**10. THE CHING DYNASTY (1644-1911)**

Like the Mongols in the 13th century, the Manchus (formerly the Juchen) were barbarians who succeeded in ruling the whole of China, but, unlike the 13th-century conquerers, the sinicized Manchus made their rule more acceptable to the Chinese. As a result, Ch'ing rule lasted 267 years, compared with 89 years for the Yuan.

**The Pax Sinica 1683-1795**

The Manchus took Peking with relative ease in 1644, but they did not gain control of the whole of China until 1683. Thereafter, the Manchus enjoyed more than a century of peace and prosperity, a period that came to be called Pax Sinica (Peace in China). By the end of that period the dynasty had reached the height of its power.

Two strong emperors who were considered models of all Confucian ideals ruled for much of this period: the emperors K'ang-hsi (1661-1722) and Ch'ien-lung (1735-96). By recruiting the well-educated in government and promoting Confucian scholarship, these two Manchu rulers firmly established themselves as Confucian rulers in China. Outside China, both were successful conquerers. All of the Ch'ing empire's vast territories, including Mongolia in the north, Xinjiang in the northwest, and Tibet in the southwest, were incorporated into the expanding Chinese Empire during this period.

The Ch'ing adopted the Ming system of government with two exceptions: the insertion of Manchu power at the head of the Chinese state, and the creation of the Grand Council in the emperor Yung-cheng's reign. The Grand Council superseded the Grand Secretariat and became the most powerful body in the government. In provincial government, the Ch'ing created 18 provinces from the 15 Ming provinces. A governor, usually Chinese, headed each province, and a governor-general, usually a Manchu before the 19th century, headed every two provinces. Local landlords and administrators were generally left alone if they submitted to the new rule.

The K'ang-hsi era marked the height of Jesuit success in China, with more than 200,000 converts. Thereafter, Jesuit influence waned rapidly because of the rivalry between the Jesuits and other Catholic missionaries and the so-called Rites Controversy, which concerned the Jesuits' willingness to tolerate the converts' performance of ceremonies honoring Confucius. The pope denounced the Jesuit view and prohibited the ceremonies.

The long period of peace and prosperity had some adverse effects on Chinese society. There was a shortage of land, resulting from an increase in the population from 100 million to 300 million at the end of the 18th century. Decadence and corruption spread in the imperial court. There was a decline of the Manchu military spirit, and the Ch'ing military organization deteriorated. The long and illustrious reign of the emperor Ch'ien-lung was marred by the first of many serious rebellions in the Ch'ing era, the White Lotus Rebellion from 1796 to 1804. It was not put down for ten years, and China entered the 19th century rocked by revolt. More devastating were the incursions of Western powers, which shook the foundation of the empire. (See Ch'ien-lung)

**19th Century Invasions and rebellions**.

The first of many Sino-Western conflicts in the 19th century was the first Opium War, fought from 1839 to 1842. It was more than a dispute over the opium trade in China; it was a contest between China as the representative of ancient Eastern civilization and Britain as the forerunner of the modern West. Free trade advocates in the West had protested against the restrictive trading system in force at Canton. They demanded free trade in China, the opening of more ports to Westerners, and the establishment of treaty relations. The Treaty of Nanjing, which ended the first Opium War, opened five ports to the British--the first of the "treaty ports" where Western nations were granted various privileges. A second Opium War, also known as the Arrow War, fought from 1856 to 1860, pitted China against Great Britain and France.

The Opium Wars disrupted the old life and economy of southern China. A number of peasant revolts occurred in the 1840s, coming to a head in the Taiping Rebellion, the biggest rebellion in Chinese history. The leader of the Taipings was Hung Hsiu-ch'uan, from a village near Canton. Believing that God had chosen him to save the world, he adopted a confused version of Christianity as his guiding doctrine and set out to overthrow the Manchus and change society. The combination of religious fervor and anti-Manchu sentiment attracted a following that rose to over 30,000 within a short time. In 1852 the T'ai-p'ing T'ienkuo (Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace) was proclaimed. In 1853 the rebels took the city of Nanjing and made it their capital.

Other revolts erupted at about the same time: the Nien Rebellion in the northeast and Muslim rebellions in the southwest and the northwest. Fearing a linkup among the rebels that would engulf all of China, the Ch'ing government created regional armies manned entirely by Chinese and commanded by Chinese of the scholar-gentry class. The commanders of the new forces, all loyal supporters of the dynasty--Tseng Kuo-fan, Tso TSong-t'ang, and Li Hung-chang--suppressed the rebels with the help of Western weapons and leadership. They annihilated the Taipings in 1864, the Niens by 1868, and the Muslims by 1873.

