate in February 1929 thus made the "recognition" official. Talks began soon after about ending extraterritoriality for Americans residing in China.

Americans were generally pleased by Chiang Kai-shek's marriage to Soong Meiling, whose degree from Wellesley College in Massachusetts enhanced her strong family ties to the United States. With her two younger brothers now both back in China to work alongside T. V. Soong, and her two sisters constantly in the public eye, Soong family members were effective lobbyists for American support. The popular image of this family in the United

States was further strengthened in October 1930, when Chiang was baptized a Christian in Shanghai. With his young wife beside him they repeated their marriage vows and pledged to follow a life dedicated to Christian principles.

Reflecting this general satisfaction, American investments in China continued to grow steadily, although they still lagged in pace and scale far behind those of Britain and Japan. This disparity looks all the more graphic if one considers just foreign investment in manufacturing ventures, as opposed to the entire range of trading, banking, utilities, and real estate. The profitability of American investments compared well to those of Great Britain and Japan.

Much of America's involvement in China also represented an expansion of the earlier Christian missionary impulse, which in the late 1920s and early 1930s focused on education, medical care and training, and broad-based socially oriented programs such as the YMCA and YWCA. The value of a college education had slowly come to be recognized in China, following the 1905 abolition of the old examination system, and by 1922 there were 34,880 students enrolled in China's thirty-seven national universities, provincial colleges, and private Christian colleges. (By way of contrast, in the nineteenth century approximately 1,400 scholars a year received the *juren* degree, and fewer than 100 the *jinshi*.) Although the Christian colleges had fewer students than the national and provincial colleges, the former institutions had moved ahead in the percentage of women enrolled, as is shown by figures available for 1922 (see page 384).

FOREIGN INVESTMENTS IN CHINA BY COUNTRY, 1902–1936[9]

Country	*1902*	*1914*	*1931*	*1936*
Great Britain	260.3 (33.0)*	607.5 (37.7)	1,189.2 (36.7)	1,220.8 (35.0)
Japan	1.0 (0.1)	219.6 (13.6)	1,136.9 (35.1)	1,394.0 (40.0)
Russia	246.5 (31.3)	269.3 (16.7)	273.2 (8.4)	0.0
United States	19.7 (2.5)	49.3 (3.1)	196.8 (6.1)	298.8 (8.6)
France	91.1 (11.6)	171.4 (10.7)	192.4 (5.9)	234.1 (6.7)
Germany	164.3 (20.9)	263.6 (16.4)	87.0 (2.7)	148.5 (4.3)
Belgium	4.4 (0.6)	22.9 (1.4)	89.0 (2.7)	58.4 (1.7)
Netherlands	0.0	0.0	28.7 (0.9)	0.0
Italy	0.0	0.0	46.4 (1.4)	72.3 (2.1)
Scandinavia	0.0	0.0	2.9 (0.1)	0.0
Others	0.6 (0.0)	6.7 (0.4)	0.0	56.3 (1.6)
	787.9 (100.0)	1,610.3 (100.0)	3,242.5 (100.0)	3,483.2 (100.0)

*In millions of U.S. dollars; percent in parentheses.

FOREIGN INVESTMENTS IN MANUFACTURING IN CHINA BY COUNTRY, 1936[10]

Manufacture	*Britain*	*United States*	*Germany*	*France*	*Japan*	*Total*	
Textiles	64.6*	1.2	3.9	0.0	112.4	182.1	(54.7)*
Metal, machinery, equipment	20.8	3.6	0.1	0.5	4.1	29.1	(8.8)
Chemicals	63.0	1.7	2.0	1.0	6.8	74.5	(22.4)
Lumber, woodworking	4.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.9	5.4	(1.6)
Printing, bookbinding	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.8	1.5	(0.5)
Food, drink, tobacco	23.3	1.1	0.9	0.5	5.8	31.6	(9.5)
Others	3.7	1.1	0.1	0.0	3.3	8.2	(2.5)
Total	179.7	9.5	7.1	2.0	134.1	332.4	
	(54.1)	(2.9)	(2.1)	(0.6)	(40.3)		(100.0)

*In millions of U.S. dollars; percent in parentheses.

Many of the Christian schools were launched by American missionary societies, which tried to keep the enrollments small and the curriculum concentrated on Christian knowledge and principles. As Chinese nationalism grew, this focus inevitably caused explosive pressure to build in these institutions, leading to student riots, violence, and expulsions. Yet Yanjing (Yenching) University in Peking, an amalgam of what had originally been four colleges founded by Methodist, Congregational, and Presbyterian sponsors, was famous for its training in journalism and sociology. There generations of Chinese students learned to analyze and benefit their own society, whether through business, administration, or involvement in rural reconstruction projects.

The secular Nankai University in Tianjin, founded by a Chinese self-strengthening activist of the late Qing who went on to study at Columbia University's Teachers College, developed into a center for economic and social research thanks to gifts from private backers in the United States and the Rockefeller Foundation. Qinghua College—originally set up in Peking to prepare Chinese students for study in the United States, where scholarships were provided from the almost $12 million accrued from the Boxer indemnity—trained 1,268 students between 1909 and 1929. The college was turned into a "National" Qinghua University by the Guomindang after the Northern Expedition, and added a fine College of Engineering to its already prestigious Colleges of Letters, Sciences, and Law. In 1924, furthermore,

CHINESE COLLEGE STUDENTS, 1922[11]

	National universities	*Provincial colleges*	*Christian and foreign colleges*	*Total*
Total students	10,535	20,325	4,020	34,880
Women	405	132	350	887
Women as % of total	3.8	0.6	8.7	2.5

the U.S. Congress voted to remit the remaining $12.5 million of unpaid Boxer indemnity to China, stipulating that the sum be administered by a joint board of ten Chinese and five Americans for the advancement of cultural and educational ventures in China.

Medical advances in China were also considerable, owing in large measure to the impact of private philanthropy—in particular the Rockefeller Foundation, which in 1915 made a major commitment to support a medical school in China. The Peking Union Medical College, fruit of this decision, became China's great center for medical research and teaching. Although the methodology was Western—eschewing the traditional Chinese concentration on diagnosis by pulses and cures through herbal treatments or acupuncture—and the language of instruction was English, the problems addressed were diseases unique to, or extremely prevalent in, China. Teaching procedures in the college's beautifully equipped hospital were meticulous, leisurely, and expensive: it took a faculty and administrative staff of 123 foreigners and 23 Chinese to oversee the graduation of 64 Chinese medical students between 1924 and 1930. But with a further grant of $12 million from the foundation in 1928, the college assured its status as the leader in China. The only close runner-up was the Japanese medical college in Manchuria, which was reserved for Japanese students.

The Xiangya medical college in Changsha, Hunan, experienced a different growth, although it too started with a sizable benefaction—from the American financier Edward Harkness. In this case the staff of a Yale University medical training school in Changsha pooled its resources with the Hunan governor and the local Chinese gentry to build and staff a training hospital. Chinese always figured prominently among the faculty, and in 1925 they assumed control of the administration. The joint Sino-American team achieved important results in smallpox and cholera research, rat extermination to combat an alarming spread of pneumonic plague, and remedies for opium addiction. The Changsha authorities did their part by guaranteeing an adequate supply of electricity so that the hospital's new X-ray machinery could function at all times.

Between 1921 and 1926, with a far smaller teaching staff than that at the Peking hospital, Xiangya graduated 43 Chinese doctors. One brief moment of glory for Xiangya came in 1926, when two of their doctors (one can imagine them working rather nervously together) extracted a painfully impacted wisdom tooth from Chiang Kai-shek, who was meeting with his generals in Changsha to plan the final stages of the Wuhan and Jiangxi campaigns. Several excellent medical colleges for women were also established at this time, most of them run by Christian colleges. And the Xiangya hospital developed an important nurses' training program in association with Yanjing University.

