

14. Quoted in Hibbert, *Dragon Awakes*, pp. 99–100.
15. Morse, *International Relations*, p. 142.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
17. Ssu-yu Teng and John K. Fairbank, *China's Response to the West: A Documentary Survey, 1839–1923* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), pp. 24–27.
18. See Li Chien-nung, *The Political History of China, 1840–1928* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1956), pp. 63–64.
19. *The Taiping Revolution* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1976), p. 173.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 172–73.
21. Karl Marx, "Chinese Affairs," *Die Press* (Vienna), July 7, 1862, quoted in Shlomo Avineri, *Karl Marx on Colonialism and Modernization* (New York: Anchor Books), p. 442.
22. Li Chien-nung, *Political History*, p. 82.
23. Quoted in Emily Hahn, *China Only Yesterday* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1963), p. 41.
24. See Hibbert, *Dragon Awakes*, p. 229.
25. Earl Swisher, *China's Management of the American Barbarians* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1953), p. 303.
26. For example, see *ibid.* (pp. 242 and 326).
27. Quoted in Hibbert, *Dragon Awakes*, p. 226.
28. Swisher, *China's Management*, p. 327.
29. MacNair, *Modern Chinese History*, p. 291.
30. Wu Hsiang-hsiang, *O-ti ch'in-lueh Chung-kuo shih* (Taipei: 1954), p. 48; quoted in Henry McAleavy, *The Modern History of China* (New York: Praeger, 1967), p. 100.
31. Jian Bozan, Shao Xunzheng, and Hu Hua, *A Concise History of China* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1981), p. 94.

CHAPTER 3

DECLINE OF THE OLD ORDER, BEGINNING OF THE NEW: 1860–1895

During the 34 years that followed the signing of the Beijing treaties, internal rebellion was put down, some new ("modern") political and economic institutions were added to the traditional system, the armed forces were "modernized," a few Western-style defense and commercial industries were established, railways and telegraphs were introduced, and diplomatic posts were opened abroad. The dynasty, which seemed on the verge of collapse in the 1850s, now appeared to be fully restored to power. China gave the impression of progressing satisfactorily, albeit slowly.

However, in 1894–1895 the actual incompetence and weakness of the Chinese government system that lay behind the facade of growth and development was exposed when this Asian giant was abjectly defeated by Japan, the island nation that had been "opened" by the United States in 1854. This defeat virtually spelled the end of the Chinese traditional order and put China on the path of revolutionary change, which ultimately led to the establishment of a Communist government in 1949.

China's defeat in the 1894–1895 war was a symptom of the Qing failure to renovate successfully its moribund traditional political-economic system. This failure was the result of many forces, national and international, but if there was one preponderant reason for China's plight, it was the poor leadership of

the incompetent, conservative, unimaginative Manchus, who sought to preserve their position even at the cost of further decentralization of power. What China needed was a strong center that could pull the country together and mobilize all possible resources to confront its internal and external problems. Indeed, had this been done, even the dynasty might have been saved.

CENTRAL LEADERSHIP

Occupants of the Dragon Throne

The most important figure at the court during these 34 years was Yehonala (1835–1908), whose career began in 1851 as a low-ranking Manchu concubine in the imperial palace. Her status was raised when she became the mother in 1856 of the only son and heir of Emperor Xian-feng (born 1831; reigned 1851–1861). She was well versed in the Chinese language and began to take a keen interest in the affairs of state; the emperor even allowed her to classify his memorials.

Xian-feng was extremely antiforeign and was particularly incensed at the idea of granting an audience to foreign envoys, who refused to kowtow before him. The success of his imperial forces at Dagu in 1859 gave him the false impression that the foreigners could

be militarily contained. However, the debacle in 1860 destroyed his sense of self-respect, and he gave up all interest in national affairs when he fled to Rehe. He could not see himself returning to Beijing to be humiliated by Westerners, who not only had burned down his favorite summer palace but whose envoys now had also gained the right to stand upright in his presence. So he lingered on in Rehe, indulging in excesses ("debauchery," as a more frank appraisal would have described it). As a result of these excesses, he died in the fall of 1861.

Just before his death, eight of his rabidly antiforeign advisers were appointed as joint-regents of his four-year-old son, Yehonala, although given the rank of empress dowager, was deprived of all power.

In a brilliantly organized coup, the details of which read like an exciting thriller, Yehonala connived with Prince Gong to arrest the eight regents and eliminate them from the political scene; one was executed and two were allowed to hang themselves, and the others were suitably punished in other ways. The empress consort (the legitimate wife of the Xian-feng emperor) and the empress dowager were now appointed coregents. Prince Gong, their adviser, was given the rank of Prince Counselor.

The empress consort was happy to allow Prince Gong to work unhampered, but the empress dowager, Ci-xi (popularly referred to as "the Old Buddha"), was more ambitious. In 1865, when she had consolidated her power, Ci-xi deprived Prince Gong of the special rank of prince counselor, although he was allowed to retain his other offices.

This regency lasted until 1873, when the Tong-zhi emperor (born 1856; reigned 1861–1875) came of age. The court now once again faced the audience question, which had been shelved since 1860. Despite two wars and the humiliating occupation of Beijing, the decision to allow foreign envoys to bow three times when received in audience was made with painful reluctance. The diehard conservatives, however, still managed to win a psychological victory and save face for the emperor. The audiences were held in a pavil-

ion used for receiving tribute missions from minor vassal states, like the Ryukyu Islands (great loss of face for the foreigners); the envoys were kept waiting for a long time (greater loss of face) before they were conducted before the Imperial Presence; they entered through a side gate, normally used by lesser officials (terrible loss of face)!

The young emperor, given to excesses like his father, had hardly begun to understand the business of government when he fell sick and died (January 1875). He was 19 and left no heir, although his consort was pregnant.

Ci-xi, breaking all dynastic laws, hurriedly had her sister's three-year-old son appointed heir. (Under the dynastic laws an heir could not belong to the same generation as the last ruler.) As adoptive mother of her nephew, Ci-xi again became regent, and except for a brief time, she managed to keep the Guang-xu emperor from exercising his royal prerogative. Guang-xu (born 1872; reigned 1875–1908) died one day before the Old Buddha; it was rumored that she had him poisoned because she feared he might malign her after her death.

In 1875, to avoid the possibility of the Tong-zhi emperor's consort giving birth to a son and thereby complicating Ci-xi's plans, the dowager empress forced the pregnant princess to commit suicide. From 1875 Ci-xi's position was so well consolidated and her powers so enhanced that she gradually reduced the authority of Prince Gong and finally dismissed him in 1884. This act proved shortsighted because Prince Gong had emerged after 1860 as one of the ablest Qing officials. He was not only skillful in handling foreign relations but also had a good understanding of the needs of the times, something quite beyond Ci-xi's limited intellectual capacity.

From 1875 until her death in 1908 Ci-xi retained her key position in the state, seldom losing her capacity to influence national policies. She maintained this position by playing one senior official against another, adroitly undermining the influence of those who were against her, and operating through

palace eunuchs. However beneficial to her, such techniques of control made China even less centralized than it had been before 1860.

RISE TO POWER OF HAN OFFICIALS

The major anti-Qing rebellions were suppressed, ultimately, less by the imperial armies than by Han provincial militias raised by Han provincial officials. The most important of these officials were Zeng Guo-fan (1811–1872) and his subordinates Li Hong-zhang (1823–1901) and Zuo Zong-tang (1812–1885).

Zeng was a fairly senior official when he returned home to Hunan in 1852 to observe the customary mourning period for his dead mother. While at home he received orders from the emperor to organize a militia to expel the Taipings, who had invaded Hunan and the adjacent provinces. Zeng's militia, later known as the Hunan Braves or the Hunan Army, was well trained, well paid, and well indoctrinated in Confucian ethics. Zeng was handicapped by poor finances, however, for he depended on voluntary contributions from the local officials and local gentry. Only after Zeng gained an official post, placing him in control of the provincial finances, could he enlarge his army, build gunboats, and train naval forces.

Zeng won several significant victories, but Beijing was hesitant to give him a free hand to campaign beyond Hunan's borders. Many Manchu grandees feared that a Han would gain too much military power. The one voice in his favor, surprisingly enough, was that of the 25-year-old Yehonala, who managed to sway her "husband" Emperor Xian-feng's opinion.

In August 1860, a month before Xian-feng fled the capital, orders were issued promoting Zeng to the rank of governor-general of Jiangsu and Jiangxi. After the emperor's death, Zeng in addition was given supreme military control over the provinces of Jiangsu, Anhui, Jiangxi, and Zhejiang. These rich provinces formed the heartland of the Taiping kingdom. Zeng coopted Zuo Zong-tang

and Li Hong-zhang and set up three military bases: in Jiangsu, under Li as governor; in Zhejiang, under Zuo as governor; and in Anhui, under his own control. Like Zeng, Zuo and Li raised militias (Li's became famous as the Anhui Army) in their own provinces. They received financial and other help not only from the provincial literati but also from the Chinese merchants in the treaty ports, as well as from the British and the French.

In 1860, to defend Shanghai from the rebels, Chinese merchants and local officials had backed the formation of a unit of foreign mercenaries, which was led by an American adventurer, Frederick Townsend Ward. Ward's successes against the Taipings led his backers to encourage him to expand his "army" by recruiting several thousand Chinese. Ward proved that the Chinese, given proper training and modern weapons, were as good soldiers as any. In 1862 Ward's imperial masters honored his force by giving it the name Ever Victorious Army. After the ratification of the 1860 treaties, the British and French had every reason to support the dynasty against the Taiping "rebels." So in 1862, when Ward was killed in action and his adjutant found unfit to take command, the British loaned one of their regular officers, Major Charles Gordon, to head the Ever Victorious Army and work under Li Hong-zhang. Units similar to the Ever Victorious Army were also formed by the French to help Zuo in Zhejiang.

Although the Taipings were not totally bereft of capable generals, the sustaining power of ideology had already been drained out of the system. It was too late for the faction-ridden Heavenly Kingdom to consolidate its hold over the widespread but poorly organized territories. The imperial forces, spearheaded by the armies of Zeng, Li, and Zuo and assisted by foreign units, brought the Taiping war to a successful, although bloody, conclusion in June 1864; Hong committed suicide just before the fall of Nanjing. Gordon was showered with gifts and honors by Beijing before he went back to his post in the British army. Many years later General Gor-

don was to become a national hero in England, when he fell at the siege of Khartoum.

The pacification of China, although helped by the purchase of Western arms and the assistance of Western military units, was primarily carried out by the Chinese themselves. After the Taiping collapse, Beijing ordered Zeng to turn his forces against the Nian rebels. The Nians, who were skilled in the use of guerrilla tactics, had operated with considerable success in the Anhui, Henan, Jiangsu, and Shandong area since 1853. The imperial armies had carried on a long campaign against them but to no avail. Zeng and later Li, using Confucian techniques to gain support of the local peasantry, consolidated their hold over the countryside surrounding the Nian. The Nian were thus forced to withdraw into an ever more constricted area and were finally eliminated in 1868.

Qing authority had also been challenged by the Muslim minority communities in Southwest and Northwest China. Indeed, in the Southwest a Muslim state had been established in 1865, but since it was not supported by the local non-Muslim Chinese population, it did not pose as severe a threat as the Taipings and the Nians. After a protracted war and much wanton slaughter (nearly half the local population was annihilated), the rebellion was suppressed in 1873.