The internal rebellions were suppressed, but external threats continued. After a brief period of "cooperation" in the 1860s, foreign powers renewed their assault on China, reacting to widespread antiforeign violence. Again, China became embroiled in a series of conflicts: the Tianjin Massacre with France in 1870, the Ili crisis with Russia in 1879, the Sino-French War from 1884 to 1885, and the Sino-Japanese War from 1894 to 1895. Each brought further humiliation and greater impairment of sovereignty. In the last two incidents territory was lost, and an indemnity had to be paid to the victor in the Sino-Japanese War.

**Opium Wars**

China in the 19th century was beset by internal turmoil. It was easy prey to more powerful nations that wanted to exploit every advantage to profit from trade. Chief among these advantages was the opium trade. Official Chinese resistance to opium resulted in two trade wars in which Great Britain, France, the United States, and Russia gained significant commercial privileges. These conflicts were the first Opium War from 1839 to 1842 between China and Britain and the second Opium War (1856-60) fought by China against Britain and France.

Opium had been introduced into China in the 7th century. By the early 18th century opium addiction had become such a severe problem that the government tried to prohibit trade in it. The prohibition was a failure. When the British discovered the value of the opium trade in 1773, they determined to benefit. The Chinese paid the British for the opium, and the British in turn used the money as part payment for goods bought from the Chinese.

In 1839 the Chinese government made a concerted effort to suppress the opium trade. All the opium warehouses in Canton were confiscated. This serious effort, followed by a minor military incident, led to hostilities. In February 1840 the British sent an expedition against Canton.

The conflict, in which the more powerful British were victorious, was ended by the Treaty of Nanjing, which was signed on Aug. 29, 1842, and a supplemental treaty of Oct. 8, 1843. These treaties provided for payment of an indemnity of 21 million dollars by the Chinese, cession of five ports for British trade and residence, and the right of British citizens in China to be tried in British courts. It was at this time that Britain gained control of Hong Kong.

In October 1856 the Canton police boarded a British-registered ship, the Arrow, and charged its crew with smuggling. This incident led to the second war. In this war the British were joined by the French, and an Anglo-French force occupied Canton late in 1857. The Treaty of Tianjin in 1858 temporarily halted the fighting, opened new trading ports, allowed residence in Peking for foreign emissaries, gave freedom of movement to Christian missionaries, and permitted travel in the interior.

The Chinese refusal to ratify the treaty led to an Anglo-French attack on Peking and the burning of the Summer Palace. In 1860 the Chinese signed the Convention of Peking by which they promised to observe the 1858 treaty.

**Taiping Rebellion**

In terms of casualties, it was one of the worst civil wars in history. More than 20 million--possibly more than 30 million--died, and 17 provinces were ravaged by the Taiping Rebellion. This was the most serious of several internal disturbances that took place in China between 1850 and 1873 and that seriously weakened the Ch'ing Dynasty and helped prepare the way for the revolutions of the 20th century.

The leader of the rebellion was Hung Hsiu-ch'uan, an unsuccessful civil-service candidate who came under the influence of fundamentalist Christianity. Thinking of himself as a son of God sent to reform China, he helped found the Association of God Worshipers in about 1846. Preaching that all property should be held by the people, he attracted many followers in Guangxi Province. By January 1851, when the rebellion began, Hung's ranks had swelled from several thousand ragged peasants to more than 1 million disciplined and eager soldiers. They took the city of Nanjing in March 1853 and made it their capital. For several years the rebel armies dominated the Yangtze River valley. They failed, however, to take Shanghai, where the defenders were commanded by an American named Frederick Townsend Ward and the British general known as Chinese Gordon . By 1862 the movement was losing steam, weakened by internal strife and defections. Nanjing fell in July 1864 to the army of Gen. Tseng Kuo-fan, and Hung committed suicide. Sporadic resistance continued for four more years.

**Late 19th Century Revolutionary ideas and organizations.**

The reforms that were sponsored by the imperial government were too little and too late. A drastic change was necessary. The idea of overthrowing the Manchus was suggested by Liang Ch'i-ch'ao in his concept of hsin min (new people). Publishing a magazine in Japan, where he had fled after the Hundred Days, Liang called for the Chinese people to renew themselves and also indicated that the Chinese nation was distinct and separate from the ruling dynasty of the Manchus. Although he did not advocate overthrowing the dynasty, the message was quickly picked up by the more radical leaders who were already leaning toward revolution.

