

CHINA IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Principal focus

The principal focus is upon continuity and change in China.

Problems and issues

Tradition; economic, political and social structure; Western impact; cultural interaction and conflict; nationalism; reform; imperialism; modernisation; revolution.

THE CHINESE TRADITION

THE MIDDLE KINGDOM

A major cause of the conflict between China and the West during the nineteenth century was the traditional Chinese view of peoples from beyond its borders. From the time of the Shang dynasty (1176 BC–1122 BC) to the eighteenth century, China could, with some justice argue the case for its cultural superiority.

- Surrounding peoples—Korea, Japan, Siam, Annam—were no match for China, indeed they often absorbed many aspects of Chinese culture.
- China thus *had* to be the centre of the world, the 'Middle Kingdom'; other people were consequently barbarians.
- China developed a consciousness of its own greatness.
- Its neighbours accepted this, paying tribute as vassal states whose envoys kowtowed to the emperor. Kowtowing involved kneeling before the emperor and bowing one's head to the ground

many times. Western barbarians were expected to behave no differently.

- China's isolation bred a belief of cultural superiority which fostered a unique society, not only alien to Western ideas but also deeply antagonistic towards them.

THE DYNASTIC CYCLE

Throughout its history, China has been a rebellious country, but until modern times not a revolutionary one. Revolution calls for a change in the form of government and the principles on which it is based. Rebellion calls for a change in leadership leaving the system essentially intact. China's history is the story of the rise and fall of dynasties or ruling families: the T'ang, the Sung, the Mongols, the Ming and the Manzhus (Manchu) or Qing (Ch'ing). A ruling dynasty was obliged to rule benevolently and take care of its people. It was obliged to keep in harmony with nature. Failure to do this would result in a loss of the 'mandate of heaven' or the approval of heaven. If this happened, the people not only had the right to rebel but also felt an obligation to do so. Evidence of the loss of this mandate might be earthquakes, floods, famine, poor upkeep of the irrigation systems, foreign defeat. Figure 5.1 summarises this idea of 'the dynastic cycle'.

CONFUCIANISM

At the root of the belief in the dynastic cycle was the crucial system of Confucianism. Confucianism is not a religion, but rather an ethical code of conduct. It was believed that Confucianism had solved the prob-

lem of how humanity should live. Confucianism emphasised obedience, acceptance of one's lot, respect for age and the obligation of a 'better' to care for an 'inferior'. These ideas permeated all traditional Chinese relationships: emperor to subject, father to son, husband to wife, elder to younger brother and friend to friend.

- The emperor who cared for his subject, the father who cared for his son displayed benevolent paternalism.
- The subject who obeyed his emperor, the son who obeyed his father displayed filial piety.

Confucianism was responsible for the stability of Chinese society over the centuries.

CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION SYSTEM

- The chief means by which Confucianism was institutionalised was the national civil service examination system. To rise in rank in Chinese society, indeed to reach the pinnacle of a mandarin, trusted bureaucrat of the emperor, one had to pass complex, difficult exams based on Confucian classics.
- The exams were competitive and open to all regardless of background, race or social status.
- Theoretically, anyone could become a mandarin and Chinese history is peppered with examples of poor peasants achieving high office.
- Realistically, though, this was rare as only the rich could afford to spend years studying the complexities of a written language which few could read or even understand when spoken.
- However, Confucianism acted as a 'social cement', linking all classes in their respect of the scholar and by uniting regions in the same way.

THE ECONOMY AND SOCIETY

In theory, Confucian China had no noble or upper class. One had to rise up through society by virtue of

