

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

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

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

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

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

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

Restoration through Reform

CHAPTER 9

CONFUCIAN REFORM



What was truly remarkable, after this long series of challenges, was that the Qing dynasty did not collapse right away, but managed to survive for the whole of the nineteenth century and on until 1912. In partial explanation, Qing statesmen described this survival as a "restoration" (*zhongxing*), a venerable phrase frequently applied to other dynasties that had managed to weather waves of crises and restore moral and political order to the empire. The idea of restoration had both a nostalgic and a bittersweet ring to it: those past restorations, although significant, had been impermanent, for each of the "restored" dynasties had eventually passed away. Unlike those of the past, moreover, the Qing restoration took place without strong imperial leadership. Emperor Tongzhi, whose name is given to this restoration period, was only five years old at his accession to the throne in 1861, and died in 1875 before having had a chance to exercise personal power. His "reign" was presided over by his mother Cixi, acting as regent, by his uncle Prince Gong (who had been forced to negotiate with the Westerners in 1860 when the rest of the court fled Peking), by one or two influential grand counselors, but above all by an exceptional group of provincial officials who had risen to prominence fighting the Taiping, the Nian, or the Muslim rebels. Zeng Guofan, Li Hongzhang, and Zuo Zongtang were probably the best known of these, but there were scores of others of comparable skill. Acting sometimes in concert and sometimes independently, these officials managed to reinvest the Qing dynasty with a sense of purpose, shore up the economy, and develop significant new institutions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DEFINING FOREIGN POLICY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The choice of Xu was a good one, and again showed that a new kind of thinking was gaining some ground in China. Xu had learned about the

West from American missionaries in Fujian province in the 1840s, and had been one of the earliest appointees to the Zongli Yamen staff. Xu had written glowingly about the West, especially the United States, with its curious kingless government: "The public organs are entrusted to public opinion. There has never been a system of this sort in ancient or modern times. This is really a wonder." Xu had also praised George Washington as "an extraordinary man," superior even to China's own cultural heroes in valor and strategic cunning: "Of all the famous Westerners of ancient and modern times," Xu asked rhetorically, "can Washington be placed in any position but first?"¹² Not surprisingly, the Americans in China were delighted at his appointment, which seemed an excellent omen for future diplomatic relations. The United States' minister to China, Anson Burlingame, gave Xu a copy of Gilbert Stuart's famous portrait of Washington, and Xu's praises of Washington were inscribed on a block of granite from Fujian province and placed at the three-hundred-foot level of the Washington Monument. When Xu retired for health reasons in 1869, he was succeeded by W. A. P. Martin, the missionary scholar who had translated Wheaton on international or international law in 1863, and had assembled an able group of Chinese scientists and mathematicians to help translate other Western works.

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

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

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

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

THE MISSIONARY PRESENCE

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

For months rumors had spread through the city that the Christians had been maiming and torturing children, and practicing every kind of sexual aberration. The Catholics, whose huge new Tianjin church had been built—despite public protest—on the site of a former imperial park and temple, came in for the worst abuse. Seeing himself as the Catholics' main protector,

the French consul Henri Fontanier protested several times to the city officials: but they did little to calm the agitation, and large crowds of Chinese continued to menace the foreigners. Frustrated and angry, Fontanier, two pistols tucked into his belt and accompanied by an aide with a drawn sword, rushed into the magistrate's yamen. Furious at the Chinese magistrate's bland prevarication, Fontanier drew one pistol and fired, missing the magistrate, he killed a bystander. A crowd of hostile Chinese, already assembled outside the office, exploded with their own rage. Fontanier and his aide were killed along with several French traders and their wives. The church was burned. The convent of the Catholic Sisters of Mercy was broken into by a mob, and the ten sisters there were attacked, stripped, and killed. By day's end, sixteen French men and women were dead, along with three Russians whom the crowd had thought were French.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The introduction of scientific and technical texts in translation was given extra impetus by the training schools that were developed along with the new arsenals opened during the first phase of the self-strengthening movement. In 1865 Zeng Guofan himself wrote an approving preface to Euclid's *Elements of Geometry*, translated jointly by the Chinese mathematician Li Shanlan and by the British missionary Alexander Wylie. Zeng noted that this work completed the pioneering translation of Euclid's first six books done by the Jesuit Matteo Ricci over two hundred fifty years before. The completed translation, wrote Zeng, made a crucial supplement to pre-existing Chinese works on mathematics: although traditional Chinese mathematical learning could not be dispensed with, one could not deny that the student "sticking blindly" to it "after a lifetime spent in practical mathematics knows his rules indeed, but knows nothing of the reason for them, so that mathematics are thought by some an impossible study." Euclid, as presented by Ricci, Li, and Wylie, traced not methods but *principles*, "presented under the headings of point, line, surface and solid." A clear understanding of these elements, said Zeng, "will enable the student to solve the manifold problems of number."¹⁴ During the 1860s, Wylie and various collaborators also wrote, or translated into Chinese, treatises on mechanics, algebra, differential calculus, astronomy, and logarithmic tables. Equally important and productive was the long collaboration between the English missionary John Fryer and the Chinese scholar-mathematician Xu Shou. Working patiently together over decades, they were able to compile and publish a systematic and logical rendering of the entire vocabulary of chemistry into the Chinese language, backing this labor up with study guides and a journal, and making possible a rapid growth in many areas of industrial applied chemistry. By the late 1870s, other Western scholars had prepared Chinese texts on electricity, the steam engine, photography, lathes, trigonometrical surveying, and navigation.

The number of mission schools in China increased steadily throughout the nineteenth century, spreading upcoast and inland with the opening of each new treaty port. Often run by individual missionaries or by a tiny handful of teachers, these schools not only prepared young Chinese for English-speaking jobs in the treaty ports, but were designed to lead Chinese children to an understanding of Christian principles and, if possible, to convert the youngsters and train them for later work alongside the Western missionaries. Although viewed with suspicion by traditional Chinese teachers, the great significance of these schools was that they offered some form

of basic education to poor Chinese, both boys and girls, who otherwise would have received none. Reciprocal benefits were also achieved. It was by working closely with Chinese scholarly collaborators that the Scottish missionary scholar James Legge was able to complete the first full translation of the Chinese Four Books and Five Classics into fluent and accurate English, immeasurably aiding the growth of Sinological studies overseas.

Because the mission schools were unfamiliar and objects of local fears, the missionary-teachers often had to lure students with offers of free food and housing, medical care, and even clothing and cash subsidies. Such was the case at the mission school in the early treaty port of Ningbo, which admitted thirty boys in 1844 and managed to graduate a first class of eight in 1850. Of these eight, one stayed to teach in the school, one went on to study medicine, and four were hired to work with the Presbyterian printing press. Qilu School in Shandong province opened with only eight pupils in 1864 and graduated its first three in 1877. Their studies had included a grounding in Chinese classics and Christian ethics, along with English, mathematics, music, and geography, and all three graduates went on to teach or become missionary assistants. Yung Wing, later to become Zeng's assistant in buying foreign machinery, had been tutored from the age of seven to twelve by a missionary's wife in a mixed primary school in Macao. He then enrolled in a Macao missionary school at the age of thirteen to study English, Chinese, geography, and arithmetic with five others. By 1847 Yung was well enough prepared to travel to the United States, with funds provided by local Western merchants and free passage on a tea clipper.

Like other young Chinese of his day, Yung Wing had been impressed by what he saw of Western medicine and initially hoped to become a doctor. Western missionaries were quick to note the impact of medical knowledge on the Chinese, and it was the "medical missionaries" who had the greatest early successes in gaining converts. It was not that China lacked medical sophistication of its own—there was a long tradition of diagnosis by study of the pulses, and of treatment through extracts of plants, animal derivatives, minerals, and acupuncture—but by the early nineteenth century the West had much greater knowledge of anatomy and more sophisticated skills in surgery. Although there were always some fatalities, which could cause local hostility or lawsuits, Western doctors proved especially successful in removing tumors and curing diseases of the eyes such as cataracts. By the 1860s, both missionary and unaffiliated doctors were beginning to build hospitals with money given by Western philanthropists or raised by subscription from local Chinese. Initially, these buildings were concentrated, of necessity, in the treaty ports, as were such accompanying centers as homes for the blind, for lepers, and for the insane. Other missionaries introduced new seed strains

to Chinese farmers, and new varieties of fruits and plants; some also applied their energies to reforestation projects, attempting to halt the serious erosion that had been causing havoc on China's now barren hillsides.

Through their texts, their presses, their schools, and their hospitals, the efforts of missionaries affected Chinese thought and practice. The strength of that influence is impossible to calculate, but the missionaries did offer the Chinese a new range of options, a new way of looking at the world. The same was true in the broader world of family structures and the roles of women. Several of the early missionaries were women, and the wives of dozens of male missionaries also played an active role in their communities. Yung Wing recalled his first teacher, a white woman whom he encountered in 1835, as having "prominent features which were strong and assertive; her eyes were of clear blue lustre, somewhat deep set. She had thin lips, supported by a square chin . . . Her features taken collectively indicated great determination and will power. As she came forward to welcome me in her long and full flowing white dress (the interview took place in the summer), surmounted by two large globe sleeves which were fashionable at the time and which lent her an exaggerated appearance, I remember most vividly I was no less puzzled than stunned. I actually trembled all over with fear at her imposing proportions—having never in my life seen such a peculiar and odd fashion. I clung to my father in fear."¹⁵

Yet the fear could be transcended. Thousands of Chinese learned to study from, work with, be treated by, even become friends of Westerners. The Western women presented options of public work and careers that had seemed impossible to Chinese women. As the century progressed and mission families moved deep into the interior, they created their own versions of Western domestic worlds and values. They shared these with Chinese women, introducing them to new ideas of hygiene, cuisine, and child raising. They protested foot-binding, commiserated over opium addiction, offered religion and education as sources of solace and change. Some of the bolder ones offered a new perspective on social hierarchies and sexual subordination.

Robert Hart, later the revered inspector-general of the Imperial Maritime Customs, as a young man in the Ningbo and Canton of the 1850s had kept a Chinese mistress who bore him three children. It was "a common practice for unmarried Englishmen resident in China to keep a Chinese girl," he wrote later in a confidential legal deposition, "and I did as others did."¹⁶ When it came time for him to wed a lady of good British family, he paid off the Chinese woman with \$3,000 and shipped their children off to England so they would not embarrass him with their presence. Yet such double standards did not always prevail in personal relations between West-

erners and Chinese. Yung Wing married an American woman from Hartford, who bore him two children, both of whom enrolled at Yale University. And in his memoirs Yung recalled vividly how his first formidable Western teacher had also been helping three blind Chinese girls to read in Braille, doing everything she could to save them from the bleak life that would have been their probable lot. By century's end, the options for some Chinese women had become broader than either Yung Wing or Robert Hart could have foreseen. In 1892 two young Chinese mission-school graduates, their names Westernized as Ida Kahn and Mary Stone, sailed to the United States and earned their medical degrees at the University of Michigan. By 1896 they were back in China and had opened their own practices. The success of these women and the faith that inspired it were a startling tribute to the power of one side of the missionary dream.