The Northwest Muslim Rebellion (1862–1873) was a more serious affair. Since the Shaanxi-Gansu panhandle (where the rebellion occurred) linked China proper to its Central Asian dependencies, a rebellion in this region could cut off communications between Beijing and Central Asia. In 1868, after the subjugation of the Taiping and the Nian rebels, Zuo Zong-tang was ordered to the Northwest to complete the task of internal pacification. It took him five years, but in the end he managed to bring the area firmly under central control and rehabilitate its economy.

The value of this operation became apparent within a few years when China saved Chinese Turkestan (modern-day Xinjiang)

from falling into foreign hands. The Northwest Muslim Rebellion had inspired a Muslim uprising in Chinese Turkestan, leading to the establishment, in 1865, of an independent kingdom in Kashgar under Yakub Beg, an adventurer from Khokand, a state that lay on the Chinese western border. In the absence of effective Chinese authority in this region, and fearing the extension of British influence in the area, Russia moved into Kuldja and Ili in 1871.

By this date the Russians had already advanced into Tashkent, Samarkand, Bokhara, and Khokand. After moving into the Ili valley, they felt strong enough to contain Yakub Beg and so gave him recognition in 1872. The British followed suit in 1873 (the year Zuo completed the pacification of the Northwest). The situation, naturally, worried the Chinese.

In 1875 Zuo, now a grand secretary and governor general, was put in charge of military affairs in Chinese Turkestan. Zuo planned the campaign, which was to take him through many hundred miles of an arid desert, with the same meticulousness he had shown in Gansu. This was an expensive undertaking, and Zuo's request for funds was opposed by those (Li Hong-zhang among them) who regarded the ocean frontier as more important and who suggested that building a navy took precedence over the recovery of wasteland. However, Zuo and other like-minded traditionalists won their point that China could not allow any encroachment on Chinese territory.

The success of the Central Asian campaign was a tribute to Zuo's military genius. By early 1878 all lost territory, except that under Russian occupation, had been recovered. (Yakub Beg had committed suicide in 1877.) This was China's last traditional-style military victory, but it was impressive enough to influence the final outcome of the treaty negotiations between Russia and China. By the Treaty of St. Petersburg (1881) most of Ili valley reverted to China. In 1884 Chinese Turkestan was absorbed into China proper

and converted into a centrally administered province with the name of Xinjiang ("New Frontier").

"Restoration"

The period following the suppression of the Taipings has been looked on as one in which a conservative "restoration" of the Confucian empire took place. In many ways Zeng was its symbol. He was an ideal Confucian official: honest, frugal, hard-working, and dedicated. With the return of peace he turned his attention to reviving and strengthening the traditional order. He rehabilitated the agrarian economy (the basis of the Confucian state) by encouraging the movement of the people back to lands abandoned during the war; remitting or lowering taxes; and undertaking the repair of public works (canals, dikes, etc.), which had been damaged by neglect and civil turmoil. He revived the imperial examination system in the liberated areas to ensure the continued supply of Confucian literati to staff the bureaucracy and shore up the traditional order.

The "restoration," however, introduced certain important nontraditional elements into the Chinese scene. The Han civil officials, indeed, did begin their military careers with the aim of restoring national power to the Qing and the traditional order to the country, but without intending to do so, their activities resulted in undermining both.

On the broadest level the "restoration" had failed to bring back an order based on true Confucian moral and political principles. In the liberated provinces the peasant masses gained far less than the corrupt landowning gentry class and the exploitative government officials.

At a more crucial level, by highlighting the bankruptcy of the imperial armed forces and thereby the weakness of the Qing dynasty, the "restoration" led to the increased transfer of political and (something wholly new) military power to Han provincial officials. The significance of this development may not have been fully appreciated at the

time, either by the court or by the provincial leaders themselves.

The militias (called "militias" to distinguish them from the regular imperial armies) that Zeng, Li, and Zuo had raised and directed were private armies, not under the Board of War; they owed loyalty to their creators rather than to the state. These militia armies, each numbering several tens of thousands (at its high point the Hunan Army was around 100,000 strong) and recruited from the commanders' home provinces, were manned by the relatives and close friends of the commanders. Except for a minimal central subsidy, the commanders had to arrange their own sources of funds to pay the forces. After the rebellions were put down, the militia armies were demobilized or reduced in size and an attempt was made to absorb what remained into the central system; but personal ties and personal loyalties between the militia units and their Han generals could not be replaced with a higher loyalty to the Manchu rulers.

The combination of political status (the commanders all became governors general) and military power made these Han provincial officials key figures at the national level. This was particularly true of Li Hong-zhang, who as governor general of Zhili province from 1870 to 1895 (concurrently grand secretary and commissioner of the northern ports) became the virtual foreign minister of China and the main arbiter of its modernization program. When Li moved to Zhili, he took his armies with him.

Officials like Li accumulated tremendous power in their hands based on their regional armies, their control over regional officials, and their manipulation of regional economies. When at last an attempt was made to create a modern army under central control, units of Li's forces were used as the nucleus. One of his proteges, Yuan Shi-kai, was appointed commander. After 1908, when Yuan was dismissed from office, officers of the Beiyang Army (as the new model army was called) refused to cooperate with the new

commander, and Yuan finally had to be recalled to service in a last-ditch effort to save the dynasty. Later, in the 1910s and 1920s the generals of the Beiyang Army continued to exploit private loyalties in the armed forces and established regional power bases, splitting the country into autonomous "warlord" zones.

Thus the "restoration," by failing to restore central authority over the militia armies, led to the reduction of central control over the provinces. The increase in the number and power of Han officials fostered fear and jealousy in the hearts of the conservative Manchus entrenched around the throne. The possibility of the center effectively promoting national policies, pulling the Han and the Manchus together, became even more remote.

The use of modern arms and the exposure to Western-style military training and tactics stimulated the restorationists to move, albeit hesitatingly, in the direction of establishing modern defense and other industries. This move, in turn, led to the introduction of Western science and technology and, ultimately, to the questioning of Confucian concepts.

TOWARD A NEW ORDER

The Contribution of the West

In the context of change and development, Western actions in China, to this point, can be seen as having had both a positive and a negative impact: Positive activities helped to introduce new ideas, values, and institutions, and the negative ones undermined the Chinese sociopolitical tradition.

As China became enmeshed in the West-centered global historical process, officials who had had to deal with Westerners realized that the Chinese needed to acquire the weaponry of the West to ward off the West; some even concluded that the Chinese ignorance of the West would have to yield to a greater understanding of the sources of Western wealth and power.

The Chinese need to study Western methods and the opportunity to do so both increased with the passage of time. Before 1839 there were few contacts between Chinese officials and Westerners. Between 1840 and 1860, however, contact was officially authorized between the Western consuls and the imperial commissioner at Guangzhou (representing the government of China) and with certain provincial officials in the treaty ports. The number of Chinese officials who handled foreign affairs was still extremely small, but after 1860, when embassies were established in Beijing and a Chinese "foreign office" opened, the contacts became more widespread.

Contacts between foreign merchants and their Chinese counterparts, restricted to the Cohong merchants for eight decades before 1839, also increased. A new class of Chinese merchants emerged, the compradors, who acted as liaison between the foreign traders and the native producers or buyers. The compradors became indispensable because on the one hand they had a working knowledge of the foreigner's language and understood the foreign system of commerce, and on the other they knew the Chinese market and could deal effectively with Chinese traders in the interior.

Missionary Activities: The Positive Side. Of the two groups of missionaries active in China, the Roman Catholics and the Protestants, it was primarily the latter who went beyond evangelism to become involved with good works and social changes. In fact, considering the growth in the number of missionaries, the number of converts was rather discouraging. In 1860 there were about 100 Protestant missionaries active on the China coast; in 1870, 350; in 1890, 1,350; and in 1898, 2,458. The number of converts in 1898 was, however, only about 80,000.

From the 1870s, when some Protestant missionaries secularized their work, their activities, particularly in the major treaty ports, led to the establishment of schools (many of which later became renowned uni-

versities), libraries, museums, magazines, and newspapers. Here was a ready source of Western knowledge for the Chinese. Enrollment in mission schools stood at about 17,000 by 1890, but most of the students were from nonliterate backgrounds and hoped to gain employment with the foreigners on completing their studies.

As Irwin Hyatt has pointed out, "Education and medicine were made into institutions during the 1880s . . . by missionary specialists. By 1890 these practitioners had established professional societies and publications and had to a significant degree assumed professional attitudes."¹ Organizations such as the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge in China and the Society for the Diffusion of Christian and General Knowledge promoted the translation of Western works and introduced, among other subjects, European science and technology.

Viewed in the context of China as a whole, the positive achievement of these well-meaning foreign endeavors was extremely limited: geographically, to a few coastal cities, and socially, to a few enlightened Chinese. The vast hinterland, by and large, remained impervious to new ideas and techniques. Indeed, missionary and other foreign activity in the remoter areas created strong antiforeign sentiment. The government of China was torn between adjustment to "modern" pressures emanating from the treaty ports and the traditional system, with which it continued to govern the Chinese land mass and the bulk of the Chinese people. Nevertheless, this limited contribution of the West would in time be the catalyst for reform and change in China.

Foreign Settlements. The treaty system had created another unique situation in some of the treaty ports. Grants of lands given as "concessions" for foreign residence became autonomous and developed municipal governments under the Western consuls. The foreign settlements in Shanghai (later identified as the Anglo-American International Settlement and the French Concession) turned into foreign-governed enclaves with jurisdic-

tion over the thousands of Chinese who had sought shelter in them.

By 1895 the International Settlement boasted paved roads, street lights, running water, schools (including the famous St. John's College), law courts, modern hospitals, postal service, telegraph connections with the rest of the world, English- and Chinese-language newspapers, publishing houses, and of course a cricket club and a race course. A similar development took place in Hong Kong, which as a British Crown colony had the legitimate right to exercise foreign-style government over the territory and the large number of Chinese who lived there.

These self-governing enclaves provided a local showcase of European municipal and community life and could be viewed as models for reform-minded Chinese. Chinese dissidents sought refuge in the International Settlement, the French Concession, or Hong Kong, where they could express their views in relative freedom.

Between 1860 and 1895 the negative side of the imperialist impact was far greater than its positive contribution to China's modernization. Almost all Westerners who went to China in the nineteenth century regarded Western civilization as being far superior to that of China and showed open contempt for the Chinese. The sign "Chinese and dogs not allowed" outside a Shanghai park symbolized an extreme example of this attitude.* It is therefore not surprising that even the Chinese revolutionaries who took sanctuary in Shanghai to escape persecution by Beijing attacked their own government for not being powerful enough to get rid of the imperialists, who had established virtual colonies in China.

*Though current scholarship doubts that the sign "Chinese and dogs not allowed" was ever used, it is, nevertheless, true that Chinese were excluded from the parks on the bund because, according to J. V. Davidson-Houston, they tended "to destroy the amenities of any public place, making it essential to reserve areas for Occidentals only" (*The Yellow Creek*. (London: Putnam, 1962.) p. 100).

Missionary Activities: The Negative Side. Widespread contact between the Chinese people and Westerners developed only after the missionaries were allowed into the hinterland. The Western traders had no desire to change China, other than to lift restrictions on commerce; the diplomats could impress senior officials of the empire with the need to make institutional changes that would help ease international relations or modernize China, but it was the missionaries who took upon themselves the task of reaching the masses and providing an alternative to Chinese social tradition.