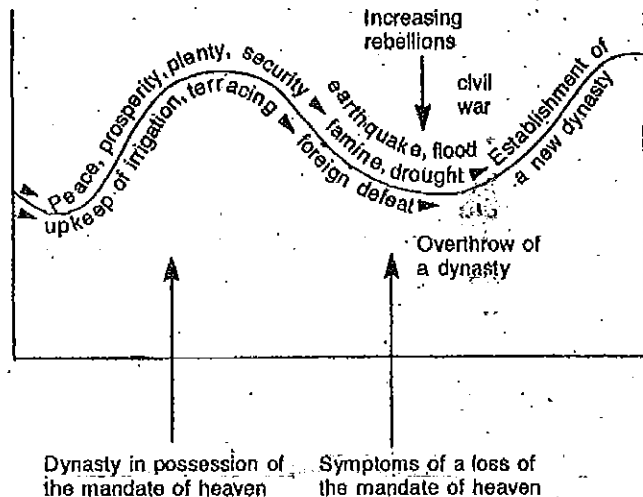


Fig. 5.1 The dynastic cycle

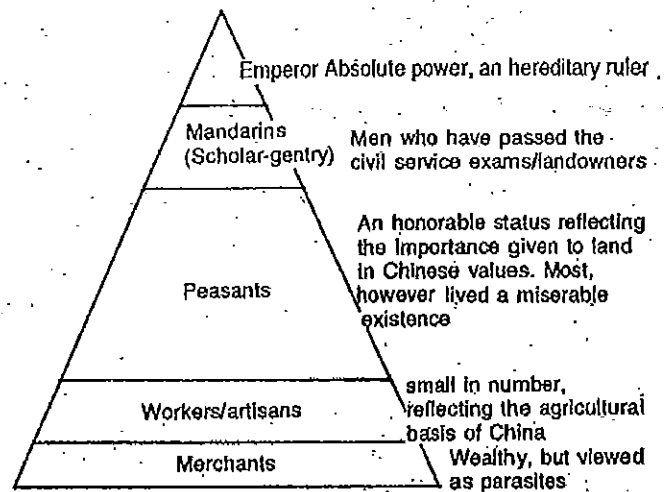


Fig. 5.2 Social structure in traditional China

passing exams. However, as mentioned earlier it took years of sacrifice and hard work to pass the exams and so the sons of scholars tended to become the scholars of the next generation. Thus, a scholar-gentry-land-owning class arose. Confucian theory in fact accepted the existence of four classes. Figure 5.2 summarises the social structure of traditional China.

Land was the key to Chinese society and economy. Over the centuries more and more land was brought under cultivation by means of irrigation, terracing and labour-intensive farming. As grain was shown to support an ever-increasing population, less attention was paid to other economic activities. The importance given to agriculture meant that any surplus capital went back into agricultural land, not commerce or industry. Thus:

1. grain became the standard of real wealth and the development of money wealth remained weak;
2. merchants continued to be viewed as parasites living off the labours of the honourable, though miserable, peasant;
3. society and economy remained tradition-bound with the scholar class especially opposed to any new ideas which might threaten their position.

Over 80 per cent of the population were peasant farmers. Most agriculture was carried out at a subsistence level, i.e. just enough was produced to feed a peasant and his family—any natural calamities or central government negligence in irrigation control invariably led to real famine. Thus the interrelationship between economics, social structure, Confucianism and the dynastic cycle can be seen.

GOVERNMENT

- The ruling dynasty since 1644 was the Manchu (Manchu) or Qing (Ch'ing) dynasty. The Manchus were from Manchuria but by the nineteenth century they had moved so close to the civilisation of their subjects as to have been almost totally 'sinicised'.

- China was an autocracy, i.e. the emperor had total power over everything. However, he delegated authority to his bureaucrats, the mandarins.
- The mandarins ran the six ministries of the central government: civil office, revenue, ceremonies, war, punishments and works.
- China's provinces were run by governors, men who had enormous power in their province and over whom imperial control was slight.
- These men, and the officials below them in charge of smaller areas, were rotated from one post to another to prevent personal power bases from being formed. Provincial governors never ruled their home provinces for the same reason.

QUESTIONS

1. How did the Chinese refer to their country?
2. What was a vassal state?
3. What ceremony did foreign envoys have to undergo in the presence of the emperor?
4. How might a dynasty lose the mandate of heaven?
5. What was the fundamental basis of Confucianism?
6. What was benevolent paternalism?
7. In what way was social mobility possible in China?
8. In what way was Confucianism a force for unity in China?
9. Place the following in order of precedence in Chinese society: peasants, emperor, mandarins, merchants.
10. What terms might best describe Chinese society?

THE IMPACT OF THE WEST

EARLY WESTERN CONTACT

Apart from occasional visits by such people as Marco Polo, China remained closed to the West until the sixteenth century:

1. Portugal began trading in 1514, gaining Macao in 1557.
2. In 1582, a Jesuit missionary, Matteo Ricci, arrived.
3. Spain (1575), Holland (1604), Britain (1637) and later other Western nations began trading.
4. In 1699, the East India Company began trading in Guangzhou (Canton).

Trade expanded far too slowly from the point of view of the West. The basic problem was that the West wanted China's goods, but that China wanted very little from the West. Emperor Qianlong (Ch'ien-lung) (1736–1796) summed up the Chinese position thus:

There is nothing we lack. We have never set much store on strange and ingenious objects, nor do we need any of your country's goods.