Another avenue of American influence was in the growing number of YMCAs and YWCAs. The success of these organizations in the warlord period had been phenomenal: by 1922, the YMCA could claim 54,000 members in 36 Chinese cities and employed 459 secretaries, 378 of whom were Chinese. They worked at a huge range of endeavors, including public-health programs, anti-opium efforts, recreational activities, the organization of public lectures on educational and social issues, and the running of their hostels. Yet even with Chinese staff the caliber of H. H. Kong and David Yui, they could not contain the antiforeign anger of 1925. Radical students charged, after the May 30 massacre in Shanghai, that "YMCAs constantly use athletics, popular education, etc. to do evangelistic work so as to smother the political thought of the youth. They are a detriment to the patriotic movement." At the same time, the various YMCA programs among urban workers were attacked as a device "to cheat laborers so that they will be contented and will regard the capitalists as their benefactors."[12] But such charges began to fade after the suppression of the Communists in 1927, and when David Yui, general secretary of the YMCA, carried his Sino-Christian message to Honolulu in late 1927 to explain the revolution, and to Washington in 1931 to protest Japan's renewed encroachments in Manchuria. In the early 1930s, too, Guomindang leaders began openly to praise the YMCA and its work, and even to speak at its meetings.

American influence spread also through the Chiangs' friendship with individual missionaries in China. Although the great majority of the close to 5,000 Catholic priests and nuns in China in the 1920s were European or Chinese, over half of the 6,636 Protestant missionaries resident in China were Americans grouped mainly in small mission stations scattered across the country. Once Chiang Kai-shek started his determined attempt to destroy the Jiangxi Soviet, the missionary influence grew, for Chiang and his wife

made their summer home in the cool, breezy hills of Kuling (near Jiujiang), which had long been the chosen summer resort for the foreign community. The house the Chiangs rented belonged to the Nanchang Methodist Mission, and Madame Chiang in particular became a close friend of their landlord, William Johnson, a Methodist from Illinois who had been in China since 1910 and was especially interested in rural reconstruction. Although Chiang's closest foreign adviser was an Australian, W. H. Donald (who earlier had been a special adviser to Yuan Shikai), Chiang had lengthy discussions with many of the American missionaries. Later he was to draw more heavily on some of them, especially the Congregationalist missionary George Shepherd, a New Zealand–born naturalized citizen who was described as "the one trusted American" in Chiang's "innermost circle."

Another element making for harmonious relations was the muting of the problems of Chinese emigration to the United States. In the late Qing, America's exclusion laws and the Chinese boycotts of 1905 had soured relations between the two countries. But by the late 1920s, despite new American laws that forbade Chinese wives of American citizens to enter the United States and excluded Chinese children of couples nonresident in the United States even if they had citizenship, a kind of status quo had been established. The Chinese population in the United States, which had dropped dramatically with the exclusion laws, started slowly to climb again in the 1920s, and the gender imbalance gradually began to right itself as a new generation was born in the United States.

Although still mainly active in such enterprises as restaurants and laundries, some Chinese had moved into new careers in business, retailing, and manufacturing, and also spread out of the old Chinatowns on the West Coast into other parts of the country. The predominance of Chinese from around Canton also ended, and in 1929 a new fraternal organization was

Chinese Population in the United States, 1890–1940[13]

	Total Chinese in United States	*Number of women*
1890	106,488	3,868
1900	89,863	4,522
1910	71,531	4,675
1920	61,639	7,748
1930	74,945	15,152
1940	77,504	20,115

formed to support those who came from Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Jiangxi. The year 1931 saw the last of the violent tong wars between rival Chinese neighborhood and dialect groups that had helped perpetuate the negative image of the Chinese in the United States for so long.

It was in this same period that Americans at home began to get some sense of the conditions of rural life in China. The most influential informant was the novelist Pearl Buck, whose *The Good Earth* was first published in 1931. This story of a Chinese peasant family caught in unending struggles with the land—fighting famine, experiencing Communist propaganda teams in Nanjing, and returning to the soil where they prosper once more—was based on careful observation. Buck, whose Presbyterian missionary parents were posted in Zhenjiang on the Yangzi River, grew up in China. She attended high school in Shanghai, and although in 1910 she left for college in the United States, she returned to China in 1914 and later married John Lossing Buck, an agricultural specialist who conducted extensive research on the economic and social conditions of China's peasants. The Bucks lived for years in northern Anhui and later moved to Nanjing, which they had to flee for Shanghai during the antiforeign outbreaks of March 1927. The experience, the tensions, the excitement, and the yearning to write all came together for Pearl Buck in early 1928, and she wrote the entire novel in three months.

Westerners were, by the late 1920s and 1930s, being exposed to an extraordinary upsurge of works either about China or inspired by it. Not since the middle of the eighteenth century had there been such interest in the country and its culture. Some of these works were symbolic and visionary, like Victor Segalen's novel of late Manchu decadence, *René Leys,* or Franz Kafka's rendering of the imperial Chinese bureaucracy in his story "The Great Wall of China." Others were passionately political, like André Malraux's two novels of Canton and Shanghai during Chiang Kai-shek's attack on the Communists. Some were wildly funny, like Ernest Brahma's deadpan tales of the irrepressible Confucian moralist and storyteller, "Kai Lung." Some teetered on the edge between racism and fantasy, like Sax Rohmer's stories of that fiendishly cunning would-be conqueror of the world, Fu Manchu. Others presented a picture of the Chinese as cheerful and intelligent, as in the popular stories and films about the detective Charlie Chan. But of all these and hundreds more, it was Pearl Buck's Chinese peasants, with their stoic dignity, their endurance, their innate realism, and their ceaseless battles with an unrelenting nature, who reached deepest into American hearts.

Buck's works also reached deepest into American pocketbooks. *The Good Earth* sold 1.5 million copies, received the Pulitzer Prize, and was translated

into thirty languages. It became a Broadway play in 1933, and four years later a movie that was seen in the United States by an estimated 23 million people. Americans clearly wanted to know about China if they could be entertained along the way, but they did not require an exotic or glamorous China. Perhaps, as the United States began to confront the Great Depression in all its complexity, it was comforting to know that in China things were even worse.

CHINA AND JAPAN

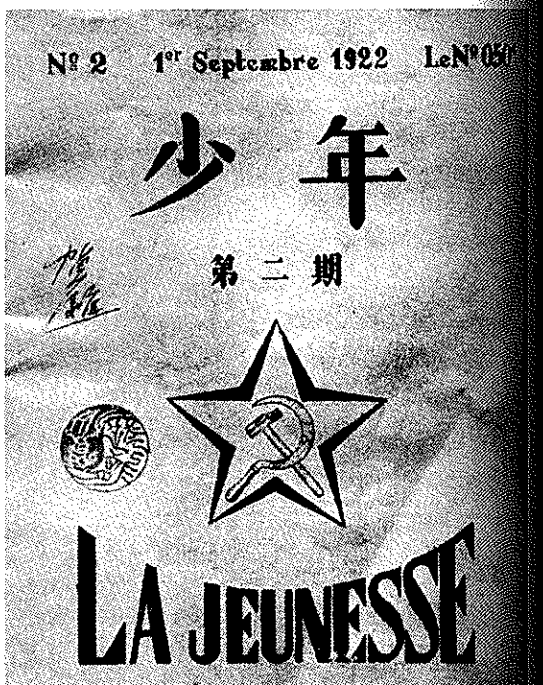
Japanese policy toward China after the beginning of the First World War underwent a number of swings. During 1914 and 1915, Japan's seizure of the German concessions in Shandong and issuing of the Twenty-one Demands had shown complete intransigence. The Washington Conference of 1921–1922 saw a more conciliatory Japan withdrawing its harsher demands and returning the former German possessions and railways to China. But in 1927–1928 the hard line resurfaced, partly in response to the belief that the Guomindang-Communist alliance would usher in a new era of antiforeignism that might damage Japan's privileged trading position in central China and its dominating military presence in southern Manchuria. The violent clash with National Revolutionary Army troops at Jinan in May 1928 and the assassination of Marshal Zhang Zuolin in June the same year gave ample proof of the new mood.