Having entered the local scene, protected by extrality, the missionaries propagated a religion that attacked Confucian values and mores: People owed absolute obedience to God and not to an emperor; ancestor worship was a pagan rite; all human beings were equal in the eyes of God, and justice should not discriminate between people on the basis of hierarchical status; Confucian ideas of graded love must give way to the Christian ideal of universal love; men and women were equal; marriages should be a product of mutual love and not parental arrangement; and footbinding was an act against nature.

The missionaries took on the role of teachers and protectors of the socially underprivileged. Apart from erecting houses of worship, they established orphanages and homes for widows, schools, and medical clinics; at times of floods and famines they acted as relief agencies, setting up soup kitchens. Because of their special and unassailable position, they could even pressure the local officials to favor members of their flock.

Thus the missionaries came to challenge the traditional order and assail the local gentry, who were supposed to propagate Confucianism, establish Confucian schools, and look after local welfare. Consequently the gentry, concerned for their vested interests, became implacable enemies of the missionaries; indeed, it is not difficult to imagine why missionary attacks on Chinese tradition would make even the common folk resentful of the missionary presence.

Within a few years of the opening of China to missionary activity, antimissionary riots began to mar China's relations with the Western powers. The treaties gave missionaries the freedom to preach, whereas the Chinese government had the responsibility of protecting their persons and property. In case of trouble the powers were committed to intercede on behalf of the missionary and demand compensation for any damage done to the missionary's person or property. In any conflict between a missionary and the local gentry or local government, the powers forced Beijing to side with the missionary against its own local upholders of Confucian society and state. Indeed, the central government often had to punish or transfer offending officials and to order the gentry to raise money to pay the compensation or indemnity demanded by the missionaries. From being a protector of Confucianism, the treaties turned the emperor into a protector of a foreign heterodox cult. The European powers thus were led by the missionaries to interfere in China's internal affairs and further weaken its capacity for governance.

Antimissionary incidents and riots started in the 1860s and continued into the twentieth century. Between 1867 and 1869 there was trouble in Dayong, Liuzhou, Gengshan, Yantai, Yangzhou, Fuzhou, and Wuchang. In many cases a broader antiforeignism was closely mixed with purely anti-Christian sentiments; in all cases the powers used the treaties to gain redress; in some cases they intervened directly with gunboats to put down local unrest.

A far more serious incident, known as the "Tianjin Massacre," took place in 1870 and brought to a close the so-called period of cooperation between China and the West. The details of the incident provide a good example of the friction that missionary activity was causing in Sino-foreign relations. By 1870 anti-Christian tracts were circulating widely in the provinces. They charged that the missionaries forced their converts to show dishonor to their ancestors and undergo baptism with an unguent made from the corpses of priests; that they tore out the eyes and

hearts of the dying to make drugs; and that they encouraged sodomy and sex between parents and children and between brothers and sisters.

In Tianjin the French were doubly detested because, without legal title, they not only had erected a Roman Catholic cathedral but also had done so on the site of an imperial temple. Rumor had it that the French Sisters of Mercy, who had established an orphanage, were buying up children and killing them for their eyes and hearts. Indeed, the sisters did give some gratuity to those who brought orphans to their institutions (which probably encouraged some kidnapping), and since most of these orphans were in poor health, they often died soon after they were taken in. Just at this time an epidemic raised the death rate even higher. The rites of baptism and last unction (which included the ritual of anointing the dead person's eyes with holy oil) and the seemingly secret burial of the children in the Christian cemetery appeared to confirm the rumors. On June 21 a mob gathered to take their vengeance against the sisters.

Before the senior Chinese official of the area could pacify the angry mob, the impetuous local French consul, M. Fontanier, armed with two pistols, took direct action by firing at the crowd and the local magistrate.

There was no controlling the crowd now. The Chinese slaughtered the consul and his assistant and went on a rampage. Before the evening was out they had burned down the French consulate, the cathedral, the orphanage, and four English and American chapels; raped and butchered ten sisters; and killed two priests and seven other "French" men and women, three of whom were actually Russians.

There was a cry for war in France and for vengeance in other European capitals. Foreign gunboats were moved to Tianjin, and seven foreign powers sent a collective note of protest to Beijing. The French demanded the lives of several senior officers posted at Tianjin. Zeng and then Li were brought in by Beijing to negotiate a settlement, which became comparatively easier because France had just

suffered a defeat in the Franco-Prussian War and was powerless to exert its authority abroad. Apart from paying indemnities, Beijing had to send an "apology mission" (carrying a letter of apology from the emperor) to Paris, indemnify the French for the loss of lives and property, banish the prefect and magistrate of Tianjin to a penal colony on the Amur, and punish 51 other Chinese with decapitation and exile.

After the Tianjin massacre, antimissionary incidents increased as purely anti-Christian sentiment got fused with antiforeign and anti-Manchu hatred. Since the foreign powers could neither control the missionaries nor dissociate themselves from them, imperialist policies became more and more involved with missionary causes. According to Edmund Wehrle, in 1891, riots in the Yangtze valley made the missionary problem "the foremost concern of British policy in China . . . [and] almost simultaneous calls for [gunboats, came from] virtually every treaty port on the Yangtze."² After the "Kut'ien [Gutian] Massacre" in 1895 the British ambassador managed to get high Chinese officials punished for the first time and urged London that in the future the Chinese government be forced to punish the literati and officials when an antimissionary outbreak took place. Wehrle concludes that "by forcing the regime to humble itself publicly [the British ambassador] may have played into the hands of those who sought to overthrow the dynasty."³ In 1897 the German seizure of Jiaozhou was associated with missionary trouble, and this in turn led to a scramble for concessions and the partitioning of China into spheres of influence by the imperialist powers. In 1900 the missionaries were a catalyst in the Boxer uprising, which resulted in the occupation of Beijing by the imperialist powers and the virtual end of the Chinese traditional imperial system.

The Finalization of the Unequal Treaties. In accordance with the clause in the Tianjin treaties providing for a revision every ten years, negotiations began in 1869. Sir Rutherford Alcock, the British envoy in Beijing,

served as the main Western negotiator. He consulted the foreign chambers of commerce in China and the envoys of other powers. The merchants were adamant that China be forced to remove "unjust restrictions" on trade, open the interior further to facilitate merchant travel and residence, and throw open "the producing and consuming districts to foreign capital and energy." Alcock was of the opinion that it would be counterproductive to push China to move any faster. China should be left alone to work out things for itself. The British government agreed that a full revision of the treaties could wait for a few years, at least until 1873 when the emperor attained his majority. London reached this view partly because of the exhortations of China's ambassador-extraordinary, the American diplomat Mr. Anson Burlingame, who was in England in 1868 and who explained that unfriendly pressure on China could jeopardize its independence.

Alcock's negotiations did lead to a convention, the Alcock Convention, which even contained some clauses favorable to China. London, however, failed to ratify the convention because of pressure from the merchants, who felt that it conceded too much to the Chinese. The matter of treaty revision remained in suspension until the Margary incident in 1875.

The British, who had already occupied a part of Burma, speculated on the possibility of reaching Yunnan from India through northern Burma. The British mounted an exploratory mission that included A. R. Margary, a British consular officer posted to Beijing. However, before the expedition could reach its destination Margary was killed by some local tribe in the remote, lawless Burmo-Chinese borderland. It was not clear whether the Burmese king, who was strongly opposed to opening any trade routes, the almost independent local tribespeople, or the Chinese were responsible for the outrage. To the petulant British minister in Beijing, Sir Thomas Wade, known for his rages and outbursts during official meetings with the Chinese, this was a God-sent opportunity to

settle all outstanding matters between the two countries and give final shape to the treaties. It mattered little to him that Margary's five Chinese associates had also been killed in the same ambush or that the other foreign ministers were not favorably inclined to broadening the negotiations to include issues other than redress for Margary's death.

To put pressure on the Chinese government, Wade even threatened to break relations with China. Negotiations opened between him and Li Hong-zhang in Yantai (known as Chefoo to the Westerners) in 1876 resulted in the Chefoo Convention, "the final capstone of the treaty system," according to John King Fairbank. The agreement was in three parts:

Section I, which dealt with the Yunnan case, opened frontier trade between Burma and Yunnan, allowed British officials to be stationed at Dali, fixed the amount of indemnity to 200,000 taels of silver, and declared that a Chinese mission would be sent to England carrying an imperial letter of apology.

Section II, which dealt with the problem of official intercourse, announced that the Chinese Foreign Office would prepare a code of etiquette after consulting foreign diplomats, and it also elaborated on the conduct of judicial proceedings in mixed courts.

The last part of the convention dealt with trade. *Likin* (an inland transit duty) was abolished from the concession areas; four more cities were opened as treaty ports; six more places on the Yangtze were opened, not as treaty ports, but as ports of call for steamers; duty and *Likin* on opium were combined, and some other transit dues were rationalized. A separate article ensured proper protection for a contemplated British "mission of exploration" that would go from Beijing to India through Tibet.

The convention did not contribute to any significant increase in trade, but it did mark the beginning of Li Hong-zhang's rise to prominence as the de facto foreign minister of China, and it did result in the establishment of the first Chinese legation abroad. Guo Song-dao, who headed the mission of apology in 1877, set up the Chinese embassy

and served as China's ambassador to the Court of St. James.

Dismantling of the Chinese World Order. In the 1870s the world was entering the period of "New Imperialism." By 1870 Italy and Germany had emerged as vigorous nation-states, and the post-Civil War United States had entered a period of rapid industrialization. These countries now joined the reinvigorated Third Republic of France (established in 1870) and England in competing for foreign markets for trade and capital investment. In the next 50 years Europe reached the high point of its expansion over the globe. The compulsion for political and territorial domination to protect their financial interests led the Western powers to partition Africa and Asia among themselves and to establish colonies, protectorates, and spheres of influence.

What were the pressures behind this aggressiveness? Debate on the meaning of the term *imperialism* began in the late nineteenth century and has not yet drawn to a close. Was it due to surplus capital in the industrial countries that needed to be invested in colonies and spheres of influence ("economic colonies," as J. A. Hobson put it)? Or was imperialism simply the monopoly stage of capitalism and historically inevitable, as Vladimir Lenin analyzed it? Should one agree with Joseph Schumpeter that imperialism was not an economic instrument after all but a blind tribal impulse driving the state to "unlimited forcible expansion"? Or with A. J. P. Taylor that it was a byproduct of the conflict of European state interests? Many in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries believed that the white race had the duty, the burden, to spread higher, white civilization throughout the world: to convert the heathens to Christianity to save their souls and give them Western knowledge and techniques to save their bodies.

Whatever the nature of imperialism—indeed, it may be a varying mix of all the elements mentioned—it had a profound impact on the subject areas, where the fundamentals of native culture and civilization came under an attack that could not be warded off. In

China, until 1895, the economic gains made by the Western nations were, relatively speaking, so disappointing that imperialism cannot be explained on that basis alone. The vision of an inexhaustible market for Western industrial products never really died, but every step that opened China to further trade proved futile. The total annual value of the foreign trade of China in 1896 was a little over 50 million pounds sterling, of which Britain's exports to China amounted to only 7 million pounds.⁴

Chinese exports of tea and silk also began to decline after reaching their high point in the 1880s. Teas from India, Ceylon, and Japan began to capture the British and American markets, and better-quality silks from Japan and Europe started replacing the Chinese silks. Opium consumption continued to rise in China, but the imports peaked by 1880 (c. 87,000 chests) when the Chinese indigenous production, many times the quantity imported, began to saturate the market.