OVERSEAS CHINESE

Tens of millions of Chinese were killed or left homeless in the waves of internal rebellions, and the accompanying famine and social dislocation, that marked the mid-nineteenth century. Yet the pressures on the land continued to be unrelenting. China's population had probably reached 430,000,000 by 1850, and even though it must have dipped sharply in the 1860s, it began to climb once more in the 1870s.

One response to the scarcity of arable land was internal migration, but the Chinese had no alternative as straightforward as that of the westward migrations to the Great Plains and the Pacific Coast that marked the same period in United States history. Chinese settlers moving west or northwest came either to the high, arid plateaus of Tibet or to the vast deserts of Xinjiang, which was finally incorporated as a province of the Qing in 1884 but remained forbidding territory. Those moving southwest encountered hostile mountain tribes or the settled borders of already established kingdoms in Vietnam and Burma. Millions chose to move northeast, first to the settled arable regions of Liaodong—the staging area long before for the Manchu conquest—and then, defying all bans by the Qing state, north again into the wooded mountains and bitter cold of what is now Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces. Others braved the short sea passage to swell the number of immigrants on Taiwan, which had become thoroughly opened to Chinese settlement and agriculture by the 1850s and was named a full province in 1885. And some chose to leave the countryside and try their luck in the expanding cities—such as Hankou, Shanghai, or Tianjin—where new

industries and the need for transport workers offered chances for employment, even if at pitifully low wages.

The other main response to the demographic crisis was to move out of the known Chinese world altogether and to try one's fortunes elsewhere. Those who made this choice were mostly from southeast China, and used Canton or Macao as their points of debarkation. Some were destitute farmers, some fugitives from rebel regimes, some the ambitious children of large families who saw few opportunities for advancement in Qing society. Most were men who often married just before they left China and dreamed of returning someday to their native villages, loaded with riches, so they could buy more land and expand their families' waning fortunes. They tended to focus their hopes initially on three main regions: Southeast Asia and Indonesia, the Caribbean and the northern countries of Latin America, and the western coast of the United States.

Emigration to Southeast Asia was cheapest and easiest, and many Chinese settled quickly into rice-farming or fishing communities, and into retail and commercial businesses. Even though the upper levels of economic life might be dominated by the British, the French, or the Dutch (according to the region chosen), Chinese emigrants found ample room for their entrepreneurial skills. They branched out successfully into tin mines and rubber plantations, and into shipping. Under Dutch rule in Indonesia, the Chinese served profitably as tax collectors, working under contract, and as managers of the Dutch-controlled opium monopoly.

Because so many of these new settlers came from Fujian or the Canton delta region, local community bondings and dialect groups remained important, and Chinese from similar neighborhoods tended to cluster together and support each other. Triads and other secret-society groups also flourished, setting up protection rackets, channeling opium sales, arranging cheap passages on credit, and running prostitution rings; as late as 1890, there were still few married Chinese women in the Southeast Asian communities. Despite their uneasiness about the extent of the emigration, the Qing set up a consulate in Singapore in 1873 so that they could keep closer watch on the half a million or more Chinese settlers in that area. They also tried to retain the loyalty of the richer emigrants by selling them honorary titles in the Qing hierarchy.

Latin America, too, drew large numbers of Chinese settlers, especially after 1840, when several countries in the region experienced rapid economic growth. Along with increasing opposition there to the use of slave labor, and the availability of cheap passages on steam vessels, this rapid development beckoned to the Chinese with the promise of jobs. Close to 100,000,

for instance, had come to Peru by 1875, often lured by promoters and handbills promising them great riches. Instead of making great fortunes, most of these Chinese laid railway lines, toiled on the cotton plantations, and labored in the guano pits, where conditions were particularly vile. There, the Chinese worked in boiling heat to clear as much as 4 to 5 tons of the bird droppings in a single day, which often led to infections, lung disease, and premature death. Others worked as domestics, cigar makers, and millers. Many of the Chinese had signed labor contracts without understanding their full implications, and those who fled from the areas where they were contracted to work were, if caught, forced to work in chains. There were many suicides. In Cuba, where tens of thousands of Chinese were working on the sugar plantations by the 1860s, conditions were equally bad. The Chinese were often treated more like slaves than free labor, forced to work inhuman hours on docked pay, and were similarly punished if they fled their workplaces or argued with their employers. Conditions were little better on the sugarcane and pineapple plantations of Hawaii, where thousands of Chinese had also settled.

In 1873 the Zongli Yamen initiated a new phase of foreign-policy activism by authorizing investigation commissions to report on the conditions of life and work for Chinese in both Peru and Cuba. (Yung Wing, who had just successfully concluded the purchase of \$100,000 of Gatling repeating guns for the Tianjin arsenal, was a delegate on the Peruvian commission.) The two commission reports gave startling evidence of the abuses that existed not only in working conditions, but in the original procurement of the Chinese laborers. Thousands had clearly been tricked into signing up or cheated once they had done so. A great many had literally been kidnapped by procurers for the plantation owners, and held incommunicado in hulks at Macao or Canton before being shipped off. Conditions of passage were so bad—often amounting to less than 6 square feet of space per coolie “passenger”—that scores died on every voyage and Chinese “mutinies” were commonplace. From 1876 on, mainly in response to these reports, the worst abuses of the contract-labor practices were abolished and shipping procedures were more carefully regulated.

The first great impetus for Chinese emigration to the United States came with the gold rush of 1848–1849 in California; indeed, the first name in Chinese for San Francisco was *Jinshan*, meaning “mountain of gold.” But few Chinese arrived in time to make lucrative strikes, and most of them, after working over mines already abandoned by less tenacious forerunners, slowly drifted into other lines of work. They flourished as market gardeners, storekeepers, and laundrymen, spreading along the coast from Los Angeles to Seattle. Thousands worked on the final stages of the great railway-

building boom that extended the lines from California to Utah in the 1860s. The gradual Chinese migration eastward across the United States subsequently coincided with the later stages of the American move west: startled travelers on the Oregon Trail reported in their diaries seeing their first Chinese eating with chopsticks. Portland had a large Chinese population by 1880, while other settlements arose in the mountains of Wyoming Territory and along the Snake River in Idaho. After the Civil War, southern plantation owners lured many Chinese to Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee and tried to induce them to work fields now abandoned by freed black slaves. By the later 1880s, there were Chinese working in shoe factories in Massachusetts, cutlery plants in Pennsylvania, and steam laundries in New Jersey, and there was a sizable group of Chinese merchants in Boston.

The process of Chinese settlement in the United States was not an easy one. From early on, hostility toward the Chinese settlers was complex and profound. Part of the trouble lay in the stated desire of many Chinese, echoing those who had gone to Southeast Asia and Peru, simply to work for a few years in the United States before returning home to their families. This led the Chinese to be regarded as “sojourners” rather than true immigrants. Part of the difficulty also lay in the industrious work habits of the Chinese, which caused them to be envied for making a profit where others had failed. There was a common belief among white workers that the Chinese would always work for lower wages than those of other races and, hence, would drag down pay scales across the board. Although there was little truth in that assertion, there were occasions when employers used the Chinese as strikebreakers. Knowing little or no English, the Chinese were often ignorant of the social and economic battles into which they had been projected.

The Chinese—or “Mongols,” as many whites began to call them—were also disliked or feared by Westerners because of the relative strangeness of their social customs. The Qing queues that many of the men still wore looked bizarre in the United States. Americans noted the extremely high proportion of men over women in the Chinese communities—more than 100,000 male Chinese were living in the western United States in 1880, but only 3,000 women—and, without seeking to understand the reasons, condemned the Chinese as unnatural. The singsong sound of Chinese speech, the opium-smoking proclivities of some and the yearning for drink or gambling of others, their willingness to eat what appeared to be odd or unappetizing food—all combined to build a rumor-filled climate of opinion in which Chinese wickedness and depravity were given prominence.

Two unfortunate facts lent some appearance of validity to the wilder charges. First, like Chinese emigrants in other areas, the Chinese in the

United States clung together according to dialect and locality groups. The majority of them came from within a hundred miles of Canton, and when they landed in San Francisco, most were at once incorporated into subgroups controlled by the "Six Companies." These companies had ties to Chinese secret societies and, like them, had overlapping functions as protection systems and as economic exploiters. Rival Chinese groups became involved in numerous "tong wars," battles between feuding gangs that gave the Chinese as a whole a reputation for lawlessness. Second, the crowding of Chinese into "Chinatowns" in the United States—whether in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Portland, or later in New York—compounded by scarce housing and the loneliness of thousands of single males, led to an explosive social situation, sexual frustrations, and the prevalence of disease. The irony was that anti-Chinese discriminatory legislation concerning housing, schooling, work permits, and eating establishments tended all the more to force the Chinese into Chinatowns and keep them there. Redress was not easy to find. Chinese in many states were not allowed to testify against whites in court and were forbidden to hold public-service jobs. Most had to struggle for even basic educational opportunities.

Within a few years of the first settlements in 1849, underlying tensions burst into open violence, deliberately fanned by the racist rhetoric of white workers and their political supporters. The worst examples were in California and Wyoming. In October 1871, after two policemen had been killed trying to intervene in a tong battle, a crowd smashed through the Chinatown in Los Angeles, looting shops, burning houses, and beating up any Chinese they found. The crowd ultimately killed nineteen Chinese men, women, and children and injured hundreds before the civic authorities checked them. (By a macabre coincidence the Chinese fatalities in Los Angeles exactly matched in number the French and Russians killed in the "Tianjin massacre" of 1870.) Fourteen years later in Rock Springs, Wyoming Territory, groups of poorly-off white miners first beat a Chinese miner to death with a shovel, then burned the camps of Chinese migrant workers and killed at least twenty-eight. Scores of lesser incidents occurred in the same period, playing an integral, if unfortunate, part in the "opening of the West."

Unaccustomed to recognizing the rights of any Chinese who traveled overseas, the Qing reacted slowly, although officials in the Zongli Yamen were aware of the kinds of problems that existed. In 1867 they had obtained the services of the former American minister, Anson Burlingame, as ambassador-at-large. The next year Burlingame, in language echoing the most optimistic promises of the French philosophers of a century before, passionately pleaded the cause of the Chinese in his tour across the United States and Europe. "The present enlightened Government of China has

advanced steadily along the path of progress," Burlingame told his audiences. "She says now: 'Send us your wheat, your lumber, your coal, your silver, your goods from everywhere—we will take as many of them as we can. We will give you back our tea, our silk, free labor which we have sent so largely out into the world.'" His power of persuasion led the United States to sign a treaty in 1868 guaranteeing continued Chinese rights of immigration. But Burlingame also muddled the issue by promising that the Qing state was ripe for conversion to Christianity: it would only be a short while, he cried, before China invited the Western missionaries "to plant the shining cross on every hill and in every valley, for she is hospitable to fair argument."¹⁷ Following up on Burlingame's initiative, the Qing sent diplomatic representatives to France and England in 1871 and had a full ambassador in the United States by 1878.