Tension between the Japanese army and the various governments in China mirrored growing problems in Japan itself. The enormous promise of rapid development that had lasted through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries began to waver and fade. Although the granting of full voting rights to all Japanese males in 1925 and the accession of the young and scholarly emperor Hirohito to the throne in 1926 seemed to augur continued vitality, the Japanese imperial-constitutional government had in fact entered a period of decline. The great government-backed industrial corporations were believed by many to have grown too powerful and corrupt, and to have undermined the integrity of elected politicians and the bureaucracy. Both the army and navy, well equipped and well trained, felt frustrated by international treaties and a foreign policy that seemed to deny them a meaningful role.

There was a pervasive fear of subversion within the country, and even though Japan's Communist party had been wholly ineffectual, tough new "peace-preservation laws" were passed in the late 1920s that gave special powers to the police in their hunt for domestic agitators. A population that

Chinese assembling in Peking to celebrate the armistice ending World War I and press for China's [illegible], November 1918 (photographs by Sidney D. Gamble)

Student demonstration at Tiananmen, Peking, Summer 1919 (photograph by Sidney D. Gamble) On May 4, 1919, thousands of Peking-area students gathered to assert China's rights in Shandong and call for "democracy and science." The demonstrations continued through June.



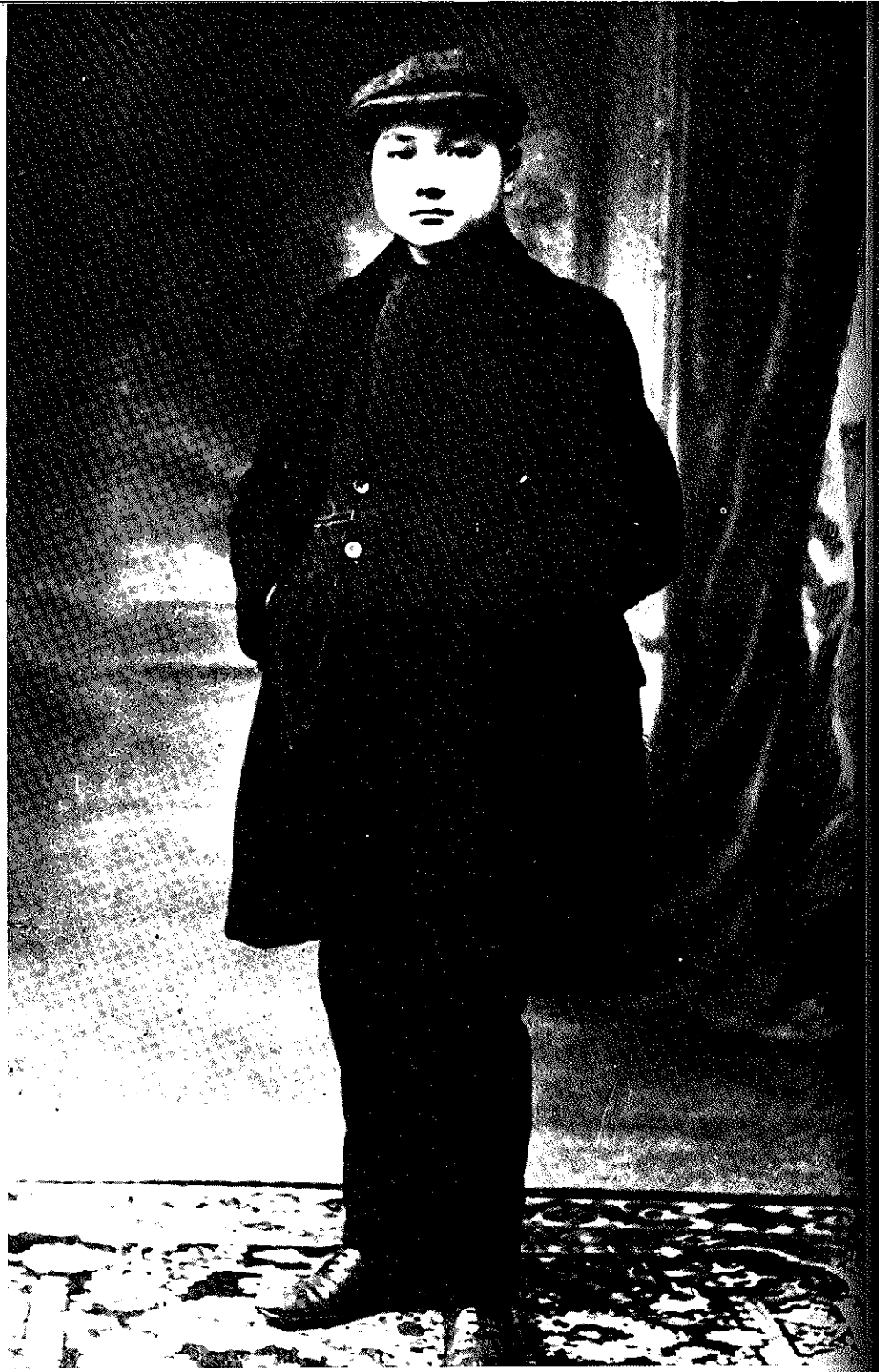
"La Jeunesse," one of the influential May Fourth period journals, edited by Chen Duxiu