The competition between imperialist powers in China spilled over into the states on its periphery, resulting in weakening China in another unexpected way. The concept of the Central (Middle) Kingdom was good only as long as China was surrounded by the ring of tributary states: Burma (present name, Myanmar), Siam (now Thailand), Annam (now Vietnam), Ryukyu Islands, Korea, Mongolia, Chinese Turkestan, and Tibet (the last three were much more closely tied to Beijing and fell into the different category of "dependencies"). By 1895 many of these states were removed from China's orbit, thus destroying the world order to which China was "central."

At this stage a new imperialist power arrived on the Chinese scene: Japan. The Japanese, after their country was "opened" by the United States in 1854, went through a political revolution (the Meiji Restoration, 1868) and began to Westernize rapidly. Unlike China, Japan was sensitive about its vulnerability to Western expansion and was particularly fearful of Russia. It saw its line of strategic defense as lying on the continent

and so began to take increasing interest in the peripheral regions. Japanese imperialism aped its Western counterpart but lacked the ingredients that made Western imperialism a world phenomenon. However, its impact on China was to be even more devastating than that of the West.

Japan's treaty of peace and friendship with China, signed in 1871 without any threat of force, marked the beginning of China's modern relationship with an Asian power. The treaty did not include the "most favored nation" clause and therefore denied Japan the privileges accorded to Western states.

The first indication of future discord between the two Asian neighbors came shortly thereafter, when Japan absorbed the Ryukyu Islands into its newly unified empire. The Ryukyus had paid tribute to China but had also been considered vassals of the feudal lord of Satsuma, a powerful domain in southern Japan. When the Meiji government abolished feudalism, the Ryukyus were automatically considered to belong to Japan. In 1873 the Japanese sought, but did not immediately gain, redress from China for the killing of some Ryukyuan shipwrecked sailors by Taiwanese aborigines. Japan followed up its diplomatic action by a military expedition to Taiwan to chastise the Taiwanese. In 1874 China negotiated a settlement and paid an indemnity to Japan, thus unwittingly recognizing Japan's sovereignty over the Ryukyu Islands. In 1878 Japan stopped the king of the Ryukyus from sending tribute to China, and in 1879 the islands were incorporated into Okinawa Prefecture. The Chinese protested, to no avail.

The importance of the Ryukyuan incident is that it was the first act in the dismemberment of the Chinese tributary order and a signal indication of how successfully Japan had learned the Western concept of nation-state boundaries and the value of Western-style international treaty relations.

Li is reported to have tried to reduce the significance of this development by saying "this dot on the map [the Ryukyus] is closer to Japan than to us." He could, however, not have said the same of Burma and Annam,

which were shortly to be taken over by the British and the French.

The French had first entered Indochina in the mid-eighteenth century. The area then comprised Cambodia, Laos, and Annam (roughly present-day Vietnam), and the emperor of Annam was the primary power. It was, however, only in the mid-nineteenth century that France began to use military power to gain political ascendancy in this region. By 1863 France had established a protectorate over Cambodia and forced Annam to cede the three eastern provinces of Cochin-China.

A treaty signed in 1874 (the same year that the Ryukyus were lost) gave France control over the foreign relations of Annam and navigation rights in the Red River, confirmed their possession of Cochin-China, and provided extraterritoriality for French citizens and protection for missionaries. Thus Vietnam became a virtual protectorate of France, although technically it retained its independence. The emperor of Annam appealed to China for help. The Chinese refused to recognize the treaties on the grounds that Annam was a tributary state, "whose ruler," Paris was informed by China in a letter sent in 1880, "down to the present day has received his investiture from the Emperor of China."⁵ But China could do little to enforce its position. The French replied that the Treaty of 1874 recognized the independence of Vietnam.

In 1880 France stationed troops in Hanoi and Haiphong, whereupon Annam sent a tribute mission to China in an attempt to strengthen its ties with Beijing. In 1882 the French occupied Hanoi.

China was caught in a dilemma: Should it or should it not come to the aid of Annam? Opinion in Beijing was divided between those who championed war and those, like Li, who advocated a more cautious approach. The basic issue was whether Vietnam was an independent country or under Chinese sovereignty. The young, hot-blooded conservative officials, who had formed a "party of purists" (*qing liu dang*) and who had been encouraged by Zuo's success in Xinjiang, attacked Li for his capitulationism. In 1883, the purists

gained ground and Beijing ordered the Yunnan and Guangxi armies to advance into Tongking.

The French response was to occupy Hue, the capital of Annam, and sign another treaty (the Treaty of Hue, 1883) with the powerless government of Annam. The treaty, without any ambiguity, reduced Vietnam to the position of an outright protectorate. Beijing announced, in November 1883, that any attack on the Chinese forces moving into Tongking would signal the beginning of a war. In March 1884, French troops inflicted a humiliating defeat on the Chinese armies, but the action brought neither a declaration of war from Beijing nor a move for peace.

The empress dowager, however, took this opportunity to strengthen her hold over the government by dismissing Prince Gong, the head of the Zongli Yamen (the Chinese Foreign Office), ostensibly because he was in favor of a negotiated settlement. But in reality she had carried a personal grudge against him for a long time. Ci-xi's action gave the impression that the officials favoring war had gained ascendancy. In fact, there was still no firm policy on war or peace.

At this stage Captain Fournier of the French navy appeared on the Chinese scene and offered to help negotiate a conciliatory settlement of the controversy. In May 1884 the Li-Fournier Convention was signed. It provided that China was to withdraw "immediately" its troops from Tongking, respect the treaties between France and Vietnam, and open the southern border to French trade (via Tongking). In return, France would respect China's southern border and not use any expressions in its forthcoming treaty with Vietnam "calculated to affect prejudicially the prestige of the Celestial Empire." Li, afraid of the court's reaction, failed to inform Beijing of the date on which the Chinese troops were supposed to withdraw. The result was that in June there was a skirmish between French and Chinese forces (who had not withdrawn because they had received no orders to do so) at Bac-le in which the French were defeated.

The French now added a demand for indemnity to the Li-Fournier agreement, but

Beijing was adamant that China was not responsible for the Bac-le incident and rejected all French ultimatums. A state of undeclared war resulted. In August 1884 the French navy destroyed the Fuzhou shipyard (established in 1866 with French aid and technical help) along with 9 of the 11 steam warships built at the yard.

France and China finally agreed to end hostilities after Robert Hart's London agent (Hart was the inspector general of the Chinese Maritime Customs Service, 1868-1907) negotiated a settlement in Paris. The protocol, signed in April 1885, was essentially a confirmation of the Li-Fournier agreement. The French reverses at Langson, a strategic town just south of the Chinese border, which had been recovered by the Chinese in March, saved Chinese face somewhat.

In 1887 the French unified their administrative control over Vietnam and Cambodia and established the Union Indo-Chinois; in 1893 they acquired Laos, which had long been in dispute between Annam and Siam.

The Annam affair showed that two and a half decades after the second set of treaties, China was still caught between its traditional tributary system and the new Western-style international relations. Although China was no longer in a position to protect its dependencies, the concept of tributary states was difficult to discard. Lacking a unified leadership, Beijing could make only ad hoc policy decisions, which vacillated between halfhearted resistance to the West and humiliating appeasement. As one senior Chinese official put it, "In the morning an order [is] issued; in the evening it is changed. Unavoidably outsiders will laugh. But there is nothing that can be done about it."⁶ Beijing's troubles were not to end with Annam.

The British, already in possession of eastern India, had begun their penetration and occupation of Burma in the 1820s. By the time of the Margary affair (1875) the British had fought two wars and absorbed Arakan, the Tenasserim coast, and Pegu. Fear of the French moving from Annam into Burma precipitated the third war in 1885, and the British annexed Burma.

Since Burma was also a dependency of China, the British felt it proper to clear the matter with Beijing. It appears that a few years after the Chefoo Convention, Thomas Wade had told Li Hong-zhang that "we British like Burma very much: it is a place worth having." Li's reply was, "If you should decide to go to war with Burma let us know beforehand, so that it will not cause any trouble between us."⁷ Now that Burma had been conquered, the British made the act more palatable by agreeing (1886) that the Burmese would continue to send their tribute missions. A Burmese mission was sent in 1895, but after China's defeat by Japan in the 1894-1895 war, even this face-saving act was no longer necessary.

Siam (modern-day Thailand) was lost to the Chinese much earlier than Vietnam and Burma, but its last days as a tributary state may be mentioned here to complete the picture of developments in Southeast Asia. Siam, like Annam, was required to send a tributary mission every three years, and it followed the practice unflinchingly until 1853. Indeed, in 1852 the new king of Siam sent an envoy to Beijing to request investiture.

However, when danger of foreign aggression came to Siam with the expansion of the British into Burma and the French into Annam, instead of looking to Beijing for help, the wise and reform-minded King Rama IV (reigned 1851-1868) willingly concluded treaties with Britain (1855), France and America (1856). While opening the country to foreign trade and missionary activity, he began a program of modernization that saved the country from China's fate. By balancing British and French interests this small kingdom assured its independence. It sent no more tribute missions to China after 1855.

Like Vietnam, Korea was a tributary state with a predominantly Confucian sociopolitical culture and had close geographical and historical links with China. Indeed, if one considers the frequency of the tribute missions, it was even closer than Vietnam because it sent a mission every year.

Of the tributary states discussed so far, Korea came nearest to the Chinese ideal

because, except for a limited contact with Japan, it followed an aggressive policy of total seclusion (thereby earning the name Hermit Kingdom) and let Beijing handle all its foreign relations. But as with other tributary states, China was no longer strong enough to prevent foreign powers from interfering in Korea. This left Korea caught between the dying Chinese international order and the one that the imperialist powers were in the process of forging.

At the outset Korea was successful in keeping the foreign powers out. The French fleet, sent in 1866 to seek redress for the murder of some French priests, failed to "open" Korea. The Americans, encouraged by their success in opening Japan, sent an expedition in 1871 and met the same fate. The Koreans asked Beijing to explain their exclusion policies to the Americans and to urge them not to try to deal directly with Seoul. As a result, China announced to the powers that "although Korea is a country subordinate to China, nevertheless, it is wholly self-determining in government, religion, prohibitions and laws."⁸ The statement sounded rather ambiguous to the legal-minded Western diplomats.

Japan, itself just recently opened, now took upon itself the task of opening Korea. It is startling to note how modern Japan had become in just a few years, how quickly it had become conscious of its strategic interests on the continent, and how keenly it was following the tactics established by the West in dealing with Asian nations. Within a year of having gained suzerainty over the Ryukyus through the Taiwan Settlement of 1874, Japan sent a surveying party to the mouth of the Han River, which led upriver to the Korean capital. The Japanese had to withdraw after their vessel was fired on, and their request for a treaty was refused on the grounds that Korea was a vassal of China. Japan now turned to Beijing and asked for credentials to be granted that would facilitate another mission to Seoul. Since it would have been totally against the spirit of the tributary relations for China to open Korean doors to a hostile barbarian country, Beijing refused.

Tokyo was given the same answer as the other powers, that Korea was "subordinate" to China but "self-governing." Japan chose to interpret this term to mean that Korea was an independent state.

Li Hong-zhang, realizing the gravity of the situation and fearing a Japanese attack on Korea, advised the Zongli Yamen to send secret instructions to Seoul to receive the Japanese mission with "proper courtesy." As a result, Korea and Japan signed a treaty (1876) that confirmed the right of the two countries to exchange envoys, forced Korea to open certain ports for trade, and granted extraterritoriality to the Japanese.