But political pressures against the Chinese spread from California to Washington, D.C. In a series of closely contested electoral battles between Democrats and Republicans, there was growing preoccupation with the need to limit Chinese immigration before it became a flood. In 1879 President Rutherford B. Hayes stayed true to the sense of the 1868 treaty by vetoing a bill to limit Chinese emigrants to fifteen per ship. In 1880, however, the Qing were persuaded to agree to a new treaty that authorized the United States to "regulate, limit or suspend" the flow of Chinese laborers if the American government considered such restriction "reasonable." In 1882 President Chester A. Arthur agreed to a suspension of the immigration of Chinese skilled and unskilled "laborers" for ten years, forced all Chinese then in the United States to obtain special registration certificates, and banned them from obtaining United States citizenship. In 1884 he accepted further legislation that broadened the term *laborers* to include "peddlers, hucksters and fishermen" and applied the restrictions to all those of the "Chinese race," whether they were Qing subjects or not.

So ended the dream of making the United States a haven for all the poor and oppressed of the world regardless of race, religion, or background. The passing of that dream was confirmed by successive presidents. Grover Cleveland in 1888 proclaimed the Chinese "an element ignorant of our constitution and laws, impossible of assimilation with our people, and dangerous to our peace and welfare," and endorsed new legislation that forbade entry to Chinese laborers who had returned to China on temporary visits.¹⁸ Benjamin Harrison, accepting the Republican nomination in the same year, spoke of his "duty to defend our civilization by excluding alien races whose ultimate assimilation with our people is neither possible nor desirable." After his election, Harrison chose as secretary of state a man committed to the view that, far from helping to develop the U.S. economy, the Chinese had

brought with them “the seeds of moral and physical disease, of destitution, and of death.”¹⁹ Americans were now choosing to make judgments about Chinese inferiority that were as harsh and comprehensive as any that Qing statesmen had made about the rest of the world in the days of Qing glory.

CHAPTER 10

New Tensions in
the Late QingSELF-STRENGTHENING AND
THE JAPANESE WAR

The Confucian statesmen whose skill, integrity, and tenacity helped suppress the rebellions of the mid-nineteenth century showed how imaginatively the Chinese could respond to new challenges. Under the general banner of restoring order to the Qing Empire, they had managed to develop new structures to handle foreign relations and collect custom dues, to build modern ships and weapons, and to start teaching international law and the rudiments of modern science. “Self-strengthening” had not proved an empty slogan, but an apparently viable road to a more secure future. Progressive-minded Chinese and Manchus seemed able to work together in order to preserve the most cherished aspects of their traditional cultures by selectively adapting elements of Western learning and technology to China’s needs. It was true that there remained complex problems of continuing rural militarization, new local autonomy over taxation, landlord abuses and bureaucratic corruption, and bellicose foreign powers with their military, diplomatic, and missionary encroachments. But with forceful imperial leadership and a resolute Grand Council, it appeared that the Qing dynasty might regain some of its former strength.

Unfortunately for the survival of the dynasty, forceful leadership was not forthcoming. Tongzhi, in the name of whose rule the Tongzhi Restoration of central and provincial government had been undertaken, died suddenly at the age of eighteen in January 1875, shortly after taking up power in person. The official cause of death was smallpox, but it was widely rumored that he had exhausted himself with wild living and overindulgence in the

pleasure quarters of Peking. His young empress was pregnant when he died, but seems to have been excluded from the crucial meetings called by Tongzhi's mother, the empress dowager Cixi, to decide on the imperial succession.

The only way for Cixi to preserve her own power was to continue in her role as regent; accordingly she appointed her three-year-old nephew, Guangxu, as emperor, thus assuring herself of years more activity as the power behind the throne. The success of this stratagem was assured when Tongzhi's pregnant wife died that spring, her baby still unborn.* The choice of Guangxu, however, violated a fundamental law of Qing succession: Guangxu was from the same generation as Tongzhi, not from a later one, and so could not properly perform the filial ancestral ceremonies in Tongzhi's memory. Cixi silenced any overt opposition on this point by promising that when a son was born to Guangxu, that son would be adopted as Tongzhi's heir and so would be able to perform the necessary rites. One upright Confucian official committed suicide outside Tongzhi's tomb to protest Cixi's decision, but no other scholars made as dramatic an issue of their discontent. Senior bureaucrats on the whole were silent, apparently resigned to another protracted period of indirect rule by the powerful female regent.

Cixi was a complex and able woman, though also tough-minded and ruthless when she considered it necessary. She was the only woman to attain a high level of political power in China during the Qing, and was consequently blamed for many of the dynasty's woes by men who thought she should not have been in power at all. Born in 1835—her father was descended from a distinguished Manchu lineage, but held only a minor official position in the bureaucracy—Cixi was named one of Emperor Xianfeng's consorts in 1851 and became his favorite in 1856, when she bore him a son. Xianfeng discussed policy matters with her and allowed her to read incoming memorials. She accompanied him to Rehe when he fled the advancing Allies in 1860, and had herself named coregent of China in a palace coup following Xianfeng's death in 1861. Cixi's political power thenceforth sprang from her position as coregent for her son Tongzhi from 1861 to 1873, and as coregent for her nephew Guangxu from 1875 to 1889. She also was the ultimate political authority while Guangxu languished in palace seclusion—on her orders—from 1898 to 1908. Highly literate and a competent painter, Cixi kept herself well informed on all affairs of state as she sat behind a screen (for propriety's sake) and listened to her male ministers' reports. Politically conservative and financially extravagant, she nev-

*It is almost certain that the pregnant widow of Tongzhi was driven to suicide by Cixi, but the evidence remains disputed.

ertheless approved many of the self-strengtheners' restoration ventures; at the same time, she tried jealously to guard the prerogatives of the ruling Manchu imperial line.

Since foreign-policy issues were going to be at the fore in all decision making, it was unfortunate that Cixi had clashed badly in 1869 with Prince Gong after he had caused the execution of one of her favorite eunuchs, who was convicted of grossly abusing his power. The growth of uncontrolled power in the hands of the eunuchs, and its attendant corruption, had traditionally been a hallmark of declining dynastic competence, and early Qing rulers had vowed never to repeat the late Ming mistake of allowing eunuchs to dominate the court. Prince Gong may have been trying to prevent the re-emergence of such a situation, but empress dowager Cixi took the killing personally and thereafter managed to block Prince Gong from holding positions of power.

Further diluting the strength of the Qing, the powerful provincial statesman Zeng Guofan died in 1872, the skillful Wenxiang died in 1876, and Zuo Zongtang remained preoccupied with the pacification of the Muslims in China's far northwest. The grand counselors in Peking, though worthy enough men with distinguished careers behind them, tended to be conservative and lacked the skill or initiative to direct China on a new course. Although self-strengthening programs continued to be implemented during the last decades of the nineteenth century, a disproportionate number of them were initiated by one man, Li Hongzhang. Li was trusted by the empress dowager Cixi; after the suppression of the Taiping and Nian rebellions, and the negotiations in the aftermath of the Tianjin massacre, he was posted to north China in the dual capacity of governor-general of the Hebei region and commissioner of trade for the northern ports. More than any person, he put his imprint on the closing years of the century in China.

Li Hongzhang's political endeavors fell largely into three broad areas: entrepreneurial, educational, and diplomatic. As an entrepreneur he built on the foundations laid during the earlier phase of the self-strengthening movement. He sought to diversify China's enterprise into areas that would have long-range effects on the country's overall development. These initiatives would involve the Qing government and individual merchant capitalists in joint operations under a formula called "government supervision and merchant management." One such project, founded by Li Hongzhang in 1872, was the China Merchant Steamship Navigation Company, which was designed to stop the domination of China's coastal shipping by foreign powers. The company, in which Li himself was a principal shareholder, drew much of its income from contracts to transship the government taxation grain from central China to the Peking region. After 1877 the Kaiping coal

mines near Tianjin were enormously expanded, on Li's orders, to give China more control over its own mineral resources and to provide fuel for China's expanding navy of steamships. Li also founded a sizable cotton mill at Shanghai in 1878 to cut into the rising imports of textiles.

In the 1880s Li went on to develop arsenals in Tianjin, which manufactured the bullets and shells for the Remington and Krupp guns that he now began to buy from abroad. A start was soon made on manufacturing the Remington rifles themselves with purchased American equipment. Li developed a national telegraph system by linking the international cables—which had terminated at Shanghai—first to Tianjin and then to Peking; branch wires were then extended to many large inland cities. He also directed the construction of new dock facilities in the south Manchurian city of Lüshun and a seven-mile stretch of railway line to carry coal from the Kaiping mines to a nearby canal, whence it could be shipped to Tianjin and used by the new fleet. Originally the cars were pulled down the tracks by mules, but in 1881 one of Li's assistants used Western scrap parts to build China's first steam engine, which was employed successfully on the line.

Li Hongzhang carried forward earlier efforts at educational reform as well. He originally threw his support behind the proposal for an educational mission in the United States, an idea first formulated by Yung Wing and backed by Zeng Guofan. The court gave its consent, and in 1872 the first group of Chinese boys aged twelve to fourteen—many of them the children of employees in China's new arsenals and shipyards at Fuzhou, Tianjin, and Shanghai—were sent to Hartford, Connecticut. There they lived with local American families and plunged into a busy round of English-language training, general education, and Chinese studies. By 1875 there were 120 in all. But in the school and social environments of this American city, it was hard for the Chinese students to maintain the traditional cultural values that Qing officials insisted on. The boys began to dress in Western style, abandoning their robes, and several of them cut off their queues under local pressure or mockery. Many were attracted to Christianity. Yung Wing's own marriage to one of the Hartford teachers was a further example of the strong attraction the West had on these students.

But the final blow to Li's mission was the belated discovery that the United States government would not permit a select group of the students, once having completed their high-school education, to enroll in the naval and military academies at Annapolis and West Point, as Li had hoped. So in 1881 he acquiesced in the decision made by conservative Qing officials to close the educational mission and bring the students home. They returned to China by sea from San Francisco in August 1881. Their final triumph on American soil was their defeat of the local Oakland baseball team, which

had expected a walkover but was routed by the wicked curveball of the Chinese pitcher. Upon their return to China, many of the students became influential in the armed services, engineering, and business; but Li Hongzhang henceforth dispatched his most promising students to France, Germany, or Great Britain, where the governments did not object to their receiving technically advanced military and naval training. He also established both a naval and a military academy in Tianjin itself.

The world of international diplomacy was even more inhospitable to the Qing. Here Li Hongzhang worked—sometimes on his own, sometimes in conjunction with Robert Hart, and sometimes with the Zongli Yamen—to try to handle a wide range of difficult problems. In the 1870s these included negotiations with the Japanese over the international status of the Ryukyu Islands and Korea. In neither of these cases were the Qing able to make a convincing claim for special Chinese rights, for the old system of “tributary relationships,” designed so many centuries ago to show China's cultural superiority over these nearby territories, was now seriously weakened. The Qing court, indeed, was totally unprepared to respond to the extraordinary expansion of Japanese power in this period. It was only since 1854 that the American commodore Matthew C. Perry had forced the Japanese to end their isolation and to acknowledge the realities of international relations and foreign trade. Yet so effective had been the sweeping economic and institutional reforms of the Meiji Restoration beginning in 1868 that Japan could now bring superior military force to bear on China. In 1879 the Japanese annexed the Ryukyus, and Korea might well have suffered a similar fate in the 1880s had not Li persuaded the Korean king to sign treaties with the United States, Britain, France, and Germany (which, since 1871, had become a unified state).