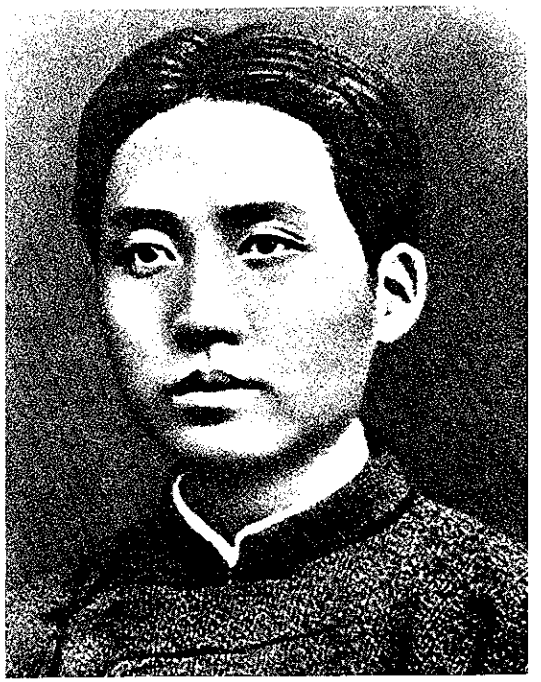
Li Dazhao

Chen Duxiu

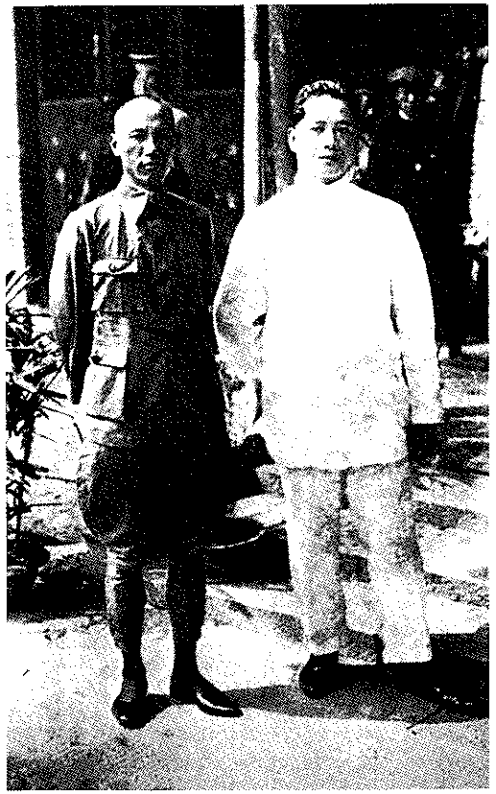
Cai Yuanpei

Hu Shi





Mao Zedong, c. 1919



Chiang Kai-shek (left) and Wang Jingwei in Canton, 1925

Zhang Zuolin (center), the Manchurian warlord and fanatical antileftist, with his son Zhang Xueliang (at left)

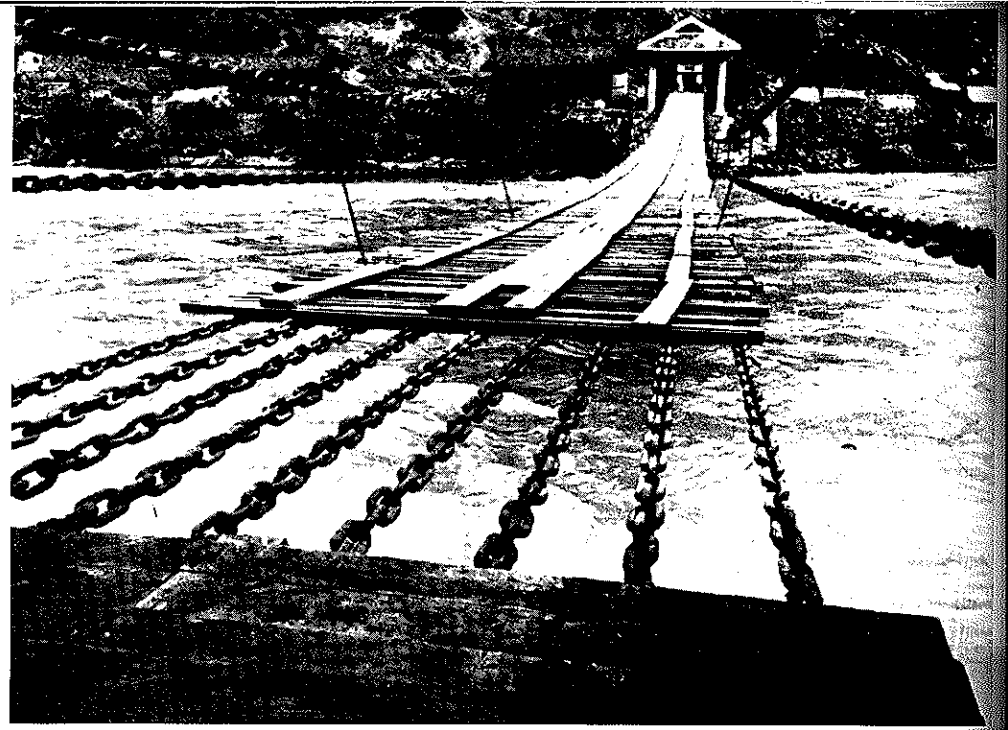
Feng Yuxiang, the powerful northern warlord who joined the Guomindang, 1928

A poster depicting the fate of Chinese patriotism at the hands of warlords and foreign imperialists in the aftermath of the May Thirtieth incident of 1925

Canton, December 11–13, 1927 Bodies of workers and Communists, executed in the aftermath of the failed Canton insurrection, lie in the streets.

Nationalist troops during the encirclement campaigns that forced the Communists out of the Jiangxi Soviet onto the Long March

Japanese forces on the move in Manchuria, 1932



Luding Bridge, high over the Datong River in Sichuan province In May 1935, Communist forces seized this critical crossing in one of the most daring acts of the Long March.

Peng Dehuai, commander of the Third Army Corps on the Long March

Lin Biao, commander of the First Army Corps

The grim march across the "Great Snow" Mountain into northern Sichuan, May–June 1935

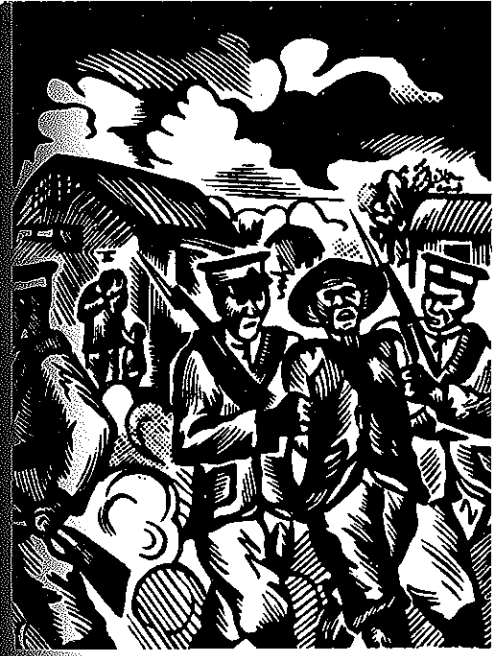
Mao Zedong (left) and Zhu De Mao emerged during the Long March as the political and military leader of the CCP; Zhu was commander in chief of the Red Army.

"The appetite for wine and food has gone" (1938)

"The cart has turned over / Those who help me at few / Those who eat the melons are many" (1936)

The frontispiece to Feng's illustrated edition of Lu Xun's "The True Story of Ah Q"

Three ink drawings by Feng Zikai, the brilliant draftsman whose work gently portrayed China's desperat



"An Ordinary Tale," woodcut by Xinbo (pseudonym) depicting peasant conscription by Nationalist forces, 1931–1936

Rickshaw Puller," woodcut by Lan Jia

Examples of the socialist realist woodblock movement that flourished in the mid-1930s

"Flying in the Rain" by Gao Jianfu, 1932 Gao was a leading figure among painters trying to create a new national art that would both preserve the best of China's past techniques and fuse it with West-

had doubled in size since the Meiji reforms, reaching 65 million in 1928, began to face urban unemployment and agricultural depression. Both were exacerbated when the U.S. stock-market crash prefigured the collapse of the huge market for Japanese silks there, throwing thousands of Japanese workers out of jobs and costing farmers their main source of supplementary income. In 1929–1930 silk prices dropped to one-quarter of their previous levels, and Japan's exports to the United States dropped by 40 percent. Japanese exports of pearls, canned goods, and porcelain to the United States were all adversely affected by the Smoot-Hawley Tariff of 1930, which raised import duties by an average of 23 percent. In the same period, Japanese exports to China dropped by 50 percent.

There was, among many Japanese scholars and politicians, a complicated attitude toward China that combined admiration for past cultural attainments with patronizing contempt for its current predicaments. One of Japan's most famous China scholars and publicists, Naito Konan, was fully representative of these attitudes. On the first day of the Sino-Japanese War in 1894, as a young man of twenty-nine, Naito had written of Japan's new "mission" to spread "Japanese civilization and ways to every corner of the world." Since of all Asian nations China was the largest, naturally it "should become the primary target of Japan's mission." To Naito, this mission was special because Japan, in an inevitable process of diffusion and change, had become the possessor and developer of a cultural maturity once held by China.