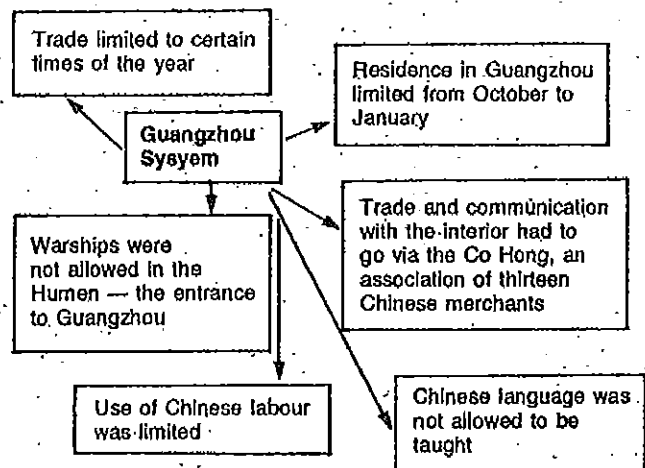


Fig. 5.3 The Guangzhou (canton) system

Furthermore, Qianlong was becoming very suspicious of Western intentions and so in 1757 he introduced the 'Eight Resolutions' which inaugurated the Guangzhou system. The main points of this system are shown in Figure 5.3.

GROWTH OF ANGLO—CHINESE HOSTILITY

Despite the restrictions, the European powers continued to profit from the China trade and were keen to allow things to carry on as normal. However, this did not suit Britain, who was by the late eighteenth century the major Western participant in trade with China. Britain had several complaints besides trade restrictions:

1. Chinese law was quite different to British law, for example Chinese law was based on collective responsibility for a crime not individual responsibility as in England. Thus, if an English sailor committed a crime and could not be found, then another sailor off the same boat could be punished for the crime. Torture and corruption were not uncommon in Chinese law.
2. British pride balked at kowtowing to the emperor.
3. Britain demanded diplomatic equality.
4. The failure of the missions of Lord McCartney (1793) and Lord Amherst (1816) to gain better trade agreements annoyed Britain.
5. The poor treatment meted out to Lord Napier in 1834 convinced many that only force could bring change.

China had grievances too. In order to improve the balance of its position with China, Britain began exporting opium to China. The results were dramatic as the Chinese developed a taste for the drug. Bullion began to pour out of China. By 1838 China was importing 40 000 chests of opium a year. This was over 50 per cent of her total imports. Opium had been banned in China in 1729 and edicts were frequently passed trying to limit use and importation.

A combination of British frustration and Chinese anger were leading to a showdown.

THE OPIUM WAR (1839–1842)

The war

1838 Lin Zexu (Lin Tse-hsu) is appointed to end the opium trade.

March 1839 Lin confiscates all British opium stocks at Guangzhou and burns them.

July 1839 British authorities refuse to hand over a sailor accused of killing a Chinese peasant. Lin tries to cut supplies to the British at Macao and Hong Kong.

November 1839 In the Battle of Chuanbi, Britain sinks three Chinese ships.

By 1842 Britain had successfully blockaded Guangzhou and had threatened as far north as Tianjin (Tientsin).

The Treaty of Nanking, 1842

The war ended with China signing the first of a long series of unequal treaties with the West. The main provisions of this first treaty and the supplementary Humen Treaty or Bogue Treaty of 1843 were:

1. Hong Kong was ceded to Britain.
2. Four more ports were opened to British trade: Xiamen (Amoy), Fuzhou (Foochow), Ningbo (Ningpo) and Shanghai.
3. British consuls had the right of direct communication with Chinese of equal rank.
4. Britons had the right of extraterritoriality, i.e. the right to be tried under British law for offences committed in China.
5. China had to pay a large indemnity.
6. A 5 per cent tariff was imposed which could not be varied unless both sides agreed.
7. Britain received 'most-favoured nation' status, which meant that any future concessions granted to any other nation would automatically be granted to Britain.

Interestingly, opium was not even mentioned!

THE UNEQUAL TREATIES

Britain's success encouraged other Western powers to quickly move in and take advantage of China's weakness, resulting in the signing of further unequal treaties:

1. Treaty of Wangxia (Whangsia) with the United States.
2. Treaty of Huangpu (Whampoa) with France, which allowed Catholic missionaries into the country.

Relations with the West worsened as the latter tried

to gain more concessions while China clung to isolation as best she could.

Second opium war

A second war broke out in 1856. Chinese officials had removed the crew of a British registered ship, the Arrow. In order to gain satisfaction Britain attacked Guangzhou. The execution of a French missionary gave France an excuse to join in. In 1858, Anglo-French forces attacked the Dagu Forts at Tianjin, quickly forcing the Chinese to come to terms. China's emperor Xianfeng (Hsien-feng) decided to sue for peace, resulting in the Treaty of Tianjin. This treaty provided for:

1. diplomatic equality with a British ambassador at Beijing (Peking);
2. opening of more ports, some inland;
3. clarification of extraterritoriality;
4. legalisation of opium and a further indemnity.