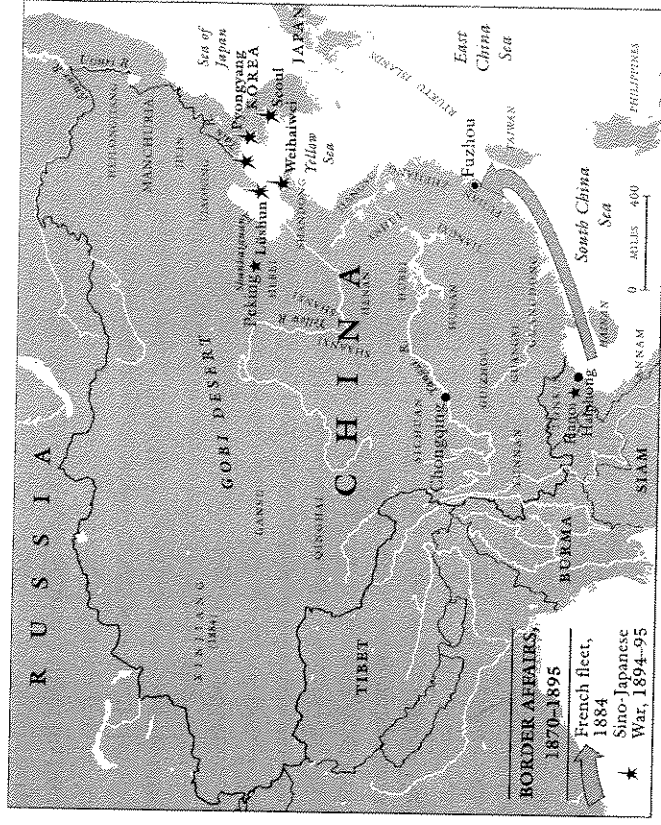
In 1876 Li also had to conduct complex negotiations with the British after one of their consuls, Augustus Margary, was murdered by local tribesmen in Yunnan. Margary had been on assignment with a British survey team exploring the feasibility of road or railway routes from Burma into Yunnan. In the resulting convention, Li, representing the Qing, essentially acknowledged the dynasty's weakness by agreeing to pay an indemnity of 700,000 taels, to send a mission of apology to Queen Victoria, and to open four more treaty ports. More beneficial to China's interests were the negotiations with Russia conducted in the late 1870s by the Zongli Yamen and Zeng Guofan's son, now the Qing minister to Great Britain. By the Treaty of St. Petersburg of 1881, the Russians agreed to abrogate an earlier unequal treaty and to return to Qing rule the sections of Ili that had been under Russian occupation since the outbreak of the Muslim rebellions. Although Russia still held huge areas of former Qing territory north of the Amur and Ussuri

ivers, the St. Petersburg treaty assured China control of her far western borders, a sovereignty confirmed when the Qing declared Xinjiang a province in 1884.

Success with Russia bred false confidence at court and among Qing scholar-officials. When the French expanded their colonial empire by occupying Hanoi and Haiphong in 1880—despite Chinese claims to special rights in the area—and began to pressure China for new concessions in Annam (now Vietnam), Li Hongzhang urged caution. But his pleas were swept aside by the excited urging of belligerent Chinese and Manchus, who insisted that the Qing take a strong stand on this matter of principle. While Li was attempting negotiations with France in 1884 to avoid the outbreak of hostilities, those in favor of strong measures continued to fight with the French in Annam and in neighboring Tonkin. The admiral in command of the French fleet in the region responded to these intermittent hostilities by moving his forces into the harbor at Fuzhou and anchoring near the Chinese fleet.

Li Hongzhang had urged a negotiated settlement with the French, however humiliating it might seem, because he knew how frail the newly developed Chinese navy was. When negotiations broke down in August 1884 and the French fleet in Fuzhou opened fire, Li was catastrophically proved correct, and the disparities between a developed industrial power and Qing China made once more clear to all. The Chinese flagship was sunk by torpedoes in the first minute of battle; within seven minutes, most of the Chinese ships were hit; within one hour every Chinese ship was sunk or on fire and the arsenal and docks destroyed. The French counted 5 dead, the Chinese 521 dead and 51 missing. Although the Qing subsequently won some indecisive land battles in the southwest, French control over Indochina was now assured. A year later the British emulated French aggressiveness and declared Burma a protectorate.

Li Hongzhang could have sent the northern segment of the Qing navy to reinforce the southern segment in Fuzhou; instead he chose to conserve those forces and strengthen them further, as well as use them to bolster his own bureaucratic and administrative power base. Besides bearing testimony to his power and prestige, the most important task of this fleet was to hold open the sea lanes to Korea. The Qing had created a new senior post, that of Chinese “resident” in Seoul, charged with the difficult task of maintaining warm relations with the Korean court, and making sure that Korean “independence” did not mean the weakening of China’s privileged status in the country. The Qing wished to ensure that Japan did not gain a permanent foothold there. During the 1890s tensions heightened as Japanese designs on the peninsula became apparent. In 1894, when the outbreak of a domestic



rebellion threatened the Korean king, both China and Japan seized the opportunity to send troops to protect the royal family. The Japanese, who were able to move more troops faster than the Chinese, seized the Korean palace on July 21 and appointed a “regent” loyal to their interests.

That same day the Qing commissioned a British transport to convey some 1,200 Chinese reinforcements to Korea. Intercepted by a Japanese cruiser and refusing to surrender, the transport was fired on by the Japanese and sunk; fewer than 200 men survived. By the end of the month, Japanese land troops had defeated the Chinese in a series of battles around Seoul and Pyongyang; in October the Japanese crossed the Yalu River and entered Qing territory. The following month another Japanese army seized the strongly fortified harbor at Lüshun, massacring many of the Chinese in the city. Japan’s land forces were now poised to enter China proper through Shanhaiguan, as Dorgon had done two and a half centuries before.

The north China navy, despite Li’s efforts to conserve it, was now to suffer a fate similar to the southern navy’s, with yet more damaging consequences to China’s self-strengthening goals. This northern fleet, consisting of 2 battleships, 10 cruisers, and 2 torpedo boats, had already been badly damaged by the Japanese in a September battle off the mouth of the Yalu,

and had retreated to the heavily defended port of Weihaiwei on the northern side of the Shandong peninsula. There the Chinese admiral retired his fleet behind a protective curtain of contact mines and took no further part in the fighting. But in a brilliant maneuver carried through in January 1895, a Japanese force of 20,000 troops and 10,000 field laborers marched across the Shandong promontory and seized the Weihaiwei defensive forts from the landward side. Turning the guns on the Chinese fleet and simultaneously penetrating the mine fields with torpedo boats, they destroyed one of the battleships and four cruisers. The two senior Chinese admirals and the senior Qing commandants of the forts all committed suicide.

Desperate, the court turned to the disgraced Prince Gong to help with negotiations, just as it had thirty-five years before when the summer palace had been burned during the disastrous Tianjin treaty negotiations. The prince sadly told a Western diplomat that he had been given the job of "piecing together the cup which the present ministers have smashed to the floor."³ To assist Prince Gong the Qing chose the most visible of those ministers, Li Hongzhang, and it was he who was made to go to Japan in person and negotiate with the victors.

The terms of the ensuing Treaty of Shimonoseki, made final in April 1895, were disastrous for China. They would have been even worse had a Japanese assassin not fired at Li, wounding him in the face below the left eye and shaming the Japanese government before the world. China had to recognize "the full and complete independence and autonomy of Korea," which, under the circumstances, effectively made Korea a Japanese protectorate. The Qing also promised to pay Japan 200 million taels in war indemnities, added four more treaty ports—including Chongqing, far up the Yangzi in Sichuan province—and ceded to Japan "in perpetuity" all of Taiwan, the Pescadores, and the Liaodong region of southern Manchuria. The Japanese were also to be allowed to build factories and other industrial enterprises in any of the treaty port areas. Russian, German, and French protests forced the Japanese to relinquish the claim to Liaodong in exchange for an additional indemnity of 30 million taels, but all the other treaty stipulations were confirmed. Many of China's brightest young scholars, assembled in Peking for the triennial *jinsshi* examinations, braved the court's wrath by passionately denouncing the Treaty of Shimonoseki and calling for a new, bolder program of economic growth and governmental reform to offset China's tragic losses. But the Qing court seemed paralyzed. It was a dark conclusion to the brightest hopes of the era of self-strengthening.

THE REFORM MOVEMENT OF 1898

During the closing decade of the nineteenth century, China was in a curious, ambiguous position. Elements of old and new existed side by side. At many levels the pace of change seemed overwhelming and irreversible. Steamboats plied the Yangzi, huge new banks lined the waterfront in Shanghai, military academies were training young officers in Western tactics, scientific textbooks were rolling off the presses, and memorials flashed by telegraph from the provinces to the Grand Council. Victorious in a series of wars, the Western powers had imposed their presence on China and were now beginning to invest heavily in the country, especially in mines, modern communications, and heavy industry. The impact of foreign imperialism was profound, intensifying tensions already generated by the self-strengthening movement.

Yet much of this apparent change was confined to the treaty port cities and within them to the Western concession areas. Penetration of the Chinese countryside by even the most aggressive foreign businesses was slow, and in nearly all cases the Westerners relied on their Chinese-merchant intermediaries—the so-called compradors—to open up markets for their products through the traditional trade and distribution routes. For most young Chinese men from well-to-do families, the patterns of education remained unchanged: they memorized the Confucian classics, and labored to obtain their local *shengyuan* degrees before proceeding to the provincial *juren* and national *jinsshi* examinations. In town and country, girls still had little access to formal education, their feet were still bound, and their marriages arranged by their parents. In the fields, sowing and harvesting were done by hand, the produce laboriously carried to market. Foreigners, if seen at all, were regarded as exotic or menacing. Chinese diplomats, posted overseas, received little prestige from the appointments and were often humiliated on their return and forced into early retirement.

Where a true interpenetration of tradition and change occurred, it was often a long-term, almost invisible development. Chinese farmers, responding to new domestic demands for cash crops such as tobacco or cotton, could make much greater profits than before, but were also more vulnerable to local market swings. Those growing tea or producing silk were in fact responding to world market demands, and sudden unexplained swoops of prosperity and dearth were the effects of world price fluctuations. The refined technology of machine silk weaving in Japan and the United States required a greater evenness of thread, which meant that peasant families, who for generations had spun silk thread by hand from the cocoons, faced

a shrinking market for their product. The technology of the printing press and the spread of a new urban readership spurred the growth of journals and newspapers. These began to introduce their readers to political commentary and to paid advertisements for health and beauty products, providing a new awareness of options for the individual. A growing sense that China was just one country among others began to lead to the view that it was, therefore, also a nation among nations, and that no nation could survive without involved citizens, both male and female. China's first regularly printed newspapers began to champion these views, which found a ready response among scholars shamed and disheartened by the Japanese war and the terms of the Shimonoseki treaty.