The Jiangsu-Zhejiang dominance of Chinese culture in the late Ming and early Qing had been followed by a period of fluorescence for Guangdong—all three provinces had been originally inhabited by non-Chinese barbarians, Naito pointed out—until by the 1920s "the Oriental cultural center [had] shifted to Japan." Naito's language could at times be crudely dismissive: "We no longer need to ask when China will collapse," he wrote during the May Fourth movement in 1919. "It is already dead, only its corpse is wriggling." But more often he tried to spell out Japan's dreams for China by using protracted metaphors of progress and change:

> Suppose, with the intention to open up a huge rice field, you start digging irrigation canals. Eventually, you hit a big rock which must be cracked with a hammer or even blasted by dynamite. What would you say if someone should disregard your ultimate objective, and criticize you for destroying the land?[14]

What this meant for China in economic terms fitted well with what the Southern Manchurian Railway Company, other Japanese industrialists, and

the Japanese army were already contemplating or carrying out: "China must in the first place be so reorganized as to become a producing country of crude materials needed for manufacturing."[15] From the conjunction of such views emerged the idea of a Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, in which China and Japan, under Japan's vigorous and martial leadership, would claim their rightful place in the world, even if it took war to persuade China of the correctness of this course.

Those Japanese army officers who had hoped that the 1928 assassination of Zhang Zuolin would spark a wider war in north China were disappointed. The Tokyo government took a watchful attitude and did not order general mobilization. Instead, Zhang Zuolin's son, Zhang Xueliang, succeeded to the leadership of his father's troops. Born in 1898, Zhang Xueliang had been an undistinguished officer in his father's Manchurian armies, an opium addict, and a social gadfly despised by many of his father's leading commanders. He could not have initially seemed much of a threat to the Japanese, and was dismissively called "the Young Marshal." But he showed surprising determination in the summer and fall of 1928 by bringing the three northeastern provinces that had constituted his father's domain—Heilongjiang, Jilin (Kirin), and Liaoning—into nominal unity with the rest of China under the Nanjing regime of the Guomindang. As an added inducement, Nanjing offered to let Zhang incorporate the province of Rehe (Jehol) into a Northeast Political Council that he would head. Despite Japanese warnings that they opposed the reunification of Manchuria with the rest of China, Zhang persisted, and pledged loyalty to the Nanjing government in December 1928.

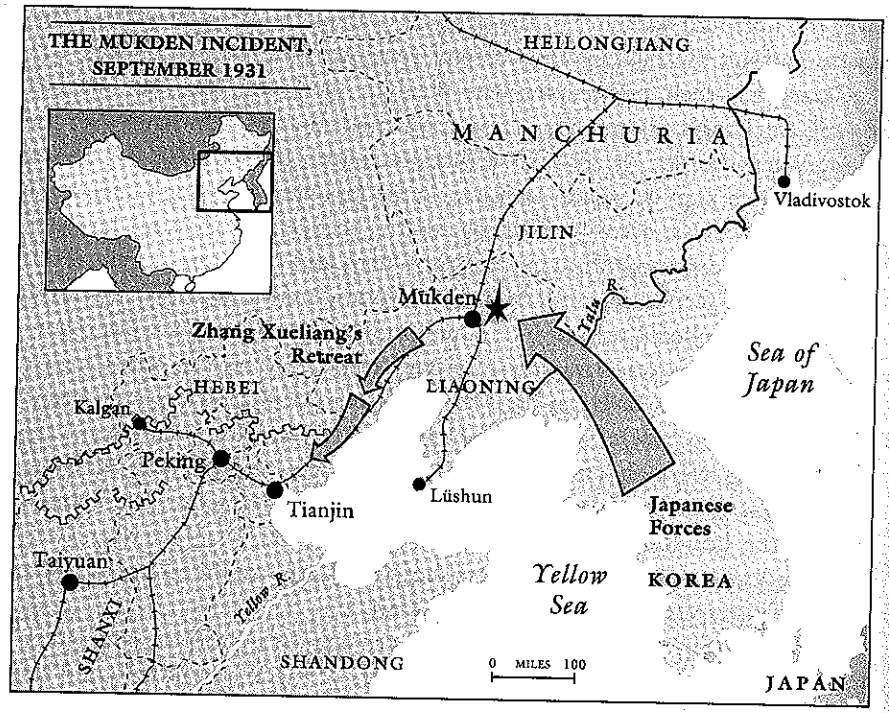
Thereafter Zhang Xueliang began to show an alarming independence. The Japanese had hoped to influence or even dominate Zhang through two of his father's close confidants who had been important military and civil leaders in the northeast. Zhang, aware of this plan, invited the two men to dinner in January 1929 and had them shot during the meal; he excused himself from his guests to get an injection of his daily morphine while the killings were being carried out. Late that spring, in an echo of his father's 1927 raid on the Soviet embassy in Peking, Zhang raided the Soviet Union's consulate in Harbin and tried to take over the entire Soviet-controlled Chinese Eastern Railway while expelling all Soviet citizens from their posts on it. He had to retreat from these acts when Stalin ordered a strong military response. But in the fall of 1930, when a military-political coalition in the north tried to oust Chiang Kai-shek from power—Chiang's enemies were the formidable trio of Feng Yuxiang, Yan Xishan, and Wang Jingwei—Zhang Xueliang ordered his own troops south through the Shanhaiguan pass and occupied northern Hebei province. This move gave him control

over the northern stretches of the Peking-Wuhan and Tianjin-Pukou railroads, and put the rich Tianjin customs revenues into his own pocket.

Chiang Kai-shek, preoccupied with breaking the hostile coalition, accepted Zhang Xueliang's extended base and confirmed Zhang's command over the Northeastern Border Defense Army that now numbered some 400,000 troops. The two men kept up steady pressure on the Japanese, refusing to negotiate new railway deals, actively working for the recovery of existing Japanese rights, demanding an end to extraterritoriality, and resuming development of a new port facility in south Manchuria to undercut the prosperity of the Japanese-controlled Lüshun. The Guomindang also waged a comprehensive economic boycott of Japanese imports, following serious anti-Chinese outbreaks in Korea. In Japan itself the levels of anger and frustration began to rise, partly because of these setbacks and partly because members of the armed forces were shocked that the Japanese government had accepted lower ratios than had been expected for auxiliary naval craft and submarines at the London naval conference of spring 1930. In November 1930, an allegedly patriotic young Japanese shot and fatally wounded the Japanese prime minister at the Tokyo railway station.

Faced with intensifying domestic violence against politicians and industrialists, and an economy in decline, members of the War Ministry and the Foreign Ministry in Tokyo began moves to curb the actions of their army in Manchuria. In early September 1931 the Japanese government sent a senior general to Lüshun with orders that the commanding Japanese officer in Manchuria use "prudence and patience" in handling problems there. Once such orders had been formally issued, it would have been impossible for the Manchurian army to proceed as it chose. Alerted to the purpose of the general's visit by a secret cable from a junior staff officer in Tokyo, Japanese army officers in Mukden decided to act before they received the restraining orders.