Other Western nations quickly signed similar agreements.

Following a renewal of fighting, Britain and France forced on China the Beijing Convention of 1860:

1. Tianjin became a treaty port, i.e. open to trade;
2. the coolie trade was legalised, i.e. the recruitment of Chinese labourers to work overseas;
3. Kowloon Point was ceded to Britain;
4. further indemnities were granted.

Relations with the West became more co-operative after 1860, thanks largely to the efforts of US Ambassador Burlingame and British ambassadors Bruce and Alcock.

1861 China established the Zongli Yamen (Tsungli Yamen), in effect a foreign affairs bureau.

1868–70 The Burlingame mission visited Europe and the USA and argued the case for treaty revision.

1868 The Seward–Burlingame Treaty placed Sino-American relations on a more equal footing.

1877 China opened first legations in the West.

However, China continued to fall increasingly under Western control. Between 1862 and 1893 France took possession of all of South-east Asia (Cambodia, Laos, Annam, Tonkin and Cochin China)—all previously vassal states of China. By 1886 Britain similarly had taken control of Burma.

Missionary work in China was often viewed with a mixture of fear, suspicion and credulity. Spurred on by the authorities, ignorant peasants were willing to believe many stories about the missionaries and as a result attacks on them were common, for example at Tianjin in 1870. Such action always led to swift Western reprisals and further opening of China, as happened after the murder of the British official Raymond Margary in 1875.

SINO-JAPANESE WAR, 1894-5, AND AFTER

The final humiliation for China came in its defeat by Japan in 1895. Fought ostensibly over Korea, Japan proved to be just as merciless as the Western powers. The war ended with the Treaty of Shimonoseki:

1. Korea ceased to be a vassal state of China and was to come increasingly under Japanese control.
2. Formosa, the Pescadores and the Liaodong (Liaoutung) Peninsula were given to Japan, though the latter was handed back following Western pressure.
3. Japan gained extraterritoriality and indemnities.

By the 1890s the Western powers were busy gaining concessions in China. These gave the West power over things like mines and railway lines or created spheres of influence. A sphere of influence gave a power some political and financial control over a region without having to be concerned with annexing the area.

THE BOXER REBELLION

By the end of the nineteenth century anti-foreign feeling was strong. This was the result of:

1. Western military action;
2. the treaty settlements;
3. humiliation as the Western powers carved up the country between them;
4. fear and suspicion of Christianity.

Stories of Christian child sacrifices and spirits flying along telegraph wires were widely believed by peasants. This anti-foreign feeling was developing into an extreme form, xenophobia.

It is against this background that the Boxers or the 'Righteous and Harmonious Fists' appear. Originally an anti-Manzchu group, they were soon to rally behind the slogan 'protect the Qing and destroy the foreigner'. The Boxers claimed supernatural powers and gained the support of credulous peasants. Throughout 1900 attacks on missionaries and other Westerners culminated in a massive Boxer siege of the Western legation area in Beijing. On 20th June the Manzchu government declared war on the West. An eight nation force relieved the siege after fifty five days on 14th August. Western troops were guilty of great excesses during the following weeks. Finally, yet another humiliating treaty was imposed on China, the Boxer Protocol of 1901:

1. China had to formally apologise and those responsible for the rising were to be executed.
2. A massive indemnity of 450 million taels was imposed.
3. Foreign troops were stationed along railway lines.

WESTERN IMPACT ON CHINA'S ECONOMY AND SOCIETY

The impact of the West on China was enormous.

1. Economically:
 - (a) dumping of cheap Western imports destroyed traditional handicraft industries;
 - (b) Western control of tariffs prevented protection of Chinese industry;
 - (c) opium, dumping and indemnities drained China of capital.
2. Politically:
 - (a) China's international standing collapsed with each war, treaty and sphere of influence;
 - (b) extraterritoriality was an added humiliation;
 - (c) central government weakness led to an increase in provincial power.
3. Culturally:
 - (a) the clash of cultures would ultimately weaken the binding power of Confucianism;
 - (b) in the short term, Western ideas and influence made possible the Taiping rebellion and fuelled xenophobia.

China's weakness was obvious, the need for reform clear and as the government concentrated on the foreign threat and allowed internal matters to slide, for example the disrepair of irrigation systems, everything pointed to the loss of the mandate of heaven. Ultimately, the impact of the West would be seen in revolution and the rise of nationalism.

QUESTIONS

11. What was the Guangzhou system?
12. Why was Britain dissatisfied with her position in China by the late eighteenth century?
13. How did Britain solve her Chinese trading problem?
14. What is extraterritoriality?
15. What was the most-favoured nation clause?
16. Name four unequal treaties.
17. How did the West increase their control of China?
18. What is xenophobia?
19. What was the economic effect of the West on China?

ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Even without the exactions of the West, the Manzchu regime was facing disintegration during the nineteenth century. Lack of transportation, limited trade, illiteracy, regional dialects and the age-old loyalty of the peasant to his local area, kept links with the centre weak. During the nineteenth century famine was common—as was the central government's

failure to do anything about it. Domestic distress and local loyalties, placed against a background of increasing Western control of the country, had the effect of increasing provincial power. The Manchu state was slowly disintegrating. This slow process of disintegration was accompanied by frequent rebellions: the White Lotus sect in 1774 and 1794; the Eight Diagrams and Nine Mansions sects 1786–88; the Heaven and Earth society 1786–89; the Eight Diagrams Sect again in 1813. The Taiping Rebellion, 1850–64 was merely the biggest. Rebellions continued right up to 1900.

THE TAIPING REBELLION

Background

- The fundamental cause of the Taiping Rebellion was land and the famines caused by a failure of the Manchus to tackle the land problem.
- Anti-Manchu feeling was strong in the south and this combined with the land issue to bring about the revolt.
- The rebellion was led by Hung Hsiu-chun who believed he was Jesus' brother, ordained by God to establish the Heavenly Kingdom of Peace, i.e. Taiping.

Course of the rebellion

- Early on the rebellion was very popular. The discipline and high morals of the Taipings contrasted well with the traditional raping and looting of government troops.
- The Taiping programme with its primitive communism attracted many. Land would be distributed equally and surplus grain would be put into a common granary.
- Women gained equality. Prostitution was banned while monogamy became compulsory.
- The Taipings abstained from opium, alcohol and tobacco and a strict moral code was enforced.
- However, by the late 1850s the strict discipline and morality began to disappear, cliques formed and Hung's stubbornness hurt the movement.
- The Manchu forces under Zeng Guofan (Tseng Kuo-fan) became more organised and the intervention of General Gordon's troops in 1864 finally ended the rebellion.

The end of the rebellion

- Twenty million people died during the rebellion.
- Manchu preoccupation with the revolt allowed the West to gain an even firmer foothold in the country.
- The scale of the destruction, plus the humiliation of having to rely on Western troops, provided further evidence of the loss of the mandate of heaven. The rebellion clearly showed the need for change.

THE CHALLENGE OF MODERNISATION

China was in a dilemma. Should it change, adopt Western ideas and modernise? To do this could mean the destruction of the foundations of traditional Chinese society and culture. Or should it cling to the old ways and try to uphold tradition in the face of Western aggression. This, however, would see China continually humiliated, perhaps partitioned, and might in turn also lead to the destruction of the foundations of traditional Chinese society and culture. This dilemma was reflected in the attempts made at modernisation after 1860.

THE SELF-STRENGTHENING MOVEMENT

The self-strengthening movement did not aim to create a new society. It was an attempt by China to strengthen herself by reaffirming the traditional values of Confucianism while at the same time making use of Western science and technology. This overall attempt was known as the Tongzhi (Tung Chih) Restoration. Tongzhi was emperor from 1862–75. Chief among the self-strengtheners were Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang (Li Hung-Chang) who shared a desire to build up Western-style arms and to set up language schools. Zuo Zongtang (Tso Tsung t'ang) tried to improve naval and transport affairs.

The self-strengthening period did achieve some success:

1. Arsenal were set up at Fuzhou and Shanghai, military schools opened and a few army and navy officers were sent to Europe for training.
2. Government-run enterprises began to operate in mining and iron production.
3. China built its first telegraph line in 1879 and its first rail link in 1876.
4. Language schools were opened, science and maths were added to the curriculum and students began to travel overseas to study.
5. The diplomatic improvements that occurred between China and the West were a reflection of the self-strengthening period.

THE FAILURE OF SELF-STRENGTHENING

Though some modernisation did occur, it was an extremely limited, half-hearted effort. The conflict between continuity and change was clearly won by the former. Traditional Chinese economy, society and government changed very little. Why did this happen?

1. Most Chinese still believed their culture to be superior and that new Western ideas were unnecessary. Indeed, it was believed that the stronger traditional values were, the stronger China would be.

2. The study of a Western curriculum was opposed by all those in power who owed their power and privilege to their mastery of the Confucian classics.
3. In 1862, the five-year-old Tongzhi became emperor. His mother Cixi (Tz'u-hsi) became the Empress Dowager and co-regent. Palace intrigue gave her power over the whole country. When Tongzhi died in 1875, Guangxu (Kuang-hsu), Cixi's young nephew, became emperor. Cixi ruled as sole regent till her (temporary) retirement in 1889. Cixi was a reactionary, i.e. totally opposed to any change, and she was in the position to keep change to a minimum.
4. The Manzhus were fearful of change because of the predominance of native Chinese in the reform movement.
5. Other factors minimising change included corruption, nepotism, lack of synchronised planning, lack of capital and fear of the possible Western use of railways if built.