In the years after the Sino-Japanese War, a formulation became widespread that gave philosophical reassurance to those worried about the value of "self-strengthening": "Chinese learning should remain the essence, but Western learning be used for practical development." Generally abbreviated as the *ti-yong* idea (from the Chinese words for "essence" and "practical use"), this was a culturally reassuring position in a time of ambiguous, often painful, change. It affirmed that there was indeed a fundamental structure of Chinese moral and philosophical values that gave continuity and meaning to the civilization. Holding on to that belief, China could then afford to adopt quickly and dramatically all sorts of Western practices, and to hire Western advisers.

This was the favorite formulation of the Confucian scholar-official Zhang Zhidong, once a forceful voice among bellicose Chinese conservatives. Zhang capped a distinguished civil-service career by serving for almost eighteen consecutive years as the governor-general of Hunan and Hubei provinces. After Li Hongzhang, he was perhaps the most effective of the provincial reformers. Zhang pressed vigorously and successfully for the development of a railway line from Hankou to Peking—funded with foreign loans—and built up China's first great coal, iron, and steel complex at the Han-Ye-Ping mines in east Hubei. Yet he continued to ingratiate himself with the empress dowager Cixi and her advisers by his conservative pronouncements on the need for gradual reform and his ringing declarations on the essential values of the traditional Confucian ethical system.

Echoing Zhang Zhidong's general *ti-yong* stance, many of the brightest and most successful of China's younger generation of Confucian scholars collaborated together in righteous indignation after learning the terms of the Treaty of Shimonoseki and presented a long memorial to the throne, urging continued resistance to Japan and requesting a wide range of economic, industrial, and administrative reforms. These men were assembled in Peking for the spring 1895 *jinsi* examinations, and were coordinated by

two scholars of great intelligence and courage—Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao. Kang was a brilliant classical scholar of thirty-seven from the Canton region who had gained fame but also drawn criticism for his eccentric approach to Confucian scholarship. In earlier writings, Kang had drawn on his great classical learning to try to prove that Confucius had not resisted social change and that Confucianism did not negate the basic ideas of human development and progress. In this he was influenced by the ideas of Confucianism first made popular by Chinese scholars studying the Gongyang commentaries early in the nineteenth century. Liang Qichao, the second scholar, was twenty-two years old and had been a student of Kang's. He was already actively involved in provincial academies and newly formed national societies that advocated a speeded-up program of radical reform for China. Despite his radicalism, he, like Kang, was also seeking the *jinsi* degree, which remained the most prestigious route to elite status.

Influenced also by Buddhism, and of a highly emotional frame of mind, Kang Youwei saw himself as a new sage capable of saving the Chinese people. His visits to Hong Kong and Shanghai, where he examined manifestations of Western technical and urban development, when coupled with his readings on physics, electricity, and optics, convinced him of the possibilities of a true *ti-yong* synthesis. Liang shared that confidence and sense of excitement. They were overjoyed when the long reform memorial, after being shunted from bureau to bureau by worried senior bureaucrats, was at last read by the emperor Guangxu himself. Now aged twenty-four, Guangxu was just emerging from the shadow of his aunt Cixi, who had gone into semiretirement in the rebuilt summer palace. He had a strong interest in reform and was moved by the words of Kang, Liang, and the other candidates.

The *jinsi* candidates' reform memorial of 1895 raised many issues that were troubling China's more farsighted scholars. China needed a modernized army, they wrote, equipped with the most advanced Western firearms and artillery. To develop a national industrial base, the court should call on the technical skills of the Chinese in Southeast Asia. It should raise taxes, develop a state banking system, establish a railway network, build a commercial fleet, and install a modern postal system. China should improve the quality of its agriculture through training schools and build centers to foster industrial innovation and encourage the kind of creative ingenuity that led inventors in the United States to apply for over 13,000 patents a year. Resettlement programs in poor and backward rural areas should be developed to lure back the thousands of productive Chinese emigrants who had been leaving every year. Previously it was only rebels like the Taiping leader Hong Ren'gan who had publicly espoused such far-reaching changes, but

now the brightest Confucian youth in China were exploring the same ideas.

These would-be reformers had made their demands for change within the accepted traditional channels, but the effects were negligible. The young emperor Guangxu, even though he seemed interested, had no overt political power, and other conservative senior bureaucrats made sure that the proposals were safely filed away. But by the 1890s, demands for change could not be confined to these comparatively orthodox and polite channels. Other reformers, such as the young Sun Yat-sen,* took a different path. Sun, from a poor rural family in the Canton area, had none of the advantages of education and status held by the Kang family. Instead, like thousands of poor Chinese in the southeast, some of the Suns had emigrated during the nineteenth century. Two had died in the California gold rush; others had settled in Hawaii. There Sun Yat-sen joined an elder brother in the early 1880s and received an education in the mission schools, which introduced him to ideas about democracy and republican government as well as Christianity, before transferring to medical school in Hong Kong. A cultural hybrid with great ambitions and a deep sense of alarm over China's impending fate, Sun offered his services to Governor-General Li Hongzhang in 1894 as an adviser to help with China's defense and development. Distracted by the crises in Korea and elsewhere, Li ignored him.

Sun was disappointed and frustrated. The British did not consider his training good enough to allow him to practice medicine in their dominions, nor did the Chinese seem adequately to admire his new skills. Sun's response was to form a secret society in Hawaii in late 1894 that he named the Revive China Society, which pledged itself to the overthrow of the Manchus and to the establishment of a new Chinese ruler or even a republican form of government. Raising some money from his brother and other friends, he moved to Hong Kong and, in 1895, tried to combine with local secret societies near Canton to stage a military uprising that would spread and overthrow the dynasty. Badly organized, hampered by poor security and inadequate weapons and funds, the plan was discovered by Qing authorities and the local ringleaders executed.

Sun fled from Hong Kong to Japan, and eventually to San Francisco and London. In this last city he settled and began to read widely in Western political and economic theory. His studies were interrupted in 1896, when the staff of the Qing legation in London made a clumsy (but nearly successful) attempt to kidnap him and ship him back to China for trial and execution. Sun became a famous figure when this dramatic story was widely

written up in the Western press. Returning to the East and setting up a series of bases in Southeast Asia and Japan, Sun continued to labor, through the secret societies and his own sworn brethren, to achieve a military coup against the Qing.

Sun Yat-sen found support among restless, adventurous Chinese who felt little allegiance to the Qing and had tasted some of the opportunities and risks of life overseas. One such backer was "Charlie" Soong, whose children were later to play significant roles in twentieth-century Chinese politics. Charlie Soong grew up in a fishing and trading family on the southern Chinese island of Hainan. Leaving Hainan to live with relatives in Java, Soong then shipped to Boston in 1878, where he apprenticed himself to a Chinese merchant family. Bored by his life there, Charlie Soong ran away to sea, enlisted as a crewman on a U.S. revenue-service cutter, and was finally passed on by the ship's captain to generous friends in North Carolina who put him through college and prepared him for life as a Christian missionary. Returning to China in 1886, he worked briefly as a preacher but in circumstances he found humiliating and badly paid. In 1892 he found a focus for his entrepreneurial energies and made a substantial fortune by printing Bibles for the Western missionaries to disseminate. Before long he branched out into the factory production of noodles, using advanced Western machinery, and moved into a comfortable foreign-style house in the suburbs of Shanghai. At this point, through shared secret-society contacts, he also began to funnel money to Sun Yat-sen's illegal organization.

By the late 1890s, the Chinese, who were becoming more knowledgeable about foreigners, could seize on a whole range of potential models from Japanese Meiji reformers to George Washington, Napoléon Bonaparte, and Peter the Great. Chinese language newspapers and didactic histories proliferated, extolling various Western thinkers of the past and holding up as warning mirrors to China the examples of such countries as Poland, Turkey, and India, which had been respectively partitioned, economically ruined, and politically subjugated. Simultaneously, the Western powers renewed their demands for special economic and residence rights in China—often called "the scramble for concessions"—which placed the Qing in greater jeopardy. In this context, the emperor Guangxu, who undoubtedly had a wider view of the options facing China than any of his predecessors and had even been studying English, decided to assert his own independence as ruler, and to act on the country's behalf. Between June and September 1898 he issued an extraordinary series of edicts, earning for this period the name of the "Hundred Days' Reforms." Although most of the edicts dealt with proposals that had already been raised by self-strengthening reformers and

*This is the romanized style in which the Cantonese form of Sun's name was always written.

by the *jinsi* protestors of 1895, there had never before been such a coherent body of reform ideas presented on imperial initiative and backed by imperial prestige.

Guangxu called for changes in four main areas of Qing life and government. To reform China's examination system, he ordered the abolition of the highly stylized format known as the "eight-legged essay," which had structured the exams for centuries. He also urged that fine calligraphy and knowledge of poetry no longer be major criteria in grading degree candidates; instead he ordered the use of more questions related to practical governmental problems. Also in the area of education, he ordered the upgrading of the Peking college and the addition to it of a medical school, the conversion of the old academies (along with unnecessary rural shrines) to modern schools offering both Chinese and Western learning, and the opening of vocational institutes for the study of mining, industry, and railways. In the broader area of economic development, the emperor ordered local officials to coordinate reforms in commerce, industry, and agriculture, and to increase the production of tea and silk for export. New bureaus in Peking were established to supervise such growth, along with mines and railways, and the Ministry of Revenue was to design an overall annual budget for the country as a whole.

Guangxu also addressed the strengthening of the armed forces. Much of the money that had been needed by the navy had gone into the rebuilding of the empress dowager's summer palace, which included construction of a marble "boat" for her lake-viewing pleasure. Now a fleet of thirty-four modern warships was to be assembled, by purchase or by local construction. Army drill was to be standardized along Western lines. Training and discipline of local militias were to be improved. Emperor Guangxu even promised to take the empress dowager to review the new armies in Tianjin. Finally, he tried to strengthen the bureaucracy by streamlining it and simplifying its procedures. He sought to abolish the more obvious sinecure appointments and to move some of the displaced officials to positions in the new economic planning bureaus.