On the night of September 18, 1931, they set off explosives on a stretch of railway line outside Mukden, selected because it was near the largest barracks of Chinese troops in the region. In the noise and confusion, skirmishes broke out between the Japanese and Chinese. The Mukden region's senior Japanese staff officer followed up by ordering a full-scale attack on the Chinese barracks, and the capture of the walled city of Mukden itself. The Japanese consul tried to remonstrate, but was silenced when one of the officers drew his sword. While the majority of the cabinet in Tokyo was urging restraint, and the Chinese and Americans requested the League of Nations to call for an end to the fighting, the Tokyo chief of staff sent ambiguous messages to his Manchurian forces. The Japanese commander in Korea independently ordered his troops across the border into south



Manchuria, and the Mukden army used current guidelines for self-defense and bandit suppression to extend the scope of its actions. Chiang Kai-shek, who faced a crisis among his supporters because of his recent arrest of Hu Hanmin, could not afford another large-scale conflict. Instead he ordered Zhang Xueliang not to risk his troops in pitched battles and to withdraw them south of the Great Wall. By year's end, Manchuria was under complete Japanese control.

The question of who might lead this potential new "country" was swiftly solved. Since 1925 the ex-emperor Puyi had been living in the Japanese concession in Tianjin. In July 1931 his brother visited Japan and met with various politicians; only twelve days after the "Mukden Incident," representatives of the Manchurian army's general staff came to Tianjin to confer with Puyi. Talks on the future of Manchuria continued in October, with the Japanese assuring the twenty-five-year-old Puyi that they had acted merely against Zhang Xueliang and his troops, and that they wished to help the inhabitants of Manchuria create an independent state, although the Japanese were vague about whether the new state would be a monarchy or a republic. In November, Puyi, apparently convinced by these arguments, and perhaps stirred by dreams of restoring his family's Manchu heritage,

allowed himself to be smuggled out of Tianjin on a Japanese motor launch, transferred to a Japanese freighter off Tanggu, and taken to Lüshun. In March 1932, after protracted negotiations with Japanese army representatives had failed to get them to agree to his being the "emperor" of a revived "Great Qing State," Puyi accepted the title "chief executive" of the state of Manchukuo, which meant "land of the Manchus." A number of former Manchu grandees and conservative Chinese officials from the Qing court came to join him as he established his new regime.

Although it was slow to act, the League of Nations did not let these developments go unquestioned, and in November 1931 the League ordered a commission headed by the British statesman Lord Lytton to examine the situation. The United States, though not willing to risk armed intervention, attempted to influence other foreign powers to take a firm stance. President Herbert Hoover's secretary of state, Henry Stimson, announced in January 1932 that the Americans did "not intend to recognize any situation, treaty or agreement" in Manchukuo that defied the basic laws of peaceful international behavior. But the British would not formally endorse this initiative for a "nonrecognition" doctrine, as it came to be called, on the grounds that "the present unsettled and distracted state of China" made it impossible to predict what might happen.[16]

"Unsettled and distracted" China might be, but the Mukden Incident prompted deeper levels of anti-Japanese and antiforeign feeling among Chinese. So serious did the boycotts become in Shanghai that on January 28, 1932, the Municipal Council of Shanghai declared a state of emergency and deployed troops for the defense of the various foreign concessions composing the International Settlement, so that they would not be caught napping as they had been in April 1927. On that same night Japanese marines, ordered ashore to secure their perimeter, exchanged fire with the Guomindang Nineteenth Route Army in the poor Chinese residential district of Chapei. Calling this clash an "insult" to the Japanese empire, the ranking Japanese naval officer ordered Chapei bombed on January 29.

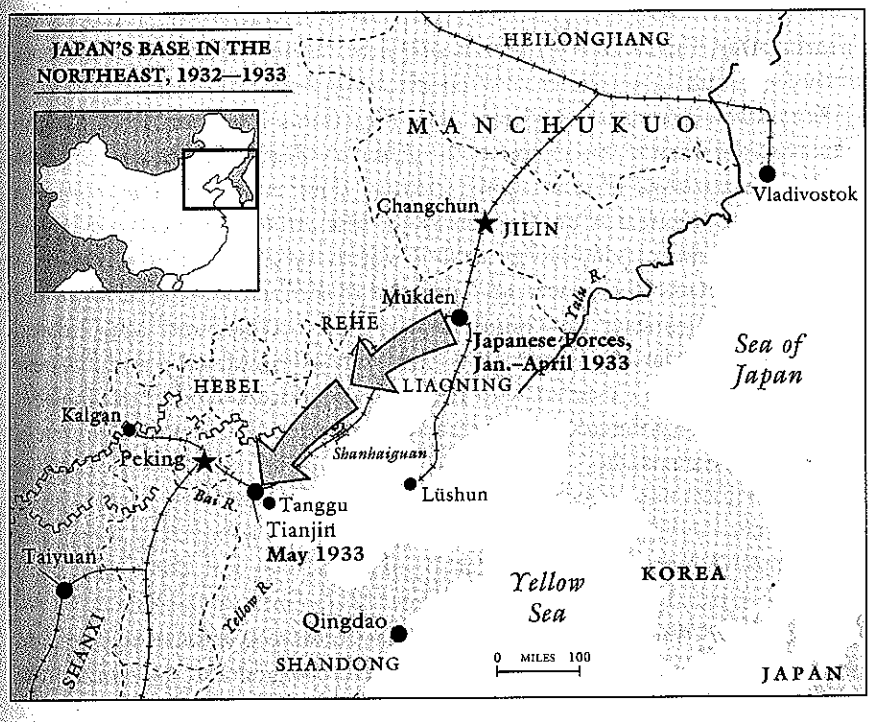
The bombings—which roused passionate world opinion because of the number of innocent civilians killed—were followed by a full-scale Japanese attack on Shanghai's Chinese defenders. The Japanese committed three entire divisions to the battle, but the Chinese fought back with remarkable courage and tenacity. Their bravery under fire, when coupled with the determined defense of Heilongjiang by another Chinese army in the far north, renewed foreigners' respect for China's fighting capabilities. And since Japan's aggression was occurring in a context of growing disorder at home—the Japanese finance minister was shot and killed during the February elections, the head of the Mitsui corporation was assassinated in

downtown Tokyo the same month, and another prime minister was gunned down in his official residence in May—Japanese claims of bringing order to a disintegrating China sounded specious.

The Japanese arranged an armistice in Shanghai in May 1932, forcing the Chinese to accept the drawing of a neutral zone around the city. Chiang Kai-shek transferred the Nineteenth Route Army, which had fought bravely in Shanghai, out of the city and down to Fujian because he did not trust the loyalty of the army's commander. Later that year the Japanese resumed an aggressive stance: in August the Japanese government announced its diplomatic "recognition" of Puyi's Manchukuo and expressed "fervent hope that the day is not far distant when Japan, Manchukuo, and China, as three independent powers closely linked together by a bond of cultural and racial affinities, will come to operate hand in hand for the maintenance and advancement of the peace and prosperity of the Far East."[17] In January 1933, after Japan learned that the Lytton commission report, though conciliatory in tone, was not going to acquiesce in the abandonment of Chinese sovereignty in Manchuria, Japanese troops were ordered to advance into Rehe (Jehol) on the pretext that "the affairs of Rehe province are unquestionably an internal problem of Manchukuo."[18] By April the Japanese had effectively conquered the whole province, consolidating their hold by occupying the strategic pass at the coastal end of the Great Wall in Shanhaiguan.

During February 1933, while the fighting in Rehe was raging, the League of Nations finally held its full debate on the Lytton report. The head of the Japanese delegation argued strongly that the League must understand the Japanese "desire to help China as far as is within our power. This is the duty we must assume."[19] He added a warning that failure to understand the logic of Japan's position might lead to a fateful alliance of a "Red China" with the Soviet Union. Unmoved, all the League countries but one—Siam abstained—endorsed the Lytton report, thus rejecting the concept of Manchukuo as an independent state. When the vote was announced, the Japanese walked out of the League, never to return.