THE HUNDRED DAYS REFORM OF 1898

The Sino-Japanese War showed China the result of failing to Westernise during the self-strengthening period. As the Western powers scrambled to carve up China, Emperor Guangxu became convinced of the need for change. On 11th June 1898 he called for reform and over the next three months nearly fifty reform decrees were issued. These included:

1. changes in education to promote practical Western subjects;
2. laws were to be codified and simplified;
3. offices to co-ordinate industry, agriculture and commercial reform were to be set up;
4. the military were to be modernised.

The reform period was short-lived. Cixi, with the help of military commanders Ronglu (Jung-lu) and Yuan Shikai (Yuan Shih-k'ai), seized the emperor who was then imprisoned on an island outside Beijing. Cixi was now 'invited to rule' which she did until her death in 1908. The conservatives urged the people to expel foreigners and return to isolation. The result was the Boxer Rebellion, further Western exploitation and ultimately the fall of the Manchu dynasty.

THE REFORMS OF 1900-11

In the aftermath of the Boxer rising, Cixi finally accepted the need for change. Over the next decade, the Manchu reform movement brought in several changes:

- 1901 Military academies were opened. Many officers were sent to Japan for training.
- 1901 A Westernised curriculum was introduced.

1905 The Confucian exams were abolished. Thousands of students were now sent overseas to learn new ideas.

1906 In November, the six central government ministries were reorganised into eleven, introducing a formal foreign affairs, education and commerce ministry.

1909 Provincial assemblies were elected.

1910 A consultative national assembly was formed with the aim of calling a parliament.

1910 A new legal code removed the more objectionable parts of China's legal system, such as branding.

In addition, there were efforts to promote industry and institute social reform, for example footbinding of women was discouraged.

The aim of the Manchu reforms was to centralise political control and modernise sufficiently for the Manzhus to be able to stand up to the West. The reverse happened. Provincial leaders saw the political and military reforms as attacks on their power. Communications improvements enabled co-ordinated action by the gentry. Education reform bred thousands convinced of the need to end Manchu rule and replace it with something better. The end of the Confucian exams ended the status of the local élites, and thus the reason for their loyalty to the government.

THE REVOLUTION OF 1911

- The Manchu dynasty was not overthrown in 1911. It collapsed.
- The issue which provided the spark was the government plan to nationalise the railways which provincial leaders saw as an attack on them.
- Several revolts occurred in 1911 at Sichuan and Guangzhou.
- An accidental explosion by rebels on 9 October at Wuhan was followed by arrests and a series of death sentences. Fearing arrest, rebels seized the army camp at Wuchang.
- Lacking a leader, rebels forced Li Yuanhong (Li Yuan-hung) to be their leader, thus adding respectability to their cause.
- Province after province rebelled and the revolution proceeded as a series of provincial declarations. By November, only two central provinces had not rebelled.

The Manzhus asked Yuan Shikai to end the revolt. Using the powers given to him, Yuan turned on the Manzhus to further his own ambition. In February 1912 the last Manchu emperor, Pu Yi, abdicated. Yuan Shikai was proclaimed president in March. Sun Yixian (Sun Yat-sen), who had been declared provisional president by his supporters, stepped down in order to avoid civil conflict.

Chinese history was repeating itself. The Manz-

chus had clearly lost the mandate of heaven as all the symptoms were there: foreign defeat, humiliation, famine, government incompetence. The strength of the force of change was not strong enough to overcome the force of continuity and allow the Manchus to reform.

QUESTIONS

20. What was the fundamental cause of rebellion in China?
21. Why was the Taiping Rebellion so popular early on?
22. Who gained most from the rebellion?
23. What was the aim of self-strengthening?
24. Who was to blame most for self-strengthening's failure?
25. Why was the reform period of 1898 so short-lived?
26. What was the aim of the post-1901 reforms?
27. Why did education reform work against the Manchus?
28. What happened to the Manchu regime in 1911?
29. Who became president in 1912?

TEST YOURSELF

STRUCTURED ESSAY QUESTIONS

Question 1

All three parts of the question are to be answered.

- (a) What was the importance of Confucianism to traditional China? (5 marks)
- (b) In what ways did the Western powers increase their influence in China during the nineteenth century? (8 marks)
- (c) To what extent had China changed by 1911? (12 marks)

Answering the question

Allocate time correctly. A rough guide for a 5/8/12 breakdown would be: part (1) about seven minutes; part (2) about fifteen minutes; part (3) about twenty-three minutes. Remember it is fairly easy to score on part (1); much harder on part (3).