In developing this reform program, several important personnel changes were made. Li Hongzhang had steadily lost influence since the Japanese war disasters and was now removed from the Zongli Yamen. Guangxu's own tutor was also dismissed for being cautious about the scale of reform. Several reformist thinkers, among them Kang Youwei, were appointed as secretaries in the Grand Council or the Zongli Yamen so they could be in on important discussions and memorialize the emperor through their superiors. Kang was granted an imperial audience and submitted two works of historical analysis to the emperor: one on the fate of Poland; the other on



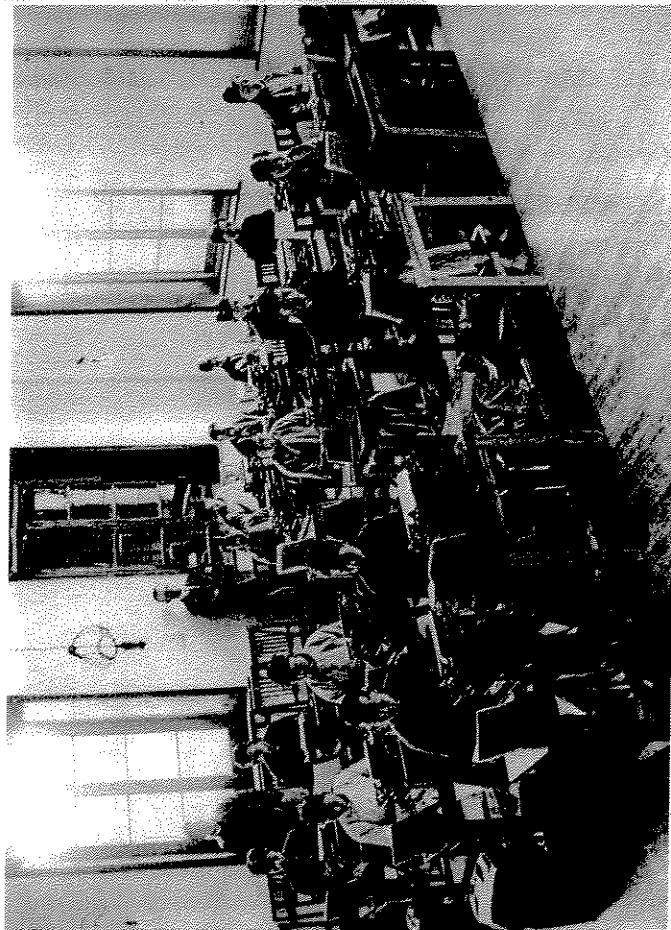
Ren Bonian, 1840–1895, *Portrait of a Down-and-Out Man* Ren Bonian, who served in the army of Hong Xiuquan's Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, portrays a friend's plight as a low-paid, minor government official.

the triumphs of Japanese reforms in the Meiji Restoration. But many senior officials, viewing Guangxu's reform program with a jaundiced eye, saw it as detrimental to the long-term good of China and destructive of China's true inner values. Guangxu seems to have mistakenly thought that his aunt Cixi would support his vision of a new China and would help him override this opposition. In fact she was disturbed by some of the proposed changes that threatened to weaken the Qing ruling house, and was worried that the faction supporting Guangxu seemed dangerously subordinate to pressures and influences from both the British and the French.

Although the evidence is contradictory, it seems that a number of the reformers feared there might be a coup against the emperor, and accordingly approached some leading generals in an attempt to win their support. This led to a backlash when news of the scheming was reported to the empress dowager, who, on September 19, 1898, suddenly returned to the Forbidden City. Two days later, she issued an edict claiming that the emperor had asked her to resume power. She put Guangxu under palace detention and arrested six of his reputedly radical advisers. Before they could even be tried on the vague conspiracy charges, her order that they be executed was carried out, to the dismay of the reform party and of many foreigners in China. Kang Youwei had left Peking on assignment just before the coup, but his younger brother was among the victims. Now with a price on his head, Kang Youwei was carried to safety in Hong Kong on a British vessel, whence he made his way first to Japan and then to Canada. Liang Qichao also fled China and began a life of exile. His and Kang's dreams for a coherent program of reform, to be coordinated by the emperor in the name of a new China, had ended in disaster.

THREE SIDES OF NATIONALISM

During 1898 and 1899, as part of their general wave of imperialist expansion, the foreign powers intensified their pressures and outrages on China. The Germans used the pretext of an attack on their missionaries to occupy the Shandong port city of Qingdao and to claim mining and railway rights in the countryside nearby. The British took over the harbor at Weihaiwei on the north of the Shandong peninsula (where the Qing fleet had been sunk at anchor by the Japanese three years before), and forced the Qing to yield a ninety-nine-year lease on a large area of fertile farmland on the Kowloon peninsula north of Hong Kong, which the British henceforth called "The New Territories." The Russians stepped up their presence in Manchuria and occupied Lüshun, where they erected massive fortifications. The French



Young Chinese learning Western secretarial and language skills at the Government Teachers College, Nanjing

claimed special rights in the Tonkin border provinces of Yunnan, Guangxi, and Guangdong, and on the island of Hainan. The Japanese, already masters of Taiwan, continued to put pressure on Korea and intensified their economic penetration of central China. Attempts by the United States to declare an "open door" policy for China, under the terms of which all countries would agree not to deny others access to their spheres of influence, may, through some moral effect, have slowed the slicing up of China, but there were no sanctions to enforce such a policy. Some Chinese began to fear—rightly enough—that their country was about to be "carved up like a melon."

In this atmosphere of hostility and fear, a vigorous force began to develop in China. The many guises in which it appeared can be encompassed under the blanket term *nationalism*, which for the Chinese comprised a new, urgent awareness of their relationship to foreign forces and to the Manchus. It carried as well a corresponding sense of the Chinese people as a unit that must be mobilized for its own survival. One can see the growth of this phenomenon in three examples: the Boxer Uprising of 1900, the publication of *The Revolutionary Army* by Zou Rong in 1903, and the anti-American boycott of 1905.

The Boxers United in Righteousness, as they called themselves, began to emerge as a force in northwest Shandong during 1898. They drew their name and the martial rites they practiced from a variety of secret-society and self-defense units that had spread in southern Shandong during the previous years, mainly in response to the provocations of Western missionaries and their Chinese converts. Some Boxers believed they were invulnerable to swords and bullets in combat, and they drew on an eclectic pantheon of spirits and protectors from folk religion, popular novels, and street plays. Although they lacked a unified leadership, Boxers recruited local farmers and other workers made desperate by the disastrous floods that had been followed by droughts in Shandong; they began to call for the ending of the special privileges enjoyed by Chinese Christian converts and to attack both converts and Christian missionaries. By early 1899 they had destroyed or stolen a good deal of property from Chinese Christians and had killed several converts in the Shandong-Hebei border area, seriously alarming the foreigners, who demanded that the Qing suppress the Boxers and their supporters. The Boxers responded with a popular slogan, "Revive the Qing, destroy the foreign," which was soon expanded into catchy jingles in doggerel verse, some of which were hung as wall posters near Boxer altars or on street corners:

Their men are all immoral;
Their women truly vile.

For the Devils it's mother-son sex
That serves as the breeding style.

No rain comes from Heaven,
The earth is parched and dry.
And all because the churches
Have bottled up the sky.

When at last all the Foreign Devils
Are expelled to the very last man,
The Great Qing, united, together,
Will bring peace to this our land.²

By spring 1900, the year their leaders had predicted as the dawn of a new religious age, the Boxers had expanded dramatically. Perhaps 70 percent were poor peasants, male and young. The rest were drawn from a broad mixture of itinerants and artisans, as had been the case with so many earlier uprisings against the Qing. In the Boxer ranks there were peddlers and rickshaw men, sedan-chair carriers, canal boatmen, leather workers, knife sharpeners, and barbers; some were dismissed soldiers and salt smugglers. They were joined by female Boxer groups, the most important of which was named the Red Lanterns Shining, girls and women usually aged twelve to eighteen whose female powers were invoked to fight the "pollution" of the Chinese Christian women, which was believed to erode the strength of Boxer men. Best known among these women was "Lotus" Huang, daughter of a poor boatman and herself a former prostitute, who was believed to have unique spiritual powers. Other women were banded together in teams called the Cooking-Pan Lanterns and fed the Boxer troops from pots that were allegedly replenished magically after every meal.

Still without any coordinated leadership, Boxer groups began to drift into Peking and Tianjin in early June. Roaming the streets, dressed in motley uniforms of red, black, or yellow turbans and red leggings, and with white charms on their wrists, they harried—and sometimes killed—Chinese converts and even those who possessed foreign objects—lamps, clocks, or matches. The Boxers also killed four French and Belgian engineers and two English missionaries, ripped up railway tracks, burned the stations, and cut telegraph lines. Powerful provincial officials wavered, as did the Qing court, sometimes protecting foreigners by meeting Boxer force with force of their own, at other times seeming to condone or even approve the Boxer show of antifeign "loyalty."

On June 17, the Westerners seized the forts at Dagou from Qing forces in order to provide cover for a troop landing should full-scale war break out. Two days later in Peking, news of the battle at the Dagou forts arrived, the

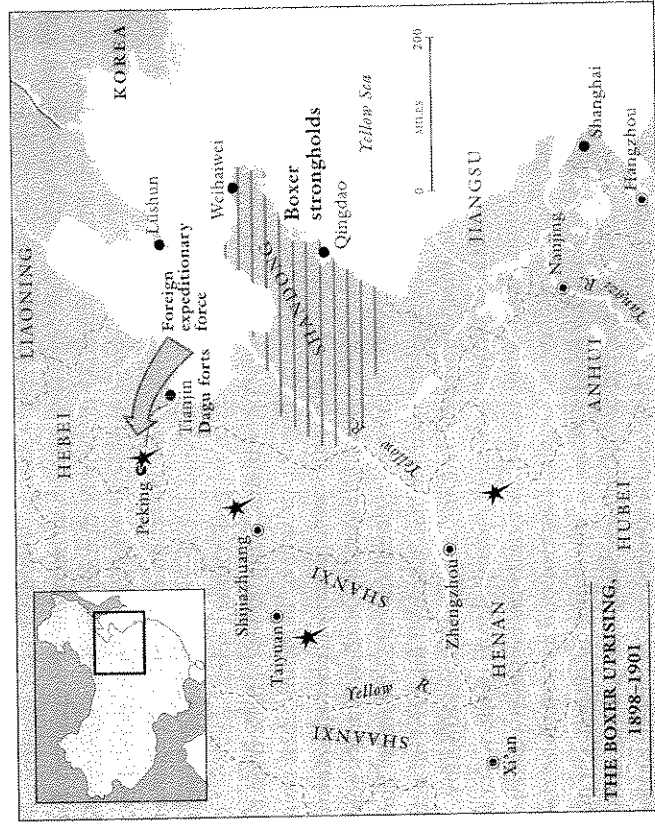
German minister was shot dead in the street as he went to an interview at the Zongli Yamen, and Boxer forces laid siege to the foreign-legation areas. Praising the Boxers now as a loyal militia, on June 21, 1900, the empress dowager issued a "declaration of war" against the foreign powers, which stated in part:

The foreigners have been aggressive towards us, infringed upon our territorial integrity, trampled our people under their feet . . . They oppress our people and blaspheme our gods. The common people suffer greatly at their hands, and each one of them is vengeful. Thus it is that the brave followers of the Boxers have been burning churches and killing Christians.³

With the empress dowager and senior Manchu officials now clearly behind them, the Boxers launched a series of attacks on mission compounds and on foreigners. The attacks were particularly vicious in Shanxi, Hebei, and Henan, with the worst atrocity occurring in Shanxi. There, the Manchu governor Yuxian summoned the missionaries and their families to the provincial capital of Taiyuan, promising to protect them from the Boxers. But once they arrived, he ordered all forty-four men, women, and children killed.