Despite this treaty Korea continued to maintain its special relations with China and to resist opening the country to other powers.

In 1880 Li Hong-zhang was given full authority to handle Korean affairs. Li's endeavor was twofold: to protect Korea's independence and to preserve China's dominance over that country. To preserve Korean territorial integrity and counter Japan's ambitions in Korea, Li encouraged Korea to establish diplomatic relations with as many powers as possible. At the same time he insisted that the treaties include a clause recognizing China's suzerainty over Korea. As an adjunct measure Li began to strengthen China's northern naval force. Between 1882 and 1886 Korea signed treaties with the United States, Britain, Germany, Italy, Russia, and France. Although the powers refused to include a clause in the treaties recognizing Korea's dependence on China, in letters accompanying the treaties Korea made a formal declaration of its vassal status.

Li also managed to increase the Chinese presence in Seoul. Chinese commercial agents were appointed to advise the Korean ruler, a Chinese became the inspector general of Korean Customs, and Chinese troops under Yuan Shi-kai (later an important figure in Chinese history) were dispatched to restore order after an abortive coup by a pro-Japanese clique in 1882. Since the Japanese legation had been attacked during the coup, the Japanese, apart from exacting an apology and an indemnity, also sent troops to Korea

and stationed them there to protect their nationals.

The situation was rather anomalous. China was intervening in Korea's internal affairs as a suzerain, and the Japanese were acting as if Korea were independent. In 1884 another coup took place, and the pro-Japanese Korean "Progressives" seized the king and appealed to the Japanese for help. Yuan Shi-kai, taking action on behalf of the ruler, defeated the Japanese and restored the king to the throne.

This was a great victory for China in a year that otherwise had brought endless bad news: The French had destroyed the Chinese ships and arsenal at the Fuzhou shipyard and were about to take over Vietnam. After the Korean incident, the Japanese exacted another indemnity from Korea but, at the same time, sent an envoy to China to discuss the Korean question with Li Hong-zhang. The resulting Convention of Tianjin (1885) was looked on as a victory by both sides. China and Japan agreed to withdraw troops from Seoul, but both nations reserved the right to send troops to Korea in case of future trouble, after notifying the other side. For Japan this was a victory because the convention put China and Japan on an equal footing. For Li it was a victory because he felt that China's traditional interest in Korea had been tacitly recognized and that China could always ship its troops from Port Arthur to reach Seoul much faster than any Japanese army.

Between 1885 and 1894 Li, working through Yuan Shi-kai, who had been appointed China's resident in Korea, made China the paramount power in Korea. He also got Beijing to increase funding to build a navy to protect the northern waters, and he developed naval bases in Weihaiwei, Shandong, and Lushunkou (Port Arthur) on the Liaodong peninsula. It appeared that Li had learned a great deal from China's earlier foreign policy failures and that Korea would not become another Annam or Burma.

But there was a serious flaw in Li's Korean policies. He confused legitimate national strategic interests (a modern concept) with a traditional Confucian stand. In 1894, because

of domestic rebellion, the Korean ruler requested and received Chinese military help. Li informed Japan of this action but implied that China had the right to send troops to help a vassal ruler. The Japanese refused to recognize Korea as a dependency of China and replied that they, too, would dispatch troops, as had been agreed on in the Tianjin Convention.

It turned out that in fact no outside troops were needed to quell the rebellion, but that was no longer relevant to further developments. The Japanese, not getting a categorical declaration from Seoul that Korea was not a vassal of China, seized the palace and installed a pro-Japanese ruler who "requested" Japan to help in the expulsion of the Chinese. The First Sino-Japanese War had begun.

The Western powers, although maintaining neutrality, were generally in favor of China and not too worried about the outcome because China's modernization efforts appeared to be far more impressive than those of Japan. China had had 34 years to prepare (1860–1894), whereas Japan, a much smaller power, had begun these efforts only around 1870. The Chinese forces that crossed the Yalu into Korea were much larger than the Japanese troops; the Chinese naval force off the mouth of the Yalu (13 ships against the Japanese 12) had superior gun power and included two ironclad warships of over 7,000 tons, whereas the largest Japanese ship was 4,000 tons. But the effectiveness of young Japan's military machine startled the world.

On land the Japanese routed the Chinese forces, pushed into Manchuria, and captured Port Arthur. On water the Chinese humiliation was even greater. In a four-hour battle the Japanese trounced the Chinese, sinking four of their vessels without losing any of their own. The rest of the Chinese fleet sought refuge in Weihaiwei, where it finally surrendered to the Japanese troops who had entered the port from the landward side.

The First Sino-Japanese War and the Treaty of Shimonoseki (1895) that concluded it marked the beginning of a new era in East Asia. Japan emerged as a key imperialist

power and, henceforth, a permanent factor in the regional and world power play. Although it would take Japan 10 years to draw Korea fully into its sphere of influence and 15 to make it an outright colony, the "liberation" of Korea in 1895 was a positive step forward in the fulfillment of Japanese ambitions. The treaty forced the Qing government to cede Liaodong Peninsula, the Pescadores, and Taiwan to Japan; pay an indemnity of 200 million taels (nearly 270 million ounces of silver); grant the Japanese "most favored nation" treatment (since the original Sino-Japanese treaty was between equal powers, this change made it an "unequal" treaty and put Japan in the category of the Western powers); and open seven new treaty ports. Incidentally, Russia, finding Japan's occupation of Liaodong strategically unacceptable, used diplomatic pressure in cooperation with Germany and France to force Japan to return Liaodong to China, for an additional monetary compensation, of course. This event marks the beginning of the Russian-Japanese conflict in Northeast Asia.

Last, and most important, in a supplementary commercial treaty signed in 1896, Japanese nationals were permitted to set up and run industries in the treaty ports of China. Under the "most favored nation" clause, all other powers automatically gained the same privilege, and this new development added a crucial dimension to imperialist exploitation of China. Since the foreign capitalists could use cheap Chinese labor and did not have to pay local Chinese taxes, they gained a competitive edge over the native Chinese industrialists. In the long run, this development thwarted the growth of national Chinese capitalist enterprises.

For China the war was a most shattering experience. A crippling defeat at the hands of the "dwarf" Asian barbarians, who had historically been looked down on as vastly inferior to the inhabitants of the Middle Kingdom, was psychologically unnerving. China was finally divested of its principal tributary states, and the traditional Confucian view of international relations was irrevocably put to rest. The country could now turn its full attention

to the building of a modern nation-state. Thirty-five years of modernization programs (see the next section) carried out halfheartedly in the context of the traditional political-social context had proved a total failure. Any respect that the foreign powers may have had for the Qing government was now replaced with a scramble to extract as many privileges as possible out of a dying dynasty. Within China, too, the corrupt and inefficient dynasty lost its legitimacy in the eyes of many Chinese, some of whom, for the first time, began to think in terms of a modern revolution.

Later, when distinction between the Chinese traditional empire and modern empires got blurred, many patriotic Chinese strongly resented the loss of the tributary states. Looking back at the nineteenth-century developments, Mao Ze-dong, the greatest of the twentieth-century Chinese revolutionary leaders, wrote in 1939,

Japan appropriated Korea, Taiwan, the Ryukyu Islands, the Pescadores and Port Arthur; England took Burma, Bhutan, Nepal, and Hong Kong; France seized Annam; even a miserable little country like Portugal took Macao from us. At the same time that they took away part of her territory, the imperialists obliged China to pay enormous indemnities.⁹

Internal Changes

China had wasted the 15 years between 1842 and 1857 in following delaying tactics that were intended to conciliate and pacify the barbarians temporarily but that aimed at a return of the status quo ante. The war of 1860 proved the bankruptcy of this traditional concept for the management of barbarians and forced Beijing to adjust, however reluctantly, to the new political environment. The Sino-Japanese War of 1894 demonstrated that the changes introduced by the Chinese between 1860 and 1894 had not been effective in truly strengthening China. Apparently China had found it impossible to achieve a viable accommodation between its traditional political style and the new elements of Westernization.

Among these new elements were the institutions of the Zongli Yamen, the Inspectorate General of Customs, the Tong-wen Guan, and the Chinese diplomatic service which China had established under Western pressure. Other Western-style developments, such as the introduction of a steamship line, were results of China's own efforts at "self-strengthening" and reform.

The Zongli Yamen. As we have seen one major cause of friction between the Westerners and the Chinese, up to 1860, was the lack of a proper institution in Beijing that could handle Western-style foreign relations. After the Second Opium War, when the British made it absolutely clear that they would no longer deal diplomatically with a provincial-level official, even if he carried the title of imperial commissioner, China, in 1861, added a new institution, the Zongli Yamen (Office of the General Administration of the Affairs of the Different Nations, or simply the Chinese Foreign Office), to the existing political edifice.

The Zongli Yamen was staffed primarily by powerful members of the Grand Council. It was supposed to be a temporary agency, whose powers to deal with foreign diplomats would revert to the Grand Council as soon as the foreign crisis was over. Although a new institution, the Zongli Yamen was handicapped in its function because it had to fit into the old system of decision making. For example, memorials from senior provincial officials, even if they concerned foreign affairs, were still to be sent to the emperor. The Grand Council was then to make copies of these memorials and forward them to the Zongli Yamen. This lack of centralization of power did not affect the Zongli Yamen as long as the attitude of the government to the foreigners was conciliatory and as long as the power holders in the Grand Council were also the directors of Zongli Yamen.

Despite the original intention, the Zongli Yamen was never dispensed with, but with the passage of years its powers were severely diminished. Of its three original leaders, one died in 1862, Prince Gong came

under attack from Empress Ci-xi, and the Grand Councilor Wen-xiang lacked the courage to stand up to the growing influence of the antforeign clique. In the meantime, after the suppression of the Taiping rebellion, new regional power holders like Zeng Guo-fan and Li Hong-zhang gained tremendous political influence. After his appointment as governor general of Zhili province in 1870, Li gradually took over many of the functions of the Zongli Yamen, and finally his personal office became the center for the conduct of foreign affairs. It was only in 1901, when China made a concerted effort to reorganize the government on Western lines, that a Ministry of Foreign Affairs was established.

The posting of resident ministers to Beijing by foreign powers physically confirmed the introduction of the new diplomatic order, but China still had some way to go before it could fully accept Western-style foreign relations. Apart from the audience question, China had yet to reach that stage of maturity when it could learn to use the new system to its own advantage by posting its own ambassadors abroad. But despite all its limitations, the Zongli Yamen did become a catalyst for change.

To carry out its duties (among them the supervision of the proper collection of maritime customs), the Yamen needed dependable translators and linguists. Under Western advice, it immediately established two new subordinate institutions: the Inspectorate General of Customs and the College of Foreign Languages (Tong-wen Guan).

The Inspectorate General of Customs. In 1853, during the Taiping insurrection, the Chinese customs official in Shanghai fled the city when the rebels occupied Shanghai. With no one around to collect maritime customs, the port of Shanghai became a tariff-free paradise for ten months. However, the British who handled the bulk of the China trade were worried that demands for retrospective payments were sure to be made once Chinese authority returned to Shanghai. After giving some thought to this matter, the British con-

sul, with the approval of the American and the French consuls and the Chinese authorities, established a foreign-managed customs service in 1854. This Foreign Inspectorate of Customs at Shanghai, headed by Horatio Nelson Lay and staffed at the top by foreigners, functioned as a "Chinese" customs office. Lay had given up his British consular service to become a Chinese employee.