- (a) Be sure to concentrate on the word 'importance'. Do not start narrating the life of Confucius or get carried away describing Confucian philosophy. Give a straightforward definition and then move on to talk about its importance.
 - Confucianism was not a religion, but an ethical code by which all classes were expected to live.
 - All relationships were based on Confucianism. Emperors and fathers had to display

benevolent paternalism to their subjects and sons. In return, subjects and sons were expected to display filial piety.

- The basis of the dynastic cycle with its obligation to rebel if the mandate of heaven was lost, was rooted in Confucianism.
 - Social mobility and high office could only be achieved by passing civil service exams which were based on the Confucian classics.
- (b) Get straight to the point, explain your argument and then provide specific examples to support your argument.
 - The Western powers increased their influence in China by means of war which led to the imposition of unequal treaties. Unequal treaties allowed the Western powers to increase their economic, political, territorial and cultural influence.
 - The Opium Wars led directly to the unequal treaties of Nanjing, Tianjin and Beijing. These were quickly followed by similar treaties (for example Wangxia) between other Western powers and China.
 - Economic influence was increased by the control of China's tariffs which allowed the dumping of Western goods. Ports were forced open and indemnities frequently imposed which led to an outflow of capital from China. 'Most favoured nation' clauses made sure that no power missed out on increasing its influence.
 - Political and territorial influence was increased by means of annexation of parts of China and its vassal states (for example Hong Kong and Annam), achievement of diplomatic equality (Beijing Convention), extraterritoriality (Nanjing Treaty) and the creation of spheres of influence. There was also direct intervention in China's affairs (for example at the end of the Taiping Rebellion).
 - Cultural influence increased as Western ideas slowly crept in and missionaries tried to convert the masses.
 - (c) This answer needs to be planned carefully: the student cannot 'jump straight in' as might be possible in part (1). Begin by presenting your basic argument. The question requires a brief comment about aspects of traditional China before the extent of change in each aspect can be discussed.
 - China had not changed a great deal by 1911 as the forces of continuity had proved far stronger than the forces of change.
 - At the beginning of the nineteenth century China was isolated, steeped in Confucianism, non-Christian, economically backward and reliant on agriculture. Education concentrated on the Confucian classics. Militarily, China

was backward and political power lay with the court or court-approved provincial leaders.

- Confucianism remained predominant. The 1905 reform had ended the civil service exams, but all efforts to introduce a Western curriculum in the self-strengthening period, 1898 and 1901, had at best only a marginal impact thanks largely to reactionary forces such as Cixi.
- Christianity made only slight inroads, despite its impact on the Taiping Rebellion.
- Land reform was non-existent so the economy remained backward, though there was some coastal industrial development, for example Shanghai.
- The war with Japan highlighted China's military weakness despite the introduction of minor reforms during the self-strengthening period.
- Political power, however, was shifting away from the court, especially after 1900, and changes were seen in the collapse of the dynasty in 1911.

Conclusion: China had changed very little by 1911 and what changes there were were only cosmetic.

Question 2

- (a) What was the Guangzhou (Canton) system? (5 marks)
- (b) In what ways did the Western powers seek to change the Guangzhou system? (8 marks)
- (c) To what extent had the West gained effective economic control of China by 1901? (12 marks)

Answering the question

- (a) In 1757 the Emperor Qianlong (Ch'ien-lung) introduced the Eight Resolutions which inaugurated the Guangzhou system aimed essentially at limiting Western involvement in China. The main aspects of this system were:
 - Limitations were put on times allowed for Western trade and residence.
 - Trade was restricted to Guangzhou.
 - All trade was to be conducted through the Co Hong, a group of thirteen Chinese merchants.
 - The Chinese language was not to be taught.
 - Restrictions were placed on the use of Chinese labour.
 - Warships were not allowed in the entrance of Guangzhou or the Humen.
- (b) At first the Western powers tried to change the Guangzhou system by diplomatic means. When this failed they used force followed by the imposition of unequal treaties.
 - The British sent several missions to China to negotiate new trading arrangements. These included the McCartney mission of 1793,

Lord Amherst's in 1816 and Lord Napier's in 1834. They all failed to obtain greater concessions.