In Peking, the foreign diplomatic corps and their families retreated into a defensive area composed mainly of the British, Russian, German, Japanese, and American compounds, hastily defended with makeshift barricades of furniture, sandbags, timber, and mattresses. Had the Boxers been better organized or had large numbers of regular Qing army troops joined in the attack, the Westerners would surely all have been killed. But the attack was not pressed with coordinated vigor, the modernized Qing armies stood outside the fray, and the powerful governors-general of central China such as Zhang Zhidong stalled for time and refused to commit their newly trained troops to the conflict.

On August 4, 1900, a foreign expeditionary column of about 20,000 troops, consisting mainly of soldiers from Japan, Russia, Britain, the United States, and France, and operating under a complex joint-command structure, left Tianjin. Boxer resistance quickly crumbled, key Qing commanders committed suicide, and the Western troops entered Peking and raised the Boxer siege on August 14. As they came into the city from the east, the empress dowager and her nephew Guangxu fled to the west, establishing a temporary capital in the Wei River valley city of Xi'an. After a protracted, often bitter campaign, conducted primarily by a newly arrived expeditionary force of German troops, and complex negotiations with the fugitive court and Li Hongzhang (once again indispensable as a mediator), a formal peace treaty



known as the Boxer Protocol was signed in September 1901.

In this protocol, the Qing agreed to erect monuments to the memory of the more than two hundred Western dead, to ban all examinations for five years in cities where antifeign atrocities had taken place, to forbid all imports of arms into China for two years, to allow permanent foreign guards and emplacements of defensive weapons to protect the legation quarter in perpetuity, to make the Zongli Yamen into a fully prestigious Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and to execute the leading Boxer supporters, including the Shanxi governor Yuxian. They also agreed to pay an indemnity for damages to foreign life and property of 450 million taels (around £67 million or \$333 million at the then current exchange rates), a staggering sum at a time when the entire annual Qing income was estimated at around 250 million taels. The Chinese were to pay the indemnity in gold, on an ascending scale, with 4 percent interest charges, until the debt was amortized on December 31, 1940. With all interest charges factored in, total Chinese payments over the thirty-nine-year period would amount to almost 1 billion taels (precisely 982,238,150).

In January 1902, the empress dowager and her nephew Guangxu returned by train from Xi'an to Peking, where Li Hongzhang had just died

from illness at the age of seventy-eight. Cixi re-established her residence in the Forbidden City, which for over a year had been the headquarters for the foreign expeditionary force. At the end of that month, in an apparently genuine gesture of reconciliation, she received the senior members of the foreign diplomatic corps in person at her palace; on February 1, in another unprecedented action, she held a reception for their ladies. But Emperor Guangxu was still not allowed to play any open political role.

The two exiled reformers, Sun Yat-sen and Kang Youwei, both tried to exploit the disruption caused by the Boxer Uprising by launching their own attacks against the Qing during 1900. Kang's took place in Hubei and Anhui in August and Sun's in Huizhou, east of Canton, in October. Kang's goal was to restore Guangxu to power as a constitutional monarch, whereas Sun wanted to found a Chinese republic. Neither plan was well financed or well coordinated, and both were suppressed by Qing troops without difficulty.

The forms of protest now passed back to the manipulators of the written word. The most articulate of these turned out to be an eighteen-year-old student named Zou Rong, whose work provides a second case study of the new forms of nationalism. Zou Rong was one of a growing number of young Chinese who, in the years after the Sino-Japanese War, had gone to study in Japan; awed by Japan's power, these students sought to observe it at the source. Zou grew dismayed at the apparent inability of the Qing to react creatively in their time of crisis. Like certain secret society and Taiping leaders before him, he singled out the Manchus for blame, but unlike those earlier rebels he moved beyond slogans to draw up a lengthy and careful indictment of the Manchus' weakness. Ironically, he was able to do this because he had returned from Japan to live in the foreign-concession area of Shanghai, where, according to complex jurisdictional agreements concerning "extraterritoriality," residents were subject to the so-called "mixed" courts dominated by Western legal practices. Such residents could write, and disseminate their writings, with a freedom impossible to those living in ordinary towns supervised by the Qing magistrates and police.

Zou Rong drew his anti-Manchu ideas together in a short book entitled *The Revolutionary Army* (1903). In ringing language, he called on his Chinese countrymen to reject the Manchu yoke and seize their own destiny. The Chinese had become a race of slaves, declared Zou, and such men as Zeng Guofan, destroyer of the Taiping, far from being heroes, were the lackeys of the Manchus and the butchers of their own countrymen. The Chinese should learn from Western examples that it is possible to overthrow domestic tyranny and free a country from foreign domination if the people are conscious of their unity and struggle together. As Zou wrote:

I do not begrudge repeating over and over again that internally we are the slaves of the Manchus and suffering from their tyranny, externally we are being harassed by the Powers, and we are doubly enslaved. The reason why our sacred Han race, descendants of the Yellow Emperor, should support revolutionary independence, arises precisely from the question of whether our race will go under and be exterminated.⁴

And he called dramatically on his Han countrymen to reclaim their destiny:

You possess government, run it yourselves; you have laws, guard them yourselves; you have industries, administer them yourselves; you possess armed forces, order them yourselves; you possess lands, watch over them yourselves; you have inexhaustible resources, exploit them yourselves. You are qualified in every way for revolutionary independence.⁵

These challenging calls, inserted in the midst of Zou Rong's other demands for such reforms as elected assemblies, equality of rights for women, and guarantees for freedom of the press and assembly, made an exciting mix. The tract spread widely, and Sun Yat-sen in particular seized on it as a means to outflank the more cautious Kang Youwei, distributing thousands of copies to his own supporters in San Francisco and Singapore. Qing officials put powerful pressures on the Western authorities in Shanghai to yield up Zou and those writers and journalists who had collaborated with him to publish and circulate his work. The Westerners refused, and in 1904 Zou was tried in the Shanghai Mixed Court on a charge of distributing inflammatory writings. There he received a two-year sentence, whereas a Qing court would swiftly have had him executed. By a cruel irony, Zou, spared humiliating and painful death at Qing hands, fell ill in prison and died in early 1905. Even though he was only nineteen, he had managed to make an extraordinary mark on his times.

During the period of Zou's trial, another wave of protest against foreign abuses had been building. Ever since the passage in the United States of the 1882 anti-Chinese exclusion laws and their enforced ratification by treaty, Americans had performed numerous hostile acts against Chinese immigrants. Immigration officers of the United States Treasury Department broke into Chinese homes in American cities allegedly to check registrations; harassments and deportations were common; and Chinese arriving at United States ports—including visitors of high status such as the delegations coming by invitation to the St. Louis Exposition in 1904—were roughly handled and abused. Further bitterness developed when America's exclu-

sonary policies were extended to Chinese residing in Hawaii and the Philippines.

By 1905, a new sort of response was developing in China, providing a third expression of nationalist feeling. The newly established Qing Ministry of Foreign Affairs, urged on by China's minister in Washington, was so outraged by the stories of mistreatment of Chinese that it refused to renew the immigration treaty with the United States. To strengthen China's position, merchants in Canton, Shanghai, Xiamen, Tianjin, and elsewhere declared a total boycott of American goods in June 1905. There had been such boycotts before, most notably by merchants in Hankou in the 1880s, but nothing so widespread and ideologically charged. Although the American government protested and some local Qing officials stepped in, especially in north China ports, the boycott was effective in many cities, particularly Canton and Shanghai. The Qing court eventually yielded to American pressure and issued a proclamation against the action; but since the copies of the proclamation were posted upside down in many cities, the Chinese boycotters correctly guessed that the court was ambivalent about the ban. Supported by funds from Chinese communities in California and Oregon, and by the patriotic excitement of Chinese students—many recently returned from studies in Japan—Chinese merchants refused to handle such goods as American cigarettes, cotton, kerosene, and flour. Only in late September did their solidarity crack and trade slowly return to normal. Although it was not as dramatic on the surface as Boxer violence or Zou Rong's fiery rhetoric, this attempt to respond to national humiliation by means of concerted economic action marked a new kind of popular movement in Chinese history.

EMERGING FORCES

The growing strength and complexity of Chinese nationalism was but one aspect of a new search for self-identity that cut across the whole of society in the later Qing. Economic, political, educational, and social pressures now began to impinge on virtually everyone in China, except perhaps for those bound to traditional patterns of rural toil far from the cities. Even such poor farmers, however, learned that taxes had to go up if new reforms were to be paid for, and they gathered in protest in many parts of the country only to be roughly suppressed by Qing troops or the agents of newly founded police forces. Among those who would once have been ignored but who now made their voices heard with ever greater effect in the closing years of

the dynasty were the overseas students, women, merchants, and urban workers.

After the recall of the official Qing student mission from Hartford, Connecticut, in the 1880s, a new surge of Chinese students left for Europe, where Britain and France were especially popular destinations. A pioneer of this movement was Yan Fu, who had been educated in the Fuzhou shipyard school during the 1860s and sent in 1877 to England, where he enrolled in the naval schools at Portsmouth and in Greenwich. There he studied British naval technology, still the best in the world despite a vigorous challenge by the Germans. He also spent much time examining Western legal practices and began a broad reading of Western political theory. In the course of this he developed an interest in the so-called "Social Darwinists"—those who sought to apply Charles Darwin's theories of species evolution to the fate of social units.

Such theories, which spoke of the "survival of the fittest" and the need for creative adaptation if species were to avoid extinction, seemed to Chinese to have a melancholy relevance to their nation's plight. Yan Fu's translations of such works into Chinese circulated widely. After his return to China in 1879, Yan also worked as an academic administrator in Li Hongzhang's Beiyang naval academy, becoming superintendent in 1890. In addition to his many other duties, he embarked on a series of translations of such influential works as Thomas Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics*, John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*, Montesquieu's *Defense of the Spirit of the Laws*, and Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. Although he was often depressed and unsuccessful in his professional career at the Beiyang academy—extreme depression led him to opium addiction—Yan nevertheless managed to introduce an electrifying range of ideas to China's students.

When the Qing court ordered the abolition of the traditional Confucian examination system in 1905, the way to a successful intellectual or academic career was thrown wide open and new options arose for China's youth. One young man, Zhou Shuren, who subsequently became China's most famous short-story writer under the pseudonym of "Lu Xun," was caught up by these new currents. Initially trained in local Confucian schools in Zhejiang, Lu Xun read Yan Fu's Social Darwinist works in his late teens and subsequently joined the great exodus of Chinese students to Japan, which had become a magnet for young Chinese. So much nearer and cheaper than the United States or Europe, sharing a common script and not as culturally distant in dress or diet, Japan offered an attractive model after its defeat of the Chinese in 1894 and became even more enticing after its shattering defeat of Russian forces at Lüshun in 1904. The means by which the Japanese had

managed to graft a constitutional structure onto the existing imperial system deeply interested reform-minded young Chinese. It was also in Japanese periodicals that Chinese began to discover a new vocabulary, recently created by the Japanese to express major concepts imported from the West, such as “human rights,” “constitutions,” “democracy,” “representation,” and “parliament.” Since Japan used Chinese characters in its own writing system, these new linguistic coinages could be transferred to China with apparent ease, even though in reality the original Chinese characters used in these neologisms often had their own resonance in China that conflicted with the intended new meanings. Japanese law and medical schools, military academies, departments of political science and economics—all seemed to offer Chinese new hope at a time when that traditional Chinese “essence” seemed every year more fragile in the face of the West’s overwhelming practical power.