This strange hybrid institution was later to play a significant role in China's modernization programs, but the impression cannot be avoided that it was basically a foreign device thrust on the Chinese, who had no substitute solution of their own for the unique situation created in Shanghai by the civil war. The foreigners in the customs service, though employees of Beijing, had extra-territorial standing and had fixed their own salaries at scales far higher than those received by the Chinese. The irony of the situation could not have been lost on anyone with the slightest sensitivity when Lay, who was fluent in Chinese, was "borrowed" by Lord Elgin in 1858 to accompany the British expedition as an interpreter. During the negotiations, Lay, the "loyal Chinese official," harangued the emperor's envoy and embarrassed him with information the British had gained from the Chinese archives captured in Guangzhou.

Even more ironic was the fact that when, under the Tianjin treaties and associated protocols, the Chinese agreed to the expansion of the foreign inspectorate of customs to all ports, Beijing promoted Lay to become the first Inspector General of Customs. He was confirmed in this post by the Zongli Yamen in 1861. The Chinese reasoning was that although Lay, "the most crafty of barbarians," had made a "great display of violence" in Tianjin to ingratiate "himself with the barbarian chief" (Lord Elgin), he was actually "grateful" to China for his "generous pay" and "looks out for smuggling for us, so in recent years barbarian customs have been three or four times as much as when the ports were opened."¹⁰ An honest barbarian was preferable to the corrupt Chinese mandarins.

The expanding customs revenues were absolutely indispensable to maintain an increasingly bankrupt government.

When Lay went on home leave in 1861, Robert Hart, who like Lay had left the British consular service in 1859 to become the assistant commissioner of customs at Guangzhou, was appointed acting inspector general. During his leave in England, Lay had been instructed to purchase a flotilla of ships for the Chinese navy. Because of the totally unacceptable manner in which he handled this affair, Lay was dismissed on his return to China in 1863. The 28-year-old Hart now replaced Lay and for the next 45 years administered the Customs Service as inspector general.

During his long tenure Hart established a model Western-style organization, but despite his personal loyalty to China, the service in many ways remained a foreign implant. Although Hart insisted that the Inspectorate of Customs was "a Chinese and not a Foreign Service" and that the foreigners "who take the pay and who are the servants of the Chinese Government" should not behave as superiors of the Chinese,¹¹ the foreigners remained elitists. By 1895 there were 700 Western and 3,500 Chinese employees in the Customs Service. However, few Chinese could ever hope to rise to the higher posts. Hart ran the organization as a one-man show. All the employees were responsible to him, and he alone was responsible to the Zongli Yamen. Hart, of course, cannot be blamed for this state of affairs. If the Qing government had had a positive national policy and greater confidence in its own officials, Hart could have been replaced by a Chinese as soon as one had been trained for the purpose.

After his office was shifted to Beijing in 1865, Hart became an even more trusted advisor of his superiors in the Zongli Yamen and played an important role in pushing for China's modernization. Like the great regional leader Li Hong-zhang, Hart got involved in China's diplomatic and reform efforts. He helped establish the Tong-wen Guan, helped to end the Sino-French war in 1885, pushed for the development of a Chi-

nese navy in the 1880s, advocated the modernization of the traditional examination system (mathematics was added to the *ju-ren* degree examination in 1888), established the national postal service (1896), and helped popularize scientific and technical subjects through publications and exhibits.

That Hart was an effective intermediary between China and the West was recognized by the British government, which conferred knighthood on him in 1882 and three years later offered him the British ambassadorship to China (which he declined).

By 1893, 30 years after he had been confirmed as inspector general, Hart had begun to lose patience with the Manchu dynasty. Looking back on the work he had done, or tried to do, in these three decades, he said, China "changes very slowly for the better, and most of what we do is merely to keep the tyre [tire] on the wheel." In 1895, the year of the First Sino-Japanese War, his conclusion was, "I fear, as far as the dynasty is concerned, it is hopeless; in ten years time revolution will do the trick."¹² The revolution came in 16 years.

To sum up, the Customs Service, apart from supporting the dynasty with dependable revenues (supplying 25 percent of the total central revenues in the 1890s and 34 percent in the early 1900s), became an important modern part of the Chinese government. It introduced the principle of central fiscal control (totally absent in traditional Chinese fiscal structure), which helped foster the concept of political unity. It also helped in promoting other modernization programs.

The Tong-Wen Guan and China's Foreign Service. Like the Customs Service, the Tong-wen Guan, the College of Foreign Languages, or Interpreters College as it was sometimes known, was also an institution in which the Westerners and the Chinese collaborated. When Prince Gong accepted the advice of foreigners, such as Hart, and established this college in 1862, he was doing no more than what was absolutely necessary to run the Zongli Yamen. Increasing contacts between the Zongli Yamen and the foreign govern-

ments meant that Beijing could no longer rely on the untrained Guangzhou "linguists" (whose English was often appalling) or on foreigners like Lay. The Tianjin treaties had stipulated that all British and French communications with Beijing would be in both English and French and that the texts in these languages would be held as authoritative. So Chinese translators were needed, but training language experts meant depending on foreign instructors. To silence critics of this policy, precedence was found in the early Qing employment of Jesuits for calendar making. And it was obviously easier to explain away the hiring of foreigners in the Customs Service, where they were not in a position to undermine the Confucian educational system.

The Tong-wen Guan hired foreign instructors to teach English, French, Russian, and German. In the beginning, since no self-respecting Confucian scholar would be caught dead studying a foreign language, the Manchu bannermen (often middle-aged), who were *ordered* to enroll at the college, proved to be indifferent students. In time the prestige of the institution improved as it became much more of a liberal arts college. Other subjects, such as science, astronomy, mathematics, and international law, were added to the curriculum, and the period of study was lengthened to eight years.

The growth and development of the Tong-wen Guan owed a special debt to W. A. P. Martin, an American missionary educator, who having served as an English instructor for some years, was appointed its president in 1869. He held the post until 1894. By 1873 the college had its own printing press, which made it easier for professors and students to publish the books they had translated or compiled. Among the books produced by the staff that can be considered helpful in introducing Western and international law to China were translations of Wheaton's *Elements of International Law*, Code Napoleon, Woolsey's *International Law*, and Bluntschli's *International Law*.

That Western international law could be used by the Chinese against the West itself was proved early when the Zongli Yamen

used information gained from Wheaton's book (translated by Martin in 1863) to force the Prussians in 1864 to release the Danish "enemy" ships they had seized in Chinese "neutral" waters.

Other centers similar to the Tong-wen Guan were set up in Shanghai (1863), Guangzhou (1864), and Fuzhou (1866). By 1895 these institutions were supplying all the interpreters for the Zongli Yamen and the legations abroad. And yet the impact of these schools on the Chinese educational system or on the attitude of the majority of the literati was virtually nil. The reasons for this are not hard to find. The traditional examination system, which attracted thousands of ambitious, bright men from all over the empire, had not changed its emphasis on Confucianism. It continued to produce a conservative, backward-looking intelligentsia, who would have agreed with Grand Secretary Wo-ren's memorial of 1867, which stated in part that subjects such as astronomy and mathematics, introduced into the curriculum of the translation schools by barbarian teachers, were of little use in strengthening the nation. "From ancient down to modern times, your slave has never heard of anyone who could use mathematics to raise the nation from a state of decline."¹³ His recommendation was that these studies be "abolished instantly," before the barbarians had an opportunity to undermine the loyalty of the Chinese multitudes to the dynasty.

Diplomatic Missions Abroad. Robert Hart, who had done so much to support the development of the Tong-wen Guan, was also eager that China establish its own diplomatic missions abroad. Chinese envoys in Western capitals could help defend China's national interests and, because of their firsthand experience of conditions in the West, help encourage China's modernization.

In 1866, when Hart was going on a six-month leave to Europe, he proposed to the Zongli Yamen that a Chinese official accompany him, in an informal capacity, primarily to see what the outside world looked like. Beijing agreed, and a delegation consisting of a

64-year-old, middle-ranking Manchu official, Pin-chun, and four students got an opportunity to visit London, Copenhagen, Stockholm, St. Petersburg, Berlin, and Paris. According to Morse, Pin-chun, though fetid and well received in the various capitals,

was disgusted with the discomforts of travel in countries whose customs he abhorred with all the dislike of a fossil and a Manchu. His tour was cut short and he was allowed to . . . leave the scenes of mental disturbance created by steam and electricity, and of moral disturbance caused by the indecorum and bad manners everywhere manifest in his eyes. He produced no favorable impression of Chinese civilization, and he could have nothing favorable to report of the West; and his mission must be pronounced a failure.¹⁴

This failure did not dishearten Hart, who continued to advise the Zongli Yamen that China must discard her psychology of seclusion and send ambassadors to the capitals of the treaty powers, "to cultivate and conserve friendly relations by explaining to the Treaty Powers the many difficulties that China cannot fail to experience in attempting to change existing conditions; to bespeak forbearance and prevent [them from resorting] to hostile pressure to wring from China concessions for which the government did not as yet feel itself ready."¹⁵

The Zongli Yamen appreciated the value of Hart's advice (incidentally, he was not the only foreigner who was giving such advice). Fearing that hostile pressures might, indeed, be exerted on China when the treaties came up for revision in 1868, the Zongli Yamen consulted the leading statesmen concerning how far China should go in the modernization programs advocated by the powers. There were differences of opinion on matters such as greater freedom to the missionaries or the opening of railroads and mines, but it was generally agreed (the two most important officials, Zeng Guo-fan and Li Hong-zhang, favored the proposal) that sending diplomatic missions abroad might be worth the effort.

In November 1867 the Zongli Yamen appointed the U.S. minister, Anson

Burlingame, who was about to retire from his post in Beijing, to be China's ambassador-extraordinary to all the world capitals. A high rank was conferred on Burlingame, and he was made a Chinese civil servant. Using barbarians to serve China seemed to have become the mode. Obviously, to placate the jealousies of the other powers, an Englishman from the British embassy was commissioned as first secretary and a Frenchman from the Customs Service as the second secretary. A Manchu and a Han official, of the second civil rank, were appointed co-envoys, and they had an entourage of 30 secretaries and aides.

The mission left China in May 1868 and for all practical purposes ended in February 1870, when Burlingame died of pneumonia in St. Petersburg. In its 28 months abroad the mission visited Washington, London, Paris, Stockholm, Copenhagen, The Hague, Berlin, St. Petersburg, Brussels, and Rome, the last two under the headship of the Manchu Zhigang.

While in the United States Burlingame took it upon himself to portray a "progressive" China, opening its arms wide to receive "the shining banners of Western civilization," welcoming the missionaries to "plant the shining cross on every hill and in every valley," and engaging engineers to open mines and build railways.¹⁶ Burlingame's exaggerations shocked both the foreigners in China and the Chinese government, but he impressed his fellow citizens favorably. Forever afterward many Americans have been guilty of deceiving themselves with favorable, though false, images of China. Burlingame was certainly responsible for inspiring large numbers of missionaries to rush off to plant their shining crosses in China.