- Thus Britain and, later, other Western powers resorted to force. Britain fought China in 1839-42 and 1856-60; France fought China in 1856-60; Britain and France took China's tribute states in South-east Asia between 1862 and 1893.
- China's military defeats enabled the Western powers to impose a series of unequal treaties upon China. These included the Treaties of Nanjing (1842) and Wangxia (1843); the Beijing Convention (1860) and the Boxer Protocol (1901).
- These treaties combined with the West's military actions significantly changed the Guangzhou system:
 - more ports were opened, for example Xiamen, Fuzhou;
 - Westerners were allowed to remain in China all year long;
 - the trading monopoly of the Co Hong disappeared;
 - the Western powers were able to use Chinese labour, indeed even 'export it';
 - restrictions on Western warships were lifted.
- (c) It is fair to argue that by 1901 the Western powers had effective economic control of China. This was the result of the West's control of China's international trade and of their domination of much of the eastern seaboard of China.
 - In 1842 a five per cent tariff was imposed on imports into China which could not be changed unless both China and the West agreed. Thus, the West had effective control of Chinese protectionist policy.
 - This meant that China could not protect her own producers from cheap Western imports which were being dumped on the Chinese market. As a result, China could not prevent the decline of her own industry.
 - The unequal treaties forced China to open ports she previously had wanted closed to the West.
 - China lost control over her balance of payments. She was not allowed to stop the opium trade which led to an outflow of bullion from China. Most unequal treaties demanded indemnities from China which further aggravated the external payments situation.
 - In the Treaty of Nanjing (1842) Britain inserted a 'most favoured nation' clause. This meant that any concession granted to another nation was automatically granted to Britain. Other Western powers also demanded a 'most favoured nation' clause. Thus, China lost the

power to discriminate between her trading partners.

- During the latter part of the nineteenth century, some Western powers gained 'concessions'. This gave the power concerned exclusive rights to certain areas of China or to certain produce of an area, for example mining. China was therefore losing control of her resources.

Clearly, by 1901, the Western powers had managed to achieve effective control of China's economic life.

Question 3

- (a) What happened during the Taiping Rebellion? (5 marks)
- (b) In what ways did the West affect both the outbreak and the outcome of that rebellion? (8 marks)
- (c) To what extent did the Taiping Rebellion affect Chinese government policy? (12 marks)

Answering the question

- (a) The Taiping Rebellion lasted from the late 1840s to 1864.
- At the beginning the rebellion, led by Hung Hsiu-chun, was very popular among the peasants. The Taipings emphasised discipline and virtue in sharp contrast to government troops, for example looting and raping were forbidden and there were strict codes of morality.
 - By the mid-1850s large parts of southern and central China were under Taiping control.
 - By the late 1850s the discipline and morality disappeared, cliques formed and Hung's stubbornness hurt the movement.
 - The Taipings were eventually defeated by Zeng Guofan's forces.
- (b) The West contributed to the outbreak of the rebellion in two significant ways:
- Western pressure on China, seen in the first Opium War and the unequal treaties of the 1840s, weakened the hold that the Manchu government had on power. Furthermore, it indicated to many in China that the 'mandate of heaven' had been lost and thus rebellion was justified.
 - The West also contributed to the rebellion in a philosophical way. Although Christianity was beginning to spread throughout China it was often misunderstood by the peasants. The Taiping leader, Hung, in fact believed that

he was Jesus' brother and that he had been instructed by God to establish the Heavenly Kingdom of Peace, i.e. Taiping.

The Western powers helped to bring the rebellion to an end in 1864. General Gordon's 'ever victorious army' sided with the forces of Zeng Guofan and together they defeated the Taiping forces.

Western interference was not an act of altruism but rather the realisation that Western interests would be better served by the maintenance of a weak central government than a splintered China.

- (c) The Taiping Rebellion and the continuing Western involvement in China presented the Chinese government with a dilemma:

- either adopt Western methods and ideas and risk the destruction of traditional society and culture;
- or reject the West, hold fast to traditional ways and risk defeat in the face of further aggression.

The government decided to try and adopt Western methods but retain Chinese values. The result was a half-hearted modernisation and the forces opposing change triumphed.

- The reform programme was known as the self-strengthening movement and occurred during the reign of Tongzhi and Guangxu.
- Men like Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang supported such things as the Shanghai arsenal, officer training schools, and the adding of maths, science and languages to the curriculum.
- Some government-run enterprises began in mining.
- However, the disaster of the Taiping Rebellion was not enough to convince the opponents of change that reform was needed. The mandarins opposed Western education, fearing a loss of their privileged position. Most Chinese believed China would be stronger by emphasising traditional values. Above all this the Empress Dowager Cixi stood firmly against change and her influence was decisive. Cixi held effective control of China from 1861 to 1889 and from 1898 to her death in 1908.

Clearly, despite the scale of the Taiping Rebellion, it proved to have only a marginal effect on government policy—the traditional values and beliefs continued to hold sway.