The last stages in this drama of Japan's establishment of a base in northeast China came in May 1933. Finding, predictably, that they could not consolidate their forces along the north side of the Great Wall unless they cleared its south side of Chinese troops, the Japanese Manchurian army moved that month into Hebei province. They then attacked the Chinese troops in the province with a mixture of force, cunning, and psychological warfare. In a series of classic military engagements they pushed the Chinese armies back to the Bai River. Through a special agency based in Tianjin, they also bribed local generals and former warlords to defect or form rival government organizations. They encouraged resistance by local secret-soci-



ety leaders and paramilitary forces. Setting up a radio station on Chinese military frequencies, they gave fake orders to Chinese field commanders, causing confusion in the Chinese battle plan. And by flying war planes low over Peking, they terrified the local population into a feeling of helplessness.

Routed, demoralized, and divided, the Chinese armies sued for peace at the end of May 1933. In the coastal town of Tanggu, under the guns of a Japanese battleship and destroyer squadron, the Chinese negotiators signed a humiliating truce. The Tanggu Truce stipulated that northeastern Hebei province, from a line just northeast of the Bai River, would be declared a demilitarized zone, to be patrolled only by Chinese police units that must "not be constituted of armed units hostile to Japanese feelings." In return, with the exception of the troops guarding the safe approaches to Peking, as stipulated long before by the Boxer Protocol, the other Japanese forces would retire back to the Great Wall, maintaining the right to fly spotter planes over the region to make sure there were no Chinese troop movements in violation of the truce.

Within weeks of the Tanggu Truce, the question of Manchukuo's form of government was discussed again—by Puyi and his advisers, the army, and ministers in Tokyo. The commander of the Japanese Manchurian army

told Puyi that there was general agreement on restoring the emperorship. Hearing this, Puyi made arrangements to have the imperial dragon robes of the last adult Qing emperor, Guangxu, shipped to him from Peking.

At special ceremonies in March 1934, Puyi donned his borrowed dragon robes to announce his accession at the Altar of Heaven in the eastern suburbs of Changchun, his new capital. He then changed into military uniform for his enthronement. For his new reign title he took the term *Kangde*, meaning "period of virtuous peace." The first syllable of this phrase was designed to evoke the power and prestige of Emperor Kangxi, who had unified the Qing state two hundred fifty years before, and consolidated Manchuria's borders against the Russians. Few of the Manchu and Chinese courtiers who were clustered with the Japanese officers around the ineffectual Puyi can really have believed that the great days of the early Qing were about to be re-enacted.

CHINA AND GERMANY

The clauses of the Treaty of Versailles that confirmed Japanese possession of the former German spheres of interest had enraged and galvanized the Chinese people. But for the Germans themselves the treaty was punitive and infinitely more damaging. Germany lost great stretches of territory to France, Poland, and Denmark, and had to give up all her colonies. The German side of the Rhine River was made a demilitarized zone, and the rich Saar coal fields were placed under French supervision. The army was slashed back to 100,000 men, the navy drastically reduced, the construction of military aircraft halted, and the manufacture of munitions strictly limited. Even the German merchant fleet was to be reduced to one-tenth of its former size. Having assigned guilt for the war to the Germans, the Allied powers imposed a gigantic reparations bill of 132 billion gold marks on the defeated nation. The result was political, economic, and social chaos as a series of weak coalition governments struggled to fill the vacuum left at Germany's center after the kaiser's abdication and flight in 1918. By July 1923 the German mark, which had traded at around 160 to the U.S. dollar in 1922, fell in value to 160,000 to the dollar; in November 1923 it had plummeted to a meaningless 4 billion to the dollar.

Yet throughout this period the Chinese had not ceased to admire Germany as a cultural and scientific center. Large numbers of Chinese students traveled to study there, some in the humanities—especially history and philosophy—and others in such fields as metallurgy, ballistics, and geology. The initial alliance and subsequent struggles between the Guomindang and the CCP were mirrored in Germany by clashing groups of Chinese students, who sometimes burst into open conflict. Two separate rallies for the opposing factions had to be held in Berlin to commemorate the first anniversary of Sun Yat-sen's death. Several Communists tried to work actively among the clusters of Chinese laborers in Germany—sailors in Hamburg, for instance, or impoverished peddlers in the Berlin slums—but the German police were watchful, and Chinese speaking at political rallies risked deportation. The liveliness of the intellectual exchange between Germany and China in the later 1920s is suggested by those Germans who sent telegrams on political matters to Sun's widow Soong Qingling, who had spent two long periods in Berlin: they included Arnold Zweig, Bertolt Brecht, Walter Gropius, and Käthe Kollwitz.

Sun Yat-sen had several times in the early 1920s sent confidential missions to Germany to seek technical and military advisers for his Canton government. But the people he wanted were either not available or not interested, and the German Foreign Ministry was wary about dealing with him, apparently not swayed by his dramatic statement that "to get rid of the yoke of Versailles there is no way better than the assistance of establishing a great, strong, modern army in China, and then let China speak for you."[20] So Sun placed most of his hopes for foreign assistance on the Comintern and Soviet military advisers; when a small group of Germans—three aviation officers and seven infantry advisers, along with some experts to work in the arsenals and train police—did finally reach Canton, the Soviet presence was already paramount.

During the years of the Northern Expedition and Chiang's attacks on the CCP, German industry began to make a strong comeback, and large-scale arms manufacture was resumed. The Ruhr—seized by France in 1923 because of German defaults on the reparations payments—returned to German control when the French withdrew their forces in 1925. Germany entered the League of Nations as a full member. As president, Hindenburg brought some order to national politics, and the currency was stabilized. To members of the Guomindang Western Hills faction who were bitterly hostile to the Communists, Germany now seemed all the more desirable as a source of technical expertise, and in late 1926, acting through intermediaries, these Chinese obtained the services of Max Bauer as an economic and military adviser.

Bauer had been an officer in the Operations and Strategic Mobilization sections of the German General Staff before and during World War I. After the war he became a free-lance military adviser in the Soviet Union and Argentina, before returning to Germany in 1926. His expertise during the war had been in the integration of military needs with industrial pro-

duction, and he had kept up with a combination of military and business contacts, which made him an excellent choice to advise the Chinese. Bauer arrived in Canton in late 1927, having already worked out deals by which he would serve as exclusive agent in China for Junkers Aircraft and the Oerlikon arms manufacturers. While in Canton, Bauer witnessed the rise and collapse of the ill-fated December Communist uprising.

Bauer was not only capable, he had a wild and visionary strain which he expressed in flamboyant rhetoric that apparently appealed to Chiang Kai-shek. In one of his first memoranda, Bauer wrote to Chiang: "That the world stands before a new epoch, a social-altruistic as opposed to the imperialist-materialistic, is clear for all to see." He appealed to Chiang to uphold "the national idea in the healthy sense." Bauer also developed deep admiration for the Chinese as a people and wrote how right they were "in rejecting exploitation by the 'white master race,' which is degenerating under the impact of materialism, eroticism, and nervous strain!"[21]

But Bauer's advice to Chiang on industry, armaments, and military procedures was sound. In 1928 Chiang sent him back to Germany, where Bauer set up a Commerce Department under cover of the Chinese legation in Berlin. He was to concentrate on bulk buying of munitions and equipment, so as to cut out expensive middlemen, weed out nonstandard or obsolete weapons, and encourage the production by the Germans of materials adapted to China's special needs. By the time of his death from smallpox while on a campaign against the Guangxi militarists during 1929, Bauer had given Chiang a good sense of the demands of modern warfare—to add to the previous lessons taught by Blyukher—and had obtained for Chiang's service not only several other talented German staff officers, but also experts on agrarian resettlement, city administration, mineral resources, and industrial engineering. Several of these men were made available by the German ministries that employed them, and this new German flexibility was taken up by the War Ministry itself, which in the summer of 1929 released for China service two of its leading experts in radio communications.