In Washington, Burlingame (without consulting Beijing) negotiated eight supplementary articles that revised the American Tianjin Treaty. These articles guaranteed China's territorial integrity; Chinese control over its internal trade; its right to construct railroads whenever it chose to do so; and the rights of Chinese in America and Americans in China to enjoy the freedoms of religion,

residence, and travel. The articles also confirmed "the inalienable right of man to change his home and allegiance," which strengthened the position of American missionaries in China and made it easier to import cheap Chinese labor to America. That the clause was one-sided became evident when the Americans, feeling threatened by the numbers of Chinese entering California, passed laws discriminating against the Chinese, culminating in making them ineligible for American citizenship (1871).

The Chinese government ratified the Burlingame treaty because, despite Burlingame's portrayal of a China dying to Westernize (a picture most abhorrent to the Chinese leaders), he had presented China's case with passion, and the new clauses did strengthen Beijing's hand in dealing with the problems arising out of the revision of treaties. The Alcock Convention failed to be ratified partly because of Burlingame's mission.

In England the mission's success was limited. It got the British government to declare that as a matter of policy "unfriendly pressure would not be applied inconsistent with the independence and safety of China," as long as Britain could deal directly with Beijing and not the local authorities and as long as China abided by its treaty obligations. Paris agreed with the British stand. Burlingame's success in the other European capitals was even less spectacular. The mission achieved no long-term results.

Between 1870 and 1877, when China finally decided to establish diplomatic missions abroad, three further incidents took place to undermine the Chinese traditional world view. In 1873, the audience question was finally more or less settled when the Tongzhi emperor, having come of age, had to receive the foreign ambassadors in audience, European style. Instead of kowtowing, the ministers, representing Britain, America, France, Russia, Holland, and Japan, bowed five times to the Son of Heaven. The question whether the emperor would continue to grant special or annual audiences remained unanswered because he died in 1875. The subtle suggestion of superiority, indicated in

the manner in which the audience was held, was repeated in 1890 when the Guangxu emperor came of age and the next set of audiences was granted. Only after the outbreak of the war with Japan in 1894 was the audience question finally put to rest. Foreign envoys were now received in a proper hall in the palace under a fully acceptable protocol.

The other two incidents were connected with the Tianjin massacre (1870) and the Margary affair (1875). On both these occasions diplomatic missions, if they can be dubbed such, were sent with letters of apology to Paris and London. The Chinese official, Guo Song-dao (1818–1891), who led the mission to London stayed on to become the first permanent Chinese diplomatic envoy to Britain and France (1877). China's entry into the world of diplomatic relations did not have an auspicious beginning. However, in 1878 a legation was opened in Washington, and by 1880 missions had been established in most European states and Japan.

The embassies were established hesitatingly and under strong foreign pressure. Many Chinese were reluctant to be appointed abroad, and even those who did accept the posts were often attacked upon their return for their changed attitude toward the world. For example, during his two years in London, Guo was converted to the idea that institutional reforms were a prerequisite to progress and that only with internal change would China be able to resist external aggression. His rational approach to European development and his un-Confucian recommendations for China's progress made him a target of attack by the conservatives in Beijing. When the Zongli Yamen decided to publish Guo's official diary, in which he had sketched the history of Western civilization, the critics managed to persuade the emperor to order the destruction of the printing blocks.

Between 1880 and 1896 China lost its tributary states; after its defeat in the Sino-Japanese War, China was at last relieved of its burden of superiority. Only then was it finally ready to enter the so-called family of nations. The irony is that to reach this stage it had to give up its own empire and recognize the

legitimacy of the empires being established by Western nations; it had to give up its own sense of superiority and recognize the superiority of the West.

Western Knowledge, Self-Strengthening, and Reform Ideas

In the two decades that followed the First Anglo-Chinese War, little was done by the Beijing government to prepare for the next round of Western aggression. The reason was that officials (like Commissioner Lin Ze-xu whose tenure in Guangzhou was discussed in the last chapter) who had come in direct contact with Westerners for the first time in their lives could not dare to inform Beijing truthfully that the foreigners possessed at least some knowledge (for example, science and technology) that was not available to the Chinese. To do so would have challenged the orthodox view that China's civilization was the most advanced in the whole world and that ignorant foreign "barbarians" came to China to imbibe its civilization and learning; any notion that foreigners may possess knowledge that China could borrow would have undermined the ideological basis of the Chinese sociopolitical system. As a result these officials, who were cognizant of Western superiority in weapons and military techniques (in the face of defeat, it was impossible not to do so), continued to belittle the "ocean barbarians" in their memorials to the emperor.

Even when it became an open secret that the Western military was superior to that of China, an attempt was made to separate guns and ships from the Western civilization and polity that had produced these instruments of aggression. This dichotomy marked the developments in China for the entire period until 1895.

However, some of the more thoughtful Chinese officials, even as early as 1839, felt that it was necessary to inquire into the sources of Western wealth and power. They were men of intellectual courage because they knew that they could be condemned for associating with the hated foreigners (from whom they got their information) and for

subverting Confucianism with their newfangled ideas.

During the two decades 1840–1860 that otherwise appear so barren, three outstanding Chinese officials made some pioneering efforts that prepared the ground for a better understanding of the world beyond China. The first was Commissioner Lin Ze-xu, who having seen how the Western steamers "came and went as they pleased," heedless of tide and wind, and having witnessed the effectiveness of their fire power, came to the very perceptive conclusion that the "barbarians are superior in three ways: firstly, warships; secondly, firearms; and thirdly, methods of military training and discipline of soldiers."¹⁷

In an intelligent response to the new situation developing on the South China coast, Lin promptly after his arrival in Guangzhou began to gather information on the West by getting translations made of materials selected from Western books and periodicals. The selections included excerpts from Murray's *Cyclopedia* and Vattel's *Law of Nations*. His observations and inquiries led Lin to the conclusion that China should endeavor to become an advanced Western-style maritime power by hiring British and American technicians to help build warships and train a naval force. Unlike the Japanese leaders of 1868, who made the search of "knowledge throughout the world" their national policy, Lin could not even give his advice openly. He could only convey his feelings, in confidence, to his closest friends. One of them, the official Wei Yuan, also received Lin's collected translations in 1841.

Wei Yuan (1794–1856), although a junior official working in the Grand Secretariat, was intensely interested in national affairs. China's defeat in 1842 led him to turn his attention to the problem of relations with Western powers. With the help of Lin's papers and other sources, Wei completed, within months of the signing of the Treaty of Nanjing, a political geography of foreign nations. The work appeared in 1844, under the title *Hai-guo tu-zhi* (*An illustrated Gazetteer of the Countries Overseas*). The book was revised and enlarged in 1847 and expanded again in

1852. The publication became popular in China and Japan and is said to have helped inspire Japan's modernization efforts.

Wei's compilation was rather uneven, a patchwork of translations not without errors, but it marked the beginning of a serious effort to seek knowledge of the world beyond China. Wei's work was acceptable because he put it in the context of China's traditional approach to barbarian management: "Use the barbarian to control the barbarian." In this case to induce Westerners to check one another. However, he also implied that the superior technology of the Western barbarians should be learned to ward them off.

A far more scientifically accurate and scholarly work, which dealt with the nations of the world, their history, and their political and economic systems, was that of Xu Ji-yu (1795–1873). In the beginning, like Lin and other officials, Xu had little knowledge of the Westerners and, for example, readily believed that "their knees do not easily bend." But his official appointments in Fujian, Guangdong, and Guangxi from 1840 to 1851 (he was governor of Fujian, 1847–1851) brought him in contact with Westerners, and he developed a far more sophisticated attitude toward the West. Xu began researching his subject in 1843, taking the help of such foreigners as the American missionary David Abeel, and finished writing it in 1848. *Ying-huan zhi-lue* (*A Short Account of the Maritime Circuit*) was published in 1850.

Because of its objectivity, Xu's book challenged the premises of China's traditional view of the world and the absolute superiority of Chinese civilization. In a manner of speaking, Xu scored the emergence of a new international order and prompted China to secure its proper place in it by reforming its institutions and borrowing Western techniques. He was perhaps the first to employ the ancient Confucian term *self-strengthening* to indicate China's needed response to Western imperialism.

Like Lin and Wei, Xu was no traitor to Confucianism, but unlike them, he went far beyond guns and ships in his search for the

sources of Western power. Because of his objectivity and his attempt at a sympathetic understanding of the West and because of his close relationship with the foreigners who supplied him information, Xu was reprimanded, demoted, and dismissed from service. Only after the 1860 debacle was Xu not only reinstated but also given posts in the Zongli Yamen and the Tong-wen Guan. His book, now printed by the government itself, became a standard work, read by every reformer into the twentieth century.

Although in the 1840s and 1850s activities of officials like Lin, Wei, and Xu were marginal to the intellectual world of the Chinese literati, their importance lies in the fact that in the 1860s, when the need for knowledge of the West became apparent, the pioneering groundwork had already been laid. In this context the contribution made by the secular writings of Western missionaries (even though their Chinese language lacked elegance and style) was also significant. For example, three books in Chinese, one by Elijah Bridgman, *Brief History of the United States*, and two by Karl Gutzlaff, *Illustrated Universal Geography* and *Universal History*, were available to Xu and the others.¹⁸

After the 1860 debacle the newly emerging provincial leaders began to absorb Western technology and science under the slogan Self-Strengthening. The expression *self-strengthening* (*zi-qiang*), used by Xu Ji-yu, was made popular by the official Feng Gui-fen, who at one time or another worked with or had come in contact with Lin Ze-xu, Zeng Guo-fan, and Li Hong-zhang. Feng posed the question "Why are [the Western countries] small and yet strong? Why are we large and yet weak?"¹⁹ And his answer was that China must master Western science and technology to gain the prosperity and strength of the Western nations.

In the aftermath of the 1860 war and with the establishment of the Zongli Yamen and the Tong-wen Guan, leaders like Prince Gong, Zeng Guo-fan, and Li Hong-zhang had little difficulty in accepting the need to acquire Western arms. Indeed, Zeng and Li

had already bought Western arms to suppress the Taiping and other rebellions. But now their goal was self-sufficiency, so they began to buy Western machinery to manufacture arms. With foreign technical help, arsenals and shipyards were established in quick succession: the Jiangnan arsenal at Shanghai under Zeng's sponsorship (1865), Fuzhou shipyard under Zuo Zong-tang (1866), and Nanjing arsenal under Li Hong-zhang (1867).

Zeng acquired the machinery for the Jiangnan arsenal from America, using a Chinese Yale graduate, Yung Wing, as his agent. The arsenal soon became one of the biggest industrial units of its type in the whole world, constructing steamships, cannons, guns, and ammunition. By 1872, the year Zeng passed away, the Jiangnan arsenal had produced five steam-powered gun boats (the last of 400 horsepower) and other sundry arms. The arsenal also had a translation bureau and a technical school attached to it. The head foreigner employed in the translation bureau was an Englishman, John Fryer, who by 1896 had helped produce over a hundred translations of books on mathematics, military affairs, navigation, engineering, chemistry, physics, medicine, law, and political economy.

The Fuzhou shipyard, set up with the help of two Frenchmen, also had an arsenal and a technical school. By 1874, 15 ships had been built at the naval yard, most of them of 150 horsepower each.

More than most other officials, Li Hong-zhang realized that China needed to progress much faster, not only in the manufacture of arms but also in communications and modern economic enterprises. From 1870 to 1895, as governor general of Zhili province posted to Tianjin, Li was the preeminent statesman in the empire (particularly after the death of Zeng in 1872). His efforts, or patronage, led to many significant self-strengthening developments in various fields.