It was while studying medicine in Japan in 1905 that Lu Xun was shocked by a lantern slide he was shown of triumphant Japanese executing an alleged Chinese traitor in the midst of a large, apathetic circle of Chinese onlookers. He resolved then to give up medicine and concentrate on literature, which, he believed, could in turn shock the Chinese into an awareness of their plight. While China’s cultural and spiritual life was in such chaos, there was, thought Lu Xun, little sense in worrying about the health of Chinese bodies. He began a program of translating into Chinese important works of social realism from Europe and Russia so that China’s students would understand the great issues that had dominated other parts of the world over the preceding half century.

The thousands of Chinese students in Japan could only be loosely supervised by the Qing authorities, if at all, even though many were supported by government stipends and technically could be returned home for improper behavior. In their excitable, energetic ranks, Sun Yat-sen found ready recruits for his anti-Qing organizations, and in 1905 he allied his revolutionary organization with a number of other radical groups to form the “Revolutionary Alliance” (Tongmeng hui). The alliance tried to infiltrate student members back into China once their education was completed, there to work toward eventual military insurrection. Its ideology was a mixture of Sun’s republican ideas—developed during his period of European study and in subsequent reading—and socialist theories on land-tax equalization and the need to control capitalist development. Sun Yat-sen’s bold call for revolutionary activism was steadily becoming more compelling than Kang Youwei’s more cautious call for constitutional monarchy and protection of the emperor Guangxu.

Among the students in Japan were many young women, and this marked a drastic change in Chinese social and political life. Although some Chinese “revolutionaries” still brought their bound-footed concubines to Japan, many independent young women were, with the encouragement of their own parents or brothers, unbinding their feet and struggling to obtain an adequate or even advanced education. They found moral and social support in sisterhoods that promised lodging and economic help if they remained unmarried, in groups of men who pledged to marry young women with the still unfashionable “large feet,” and in schools that actively encouraged their pursuit of learning. These women now had new role models in the guise of famous Western figures like Joan of Arc, Mme. Roland, Florence Nightingale, and Catharine Beecher, whose biographies were translated, printed, and reprinted in magazines. There were also stark new images such as that of the young Russian radical Sophia Perovskaya, whose successful assassination of Tsar Alexander II, even though it led to her arrest and execution, made her a model for female intransigence and courage in the face of autocratic misrule.

Although the scale was still small—by 1909, only around 13,000 girls were enrolled in schools in the whole of China, and a few hundred more overseas—for these thousands of young Chinese women this was a period for the steady development of literary skills and cautious reflection on China’s weakness and the restrictions of family life. But a vivid example of the literal acting out of the more revolutionary female goals was offered by Qiu Jin, a young woman from the same part of Zhejiang as the writer Lu Xun. Married young, by her parents’ arrangement, to a merchant’s son whom she disliked, she bore him two children before suddenly leaving her family and sailing alone for Japan in 1904. There, supporting herself by selling her jewelry and assisted by friends, she began to study a wide range of Western subjects and to speak out publicly on the need for reform.

Drawn to the orbit of Sun Yat-sen’s Revolutionary Alliance, Qiu Jin liked to dress in men’s clothes on occasion and to experiment with explosives. Returning to China in 1906, she became a radical teacher in a small school in Zhejiang, keeping up her contacts with members of the Revolutionary Alliance and meeting members of local secret societies. Often practicing military drills and riding her horse astride, she inevitably drew criticism from more conservative townfolk, but she managed to retain her position. It was at her school, in July 1907, in attempted conjunction with a revolutionary friend in Anhui, that she tried to launch an uprising against the Qing. Local troops captured her with little trouble, and after a brief trial she was executed. A short, unhappy, futile life, some might have said; yet

the example she left was one of courage and initiative in the face of deep national frustrations, and other Chinese women were to press forward and take up the struggle for political freedoms.

The commercial world of China's merchants was also roiling with change during this period. We have noted that Qing "self-strengthening" statesmen had sought to expand China's economic base by developing "government-supervised merchant-management companies" and that some of these had succeeded in fields such as shipping and mining. But problems of overlapping jurisdiction and lack of capital slowed these efforts, and by the 1890s there had come to be greater interest in so-called "officials' and merchants' joint-management companies." Many of these were promoted by officials in Shanghai or by Governor-General Zhang Zhidong in Hunan-Hubei, and they included several new spinning and weaving mills, capitalized at 500,000 taels or more. The capital was raised by wealthy officials acting in conjunction with local gentry and merchants, although in some cases merchants were essentially forced to "contribute" by provincial officials. From this level of activity, it was only a short step for some provincial officials to act as independent entrepreneurs or for some wealthy local figures to develop their own industries without state support. Zeng Guofan's son-in-law Nie was one senior official who invested in the new Shanghai cotton mills; Nie's two English-speaking sons, in turn, without holding office, became significant capitalist developers, bringing in profits to the family of over 100,000 taels in 1904.

Since the Qing court, the metropolitan Peking bureaucracy, the provincial officials, and the merchants each had their own interests and constituencies, it proved impossible to develop the kind of coordinated economic policy that had been so successful in Japan during the Meiji Restoration. Some leaders at court made gestures in that direction, however. Prince Chun, for example, Emperor Guangxu's brother, met large numbers of overseas Chinese merchants during his diplomatic journey to apologize to the Western governments for the massacres in the Boxer Uprising. He returned to China a strong backer of vigorous economic intervention by the state. Partly on his urging, the Qing in 1903 founded a Ministry of Commercial Affairs (Shangbu) with similar ranking to the old six ministries and the new Foreign Affairs Ministry. The Commercial Affairs Ministry had four main bureaus: one to deal with trade (including patents and monopolies); one for agriculture and forestry; one for industry, and one for "auditing" (which included such areas as banking, trade fairs, weights and measures, and commercial litigation).

At the same time, the state urged the formation of chambers of commerce in the hope that they might facilitate central control over merchants. The Qing do not seem to have realized that chambers of commerce might also

give commercial Chinese a greater sense of local initiative and autonomy. Drawing members from traditional urban trade guilds, from local banking institutions, and among the newly wealthy entrepreneurs, the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce was organized in 1903, although it remained dominated by financial figures from the city of Ningbo in Zhejiang province. The Canton chamber was slower to grow because of local unwillingness to allow central supervision, but it was an economic force by 1905. Both chambers played an important part in leading the anti-American boycott of later 1905. As overseas Chinese merchants in Southeast Asia (and, to a lesser extent, in Canada and the United States) grew wealthier, they also began to invest in certain Chinese enterprises or to make capital available for investment by others.

These new forms of commerce and industrial development became, like foreign imperialism, sources of dislocation in the lives of urban workers. Scattered records allow glimpses of the responses of these workers. In the earlier Qing period, there had been examples of urban market stoppages and labor strikes among such workers as the porcelain furnace men in Jiangxi and the grain-barge pullers on the Grand Canal. But a letter of 1897, written in Shanghai by a twenty-five-year-old American salesman for the Winchester Repeating Arms Company, shows urban tensions escalating in the midst of new social realities, and how swiftly foreigners could become involved.

The writer describes a conflict in late March 1897 over a decision by the Municipal Council of Shanghai to raise the tax on wheelbarrow coolies from 400 copper cash to 600 copper cash a month (a jump from 25 cents to 37.5 at contemporary rates). In protest, the coolies managed to organize and get all wheelbarrows off the streets by April 1. When one lone coolie, a few days later, tried to cross from the French Concession to the English Concession with a wheelbarrow full of offal, a crowd of workers beat him up and smashed his wheelbarrow. A policeman, coming to aid the beaten coolie, was beaten in turn. Westerners in their club, seeing the policeman in trouble, came to help him, and mounted policemen rode to their aid but were forced to dismount because their ponies were too frightened of the crowd. The coolies fought the policemen's drawn swords with poles and bricks pulled from nearby walls. Four blasts from the ship's siren on a British gunboat brought Western "volunteers" to the scene in twenty minutes, and the coolies were dispersed, leaving behind three of their number dead and having wounded two policemen. Within thirty minutes, "Blue Jackets" from several foreign ships had arrived and occupied key bridges and public spaces. Peace returned to the streets, and the Municipal Council decided to postpone the tax increase until July.⁶

Hankou was also undergoing dramatic industrial development under Zhang Zhidong, with well over 10,000 workers employed in modern industrial plants by the 1890s. Here, too, an expansion of resident foreigners and the opening of new foreign-concession areas heightened social tensions. Labor conditions were bleak, wages low, and housing conditions atrocious as rural workers migrated to the already crowded city in search of either long-term or part-time employment. Copper workers struck in 1905, mint employees in 1907, and thousands of street vendors, hawkers, and stall keepers, along with piece-goods shop assistants, struck in 1908. In China's other large cities, the new cotton mills, cement works, cigarette factories, iron works, paper mills, and other plants that were being built—often with foreign capital—all showed the prospects of exploitation and unrest.

No larger patterns in these industrial protests were yet perceived by most people, but news of the attempted Russian Revolution of 1905 had a strong impact in east Asia. Japanese radicals close to Sun Yat-sen drew a new kind of Russo-Chinese parallel, and put Sun himself in contact with Russian revolutionaries. As one Japanese explained it with graphic simplicity, China and Russia were the two greatest autocracies in the world, and the repression they enforced was a block to freedom everywhere. The solution was clear: "For the advance of civilization it was necessary to overthrow these autocracies."⁷

The End of the Dynasty

CHAPTER 11

THE QING CONSTITUTION



Between 1860 and 1905, the Qing court and Chinese provincial officials had tried to adapt a wide range of Western techniques and ideas to China's proven needs: artillery, ships, the telegraph, new schools, factories, chambers of commerce, and international law. Although the focus constantly shifted, the goal was always to learn certain practices from the West that would make China stronger and better able to protect itself from the pressures and demands of those same foreigners. It was, therefore, logical after the debacle of the Boxer uprising that the Qing try to take over elements of the constitutional structures that seemed to lie at the heart of Western power.

In the 1850s, scholar-officials like Xu Jiyou had especially praised the flexibility and openness of the American congressional and presidential system, and it was initially to the United States that the Qing had sent their students for training. Other scholars were drawn to the ideology of the French Revolution and admired the dramatic expansion of French power in the nineteenth century. But since the idea of a republic that would entail their own demise could hardly be to the Qing court's taste, they also began to look seriously at various examples of constitutional monarchy that might both strengthen the country and shore up their own dynasty. Great Britain, still the world's paramount industrial and military power, was one obvious example; another was Germany, rapidly rising to global prominence; and a third—and most dramatic—was Japan, which in less than twenty years since the establishment of a joint imperial and parliamentary structure had transformed its economy, its industry, its military and navy, and its entire