During the early 1930s, Sino-German harmony grew muted. The Chinese were nervous about a series of massive German bank failures, the rise of Germany's unemployed past the 6 million level, and the emergence of Adolf Hitler as a prominent candidate in the 1932 presidential election. The Germans for their part lacked confidence in the honesty of the Chinese Commerce Department staff in Berlin, and were skeptical about the staying power of Chiang's regime. In China, Bauer's successors proved unable to win Chiang's trust, and they even undid much of Bauer's work by insisting on the primacy of the military-training side of their mission, as opposed to the economic and industrial sphere on which Bauer had always focused.

Furthermore, Chiang's political fortunes were indeed at a low ebb. He "retired" from politics after the Mukden Incident, resigning the presidency and leaving the running of the country to Wang Jingwei and Sun Fo, who had tried to set up a separatist regime in Canton.

When Chiang was invited back to office in January 1932 (again, just as in late 1927, his absence had proved his indispensability), he concentrated much more power in his own hands. He made himself chief of the General Staff and chairman of the National Military Council, which commanded the army, navy, and air force. Further, in an attempt to speed the destruction of the Communists in their rural soviets—two major military campaigns in 1931 and 1932 had failed to dislodge them and had led to serious defeats at the hands of the Jiangxi Soviet forces—Chiang established, under the military council, a Bandit Suppression Headquarters, again with himself as its commander in chief. Since the commander in chief was empowered with complete civil, military, and party control in all areas where Communists were active, the five yuan of the national government had essentially no checks on his actions. Nor could they prevent an accompanying concentration of funds in the military. As the following table of government expenditures shows, when direct military costs were combined with accrued debt interest—often incurred for military needs as well—the amount left to the rest of the "government" for its expenses was never more than 20 percent of the total until 1934–1935. And these figures do not generally

The Nanjing Government's Military and Debt Expenditures, 1928–1937*[22]

	Military expenditures		*Debt service*		*Total military and debt expenditures*	
Fiscal year	*Amount*	*% of total expenditures*	*Amount*	*% of total expenditures*	*Amount*	*% of total expenditures*
1928–29	210	50.8	158	38.3	368	89.1
1929–30	245	45.5	200	37.2	445	82.7
1930–31	312	43.6	290	40.5	602	84.1
1931–32	304	44.5	270	39.5	574	84.0
1932–33	321	49.7	210	32.6	531	82.3
1933–34	373	48.5	244	31.8	617	80.3
1934–35	368	34.4	356	33.2	724	67.6
1935–36	220	21.6	275	26.9	495	48.5
1936–37	322	32.5	239	24.1	561	56.6

*In millions of Chinese dollars.

include provincial allocations for military defense and security.

The third "bandit suppression" campaign, directed by Chiang Kai-shek from his base at Nanchang between July and October 1932, was more successful, overrunning one of the central China soviets and driving deeply into the Jiangxi Soviet itself. Chiang and his staff now started to pay more attention to the psychological dimensions of the struggle through a program they termed the "3:7," meaning that three parts of the anti-Communist effort would be military and seven parts political. Under the "political" rubric they began to encourage the honesty and efficiency of local magistrates, readjust rents through mediation committees, and develop local cooperatives for advancing credit, making available food, seed, and tools, and marketing local goods. Chiang's forces also sought to indoctrinate the local peasantry with moral and patriotic values.

At the same time, the Guomindang put new demands on the people in the form of conscripted labor and heavy surtaxes as they began an ambitious program to build airfields and an encircling network of roads in the war zones. The Guomindang also set out to construct a line of sturdy stone or brick block houses around the entire Jiangxi Soviet area. The block houses both helped to consolidate an economic blockade and acted as defensive points, supply storehouses, emergency field hospitals, and the bases for forward operations. The model that Chiang's forces consciously employed was Zeng Guofan's suppression of the Nian rebels seventy years before. To back up the fourth and fifth suppression campaigns undertaken in 1933 and 1934, 1,500 miles of new road were built, and 14,000 block houses.

Although a number of German officers were active as advisers in these campaigns, Chiang felt the need for another senior adviser like Bauer whom he could really trust, a man with impeccable credentials who would give an intelligent overview of the entire Chinese military structure. The man he finally chose was General Hans von Seeckt, a distinguished World War I commander who had been responsible, between 1920 and 1926, for building the compulsorily streamlined German army—the Reichswehr—into a finely disciplined, spirited, well-equipped force.

Seeckt reached Chiang's mountain headquarters at Kuling, near Nanchang, in May 1933, and had several days of intense talks with him. Though Seeckt declined Chiang's request to become the permanent senior adviser of an expanded German mission, he agreed to write a detailed study of China's military needs for Chiang. Seeckt emphasized that the Guomindang-controlled army must be qualitatively excellent and led by a completely dedicated and professional officer corps, so that it could provide the "foundation of the ruling power." Chiang had too many troops, Seeckt wrote; an army such as the one he suggested need be no more than ten

divisions. An elite training brigade should be developed first, which could also serve as a strike force in its own right. To achieve this and the logistical reform to go with it, Chiang "must ensure that the influence of the German advisers in fact prevails."[23] These advisers would also build up a standardized armaments industry for China using their own selected contractors. Seeckt broached the idea also of exchanging Chinese raw materials for the munitions and other goods that China would need from Germany.

The first step in this direction was taken in January 1934, when the German Military and Finance Ministry approved the formation of a single private corporation to handle military-industrial dealings with China. Seeckt made a second visit to China in the summer of 1934 as a lavishly feted guest of Chiang's on a monthly stipend of $2,000—"I am seen here as a military Confucius," the German wrote to his sister[24]—and a "strictly secret" treaty was signed in August 1934. Starting with a credit of DM 100 million, China was to obtain an iron and steel complex, ore-processing machinery, and modern arsenals from Germany. Seeckt had pointed out that the arms currently being made in China were "from 75 to 90 percent unusable" in a modern army such as the one he envisaged.

The Germans were to receive in return "high-quality ores." These ores were unspecified in the agreement, but referred mainly to antimony and tungsten, both of which were essential in modern warfare. Antimony was needed to harden lead alloys used in ammunition manufacture, especially for shrapnel shells and cartridge caps; tungsten (extracted from wolframite), with the highest melting temperature of any known metal, was used to cut steel and in making armor plate, armor-piercing shells, airplanes, light filaments, and telephone parts. Germany produced neither one of these minerals; China, in north and south Hunan, produced 60 percent of the world's supply of antimony (of exceptionally high purity) and, in Hunan and Jiangxi, half of the world's supply of tungsten.

So important did the possibilities for mutual supply now seem, that the German War Ministry openly took over control of the once nominally private trade company. The German consul general in Shanghai cabled Hitler directly in May 1935 to support the arrangement made with the Nanjing government, and urged him not to encourage deals with other Chinese companies, no matter how tempting they might look. On the Chinese side, a National Resources Commission was formed as a supplement to the other economic development groups run by various branches of the government. The significance of this new commission was that its activities were coordinated by the National Military Council, which Chiang directed. All receipts and payments were managed by a special subsidiary of the Central Bank of China. In early 1936 the Nanjing government established monopoly bur-