To prepare the Chinese to officer modern naval and army units, naval and military academies were established by 1885 and trainees sent to England, France, and Ger-

many to study military tactics, shipbuilding, and navigation. Between 1872 and 1881, under the care of Yung Wing, 120 young boys were sent to schools in the United States to acquire Western knowledge.

In the realm of transportation and communications the China Merchants' Steam Navigation Company (CMSNC), established in 1872, ran commercial ships between the northern and southern ports and to Japan, the Philippines, and Singapore; and telegraph and railways were inaugurated in 1881. Coal mines to supply the fuel for the ships and railways were opened in Kaiping in 1877.

Heavy industry was introduced with iron mines and iron works (1889–1890) and light industry with cotton mills, textile factories, paper mills, and match companies (all between 1885 and 1895).

Although the list of enterprises looks impressive (many Westerners were impressed enough to believe that China would win the 1894 war), the achievements were disappointing. The arsenals could not keep up with the improvements in arms in the West, and as the cost of building ships became excessively heavy, it was found advisable to buy, from abroad, more advanced ships of greater tonnage and better guns. The Fuzhou shipyard (built with French help) and ten Chinese naval vessels in the port were destroyed by the French in the war of 1884–1885; the shipyard never fully recovered from the blow. Fryer's translations were read by very few, and as he himself said, they never came "into general notice." The educational mission to the United States was withdrawn five years before its completion because the Chinese boys had become too Americanized and were seen as losing their own culture. The CMSNC did well enough to buy out the competing American firm of Russell and Co. in 1877 and increase its fleet to 31 ships, but thereafter it stagnated because of corrupt practices and lost its edge over the British coastal lines. Similarly, the Kaiping Mining Company, which did well until 1892, fell into debt and was taken over by a British company in 1900. After 1896, foreign industries began to be

established in treaty ports on the basis of the privileges granted to the Japanese at the conclusion of the Sino-Japanese War.

Reasons for Failure. As Jonathan Spence has put it, "The 'self-strengthening' movement never really took off; indeed, it was more a succession of experiments than a movement. The various projects undertaken . . . remained isolated phenomena."²⁰ The authority and resources of the central government had become severely limited. Besides, Beijing had neither the understanding nor the vision that could have compelled it to play the unifying role necessary to coordinate a national program of modernization.

A representative example of this situation can be seen in the development of the Imperial Navy. A Naval Yamen (Board of Admiralty) was created in 1885, presumably to centralize the four regional fleets. The centralization did not take place. Li Hongzhang, who was more interested in building up the northern navy (the Beiyang fleet), which was under his command, ensured his dominant position in the Naval Yamen by diverting 36 million taels of the naval funds to the emperor dowager for the building of a new summer palace. When the war with Japan came, Li's navy was short of ammunition for the heavy guns (some of the torpedoes were filled with scrap iron instead of gunpowder because of corrupt officials); the Beiyang admiral could not communicate with the British master-gunner; the southern navy would not spare ships for the war; and after the Japanese had captured all the ships at Weihaiwei, the captain of a ship from the Guangdong fleet, caught in the war, pleaded that he be allowed to leave with his ship because his squadron had not taken part in the war.²¹

The regional officials, who promoted modernization efforts, were required to receive central permission for their projects, but in practice the efforts remained personal, leading to personal aggrandizement. The rivalries between regional power holders and the system of overlapping

bureaucratic authority made it impossible for the center to coordinate even defense activities.

Most of the funds for commercial and industrial enterprises had to be raised locally by the regional officials. The result was joint official-merchant undertakings, the officials supervising the operation and the merchants providing the bulk of the capital. The system came to be known as *guan-du shang-ban* (Official Supervision and Merchant Management). The grafting of traditional bureaucratic practices onto modern industrial and commercial ventures was bound to lead to failure; officials, themselves Confucian generalists, could not foster functional specialization (there was excessive dependence on foreign experts; nepotism brought inefficient operators into the system; and official exactions and other corrupt practices siphoned off profits and kept them from being plowed back into the enterprise. According to Albert Feuerwerker, "the *guan-du shang-ban* industries remained marginal undertakings within their own environment. Their establishment and operation did not represent a fundamental break with traditional agrarian economy and the conservative economic outlook that reflected it . . . [the lesson to be drawn is that] one institutional breakthrough is worth a dozen textile mills or shipping companies established within the framework of the traditional society and its system of values."²²

Some scholars have found the cause for China's failure at industrialization in the unhealthy relationship between the government (as represented by the regional officials) and the merchants, which constrained the development of free enterprise. But this in itself is not necessarily true. Some of the most rapidly developing economies in the world today are in countries where the government's relations with the industrial sector are close (e.g., Japan, Taiwan, and Singapore). Indeed, the Chinese failure may be seen as resulting from the absence of a strong central government that could lead and guide economic growth.

Changing Intellectual Environment. Despite the failures already mentioned, China by 1895 had established the beginnings of an industrial base (mostly in the treaty ports along the coast). As a consequence, new technical and working classes emerged. What is perhaps even more important, the trend hesitatingly set by Lin Ze-xu, Wei Yuan, and Xu Ji-yu now spread to Confucian scholars who had not even gained official status. In other words, political developments and loss of central authority had made it possible for some literati to become involved with foreign matters.

Although their number was small, scholars like Kang You-wei and Liang Qi-chao rose to national prominence after 1895. Their education and lives before 1895 show how the intellectual environment was already changing under the old regime.

Kang You-wei (1858–1927), who came from a family of scholars in a village near Guangzhou, received formal Confucian education in his youth. However, he failed to pass the *ju-ren* examination in 1876. Shortly thereafter, for personal reasons, he temporarily turned away from classical education to study Daoism and Buddhism. His new scholarship inspired him to such an extent that he considered becoming a "sage" and working for the salvation of the world. In his preparation to reach sagehood, he read books on history and geography and gained an interest in the West. He visited Hong Kong and Shanghai, read translations by the missionary press and the Jiangnan arsenal, and became a student of Western civilization.

In 1888, following the Chinese failure in the First Sino-French War (1884–1885), which disturbed him very much, Kang wrote a memorial to the emperor urging reforms in the administration; the memorial from such a humble source naturally never reached the emperor. In 1891 Kang founded a school in Guangzhou, where apart from the classical subjects, he taught Western learning and other modern subjects such as mathematics and military drill. It was during this time that Kang began to study the Han *gu-wen* (old

text) classics (the basis of orthodox Confucian education) critically and to assail their authenticity. He developed theories to prove that Confucius and Confucian classics, when culled of forgeries, encouraged political reform. His book dealing with forgeries raised a storm of protest and was banned in 1894. Kang, wanting to legitimize reform within the framework of Confucian ideology, refused to give up his efforts and produced another controversial book, *Confucius as a Reformer*, in 1897.

In 1893 Kang passed the *ju-ren* examination and in 1895 gained the final degree of *jin-shi*. On hearing of China's acceptance of the humiliating terms ending the Sino-Japanese War, Kang got 1,200 imperial examination candidates to sign a petition urging the government to reject the treaty and carry on the war. Kang followed up the Candidates Memorial, which had had no effect on the government, with two other memorials recommending a systematic program of administrative, economic, military, and educational reform. In mid-1895 Kang, along with his student Liang Qi-chao, established the Society for the Study of National Strengthening (*Qiang-xue hui*) and a newspaper associated with it. Because of the opposition and hostility that his activities had created, the *Qiang-xue hui* was proscribed in 1896 and Kang was forced to leave Beijing and withdraw to Guangzhou. Although Kang's early efforts to change China failed, he gained a national reputation that helped him later to become the leader of the reform movement in China.

Liang Qi-chao (1873–1929), also from Guangdong province, was instructed in Confucian classics from the age of 4 or 5 and became a *ju-ren* at the age of 16. In 1890 on his way back from Beijing, where he had gone to take the *jin-shi* examination (which he failed), he passed through Shanghai and bought a copy of Xu's geography and other translations. Later in the same year Liang met Kang You-wei and became his student. On Liang's urging Kang set up his school in Guangzhou. Here, where Liang heard Kang's

lectures, in which he took "Western affairs for comparison and illustration,"²³ Liang gained an opportunity to air his own views as an instructor beginning in 1893.

In 1895 Liang helped Kang draft the Candidates Memorial and served the reform movement as secretary to the Society for the Study of National Strengthening. Later Liang became one of the most active spokespersons for progress and radical reform in China.

While discussing the failures of the self-strengthening movement, students of Chinese history often fail to see that in the realm of ideas, Chinese scholars had already begun to probe Western political, economic, and social institutions and the civilization that lay behind them and to seek ways of using this information to renovate China. Such progressive, reform-minded scholars were few and their understanding of the West was limited, but their influence, in the long run, would far outweigh their numerical strength.

NOTES

1. See Irwin Hyatt, "Protestant Missions in China, 1877-1890," *Papers on China* (East Asia Center, Harvard University), No. 17 (1963), pp. 67-100.
2. Edmund S. Wehrle, *Britain, China, and the Anti-Missionary Riots, 1891-1900* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1966), pp. 29-30.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
4. British Public Record Office, F.O. 881/7118.
5. Marquis Zeng to the French Foreign Office, quoted in Henry McAleavy, *Black Flags in Vietnam* (New York: Macmillan, 1968), p. 184.
6. Quoted in Lloyd E. Eastman, *Throne and Mandarins* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 211.
7. See McAleavy, *Black Flags*, p. 164.

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CHAPTER 4

CHINA TURNS TO REVOLUTION: 1895-1911

The last 16 years of the Manchu dynasty, 1895-1911, witnessed hectic political activity. China's humiliating defeat at the hands of Japan precipitated a series of aggressive actions by the imperialist powers that reduced China to a semicolony and parceled up its territory as separate spheres of influence. This development in turn led to national movements for reform and revolution, culminating in the 1911 revolution and the establishment of the first Chinese Republic.

THE IMPERIALIST RAPE OF CHINA: 1895-1898

Despite their victories in China the Western powers had treated it with a certain amount of respect, but China's defeat at the hands of a small Asian nation changed their attitude drastically. Fearful that the Manchu dynasty was on the verge of collapse, the powers vied with one another to exact as many concessions as possible from the Beijing government. To a certain degree their behavior in China reflected their views of how the Treaty of Shimonoseki had altered the balance of power in East Asia.

Russia, itself interested in the warm-water harbor of Port Arthur on the Liaodong Peninsula, could not tolerate the idea of its acquisition by Japan. With the help of Ger-

many and France, Russia forced Japan to renounce possession of Liaodong for an additional indemnity of 30 million taels. Although some Chinese viewed this as a friendly Russian action, Russia was only maneuvering to keep Japan out of what the Russians considered their area of strategic interest.

Until the First Sino-Japanese War, China had borrowed little from abroad, but now her reserves were totally depleted. To finance the war China had to borrow 4.635 million pounds sterling from the British Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank. After the war it faced an indemnity of 230 million taels (about 23 million pounds). With an annual revenue of 89 million taels, China was in no position to pay the indemnity without borrowing heavily from abroad. Countries wanting to dominate Beijing and also to profit financially from the transaction rushed to lend money to the bankrupt government. In 1895 the Russians, who had just proved their "disinterested" friendship for China, were anxious to keep China from becoming indebted to Britain. They loaned Beijing 400 million francs (15.8 million pounds) through a Franco-Russian syndicate, due in 36 years and secured against customs revenues. In 1896 an Anglo-German consortium of banks loaned 16 million pounds, also for 36 years. It, too, was secured against customs revenues. Two years later an Anglo-German syndicate