One such leader was Sun Yat-sen, who is now revered as the father of modern China by Nationalists and Communists alike. Born into a peasant family near Canton, the traditional stronghold of anti-Manchu rebels, Sun followed a traditional Chinese path during his early years. He was educated in Hawaii, converted to Christianity, and had a short-lived medical career before switching to politics and attempting to propose a reform program to Li Hung-chang in 1894. After forming a secret revolutionary society and plotting an unsuccessful uprising in Canton in 1894, Sun began a long period of exile outside China. He gained wide recognition as a revolutionary leader in 1896, when his arrest in the Chinese legation in London and subsequent rescue were reported sensationally in newspaper articles.

In 1905, in Japan, he brought together several revolutionary groups and formed the Revolutionary Alliance Society. Its program consisted of the now famous Three People's Principles: nationalism, freeing all China from foreign control; democracy, overthrowing the Manchus and introducing a democratic political system; and people's livelihood. Although Sun himself could not live in China, members of the alliance infiltrated many social organizations there. The revolutionary spirit that had been developed by Sun became especially high among students' and soldiers' groups.

**The Empress Dowager**

TZ'U-HSI (1835-1908). Known in the West as the empress dowager, Tz'u-hsi dominated the political life of China for nearly 50 years. As ruler acting for child emperors, she and her cohorts brought a measure of stability to their nation. But, under her, the government was dishonest and did not make changes that were needed to benefit the people. This eventually led to the end of the Ch'ing Dynasty, which ruled from 1644 to 1911, and a revolution.

Tz'u-hsi was born in Peking on Nov. 29, 1835. She became a consort of the emperor Hsien-feng (ruled 1850-61) and mother of the emperor T'ung-chih. When T'ung-chih became emperor in 1861, he was only 6. She and another consort became co-regents along with a brother of the former emperor. Under this three-way rule the Taiping Rebellion was ended. Other disturbances were put down, and some modernization was brought to China.

Tz'u-hsi gradually increased her power within the ruling coalition, and even when the emperor matured she continued to control the government. After the young emperor's untimely death, she saw to it that her 3-year-old nephew was named as heir, though this violated succession law. Thus the two dowagers continued acting as regents. The other dowager died--presumably murdered--in 1881, and Tz'u-hsi ruled alone. From 1889 to 1898 she lived in apparent retirement in the summer palace. The new emperor's attempts at reform after losing the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), however, brought her back into action--determined to stave off any changes. In 1899 she backed the officials promoting the Boxer Rebellion. After China's defeat at the hand of foreign troops, she fled the capital and accepted humiliating peace terms. She returned in 1902 and belatedly tried to install the reforms she had once opposed. Before her death, on Nov. 15, 1908, she had the emperor poisoned. His successor was a 2-year old who was forced from the throne four years later.

**Boxer Rebellion**

In the summer of 1900 members of a secret society roamed northeastern China in bands, killing Europeans and Americans and destroying buildings owned by foreigners. They called themselves I-ho ch'uan, or "Righteous and Harmonious Fists." They practiced boxing skills that they believed made them impervious to bullets. To Westerners they became known as the Boxers, and their uprising was called the Boxer Rebellion.

Most Boxers were peasants or urban thugs from northern China who resented the growing influence of Westerners in their land. They organized themselves in 1898, and in the same year the Chinese government--then ruled by the Ch'ing Dynasty--secretly allied with the Boxers to oppose such outsiders as Christian missionaries and European businessmen. The Boxers failed to drive foreigners out of China, but they set the stage for the successful Chinese revolutionary movement of the early 20th century.

Foreigners had entered China during an era of imperialism. In the late 1800s Great Britain and other European nations, the United States, Russia, and Japan scrambled for spheres of influence there. In some cases they seized Chinese territories, but usually they only sought the riches of trade and commercial enterprise. At the same time, Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries tried to convert the Chinese to Christianity. These outsiders were resented and feared by the Chinese, who saw Western religion and business practices as a threat to their traditional ways.

By May of 1900, Boxers were wandering the countryside and attacking Western missionaries and Chinese converts to Christianity. In June an expeditionary force, made up of Russian, British, German, French, American, and Japanese troops, was organized to proceed to Peking (now Beijing), put down the rebellion, and protect Western nationals.

The Chinese dowager empress Tz'u-hsi, the aunt of Emperor Kuang-hsu, ordered her troops to block the advance of this expedition. The foreigners were turned back. Meanwhile, Boxers were rampaging in Peking, burning down churches and the houses of Westerners, and killing Chinese Christians. Foreign troops then seized Chinese coastal forts to insure access to Peking. Enraged, the dowager empress ordered the death of all foreigners in China. The German minister to China was assassinated, and Boxer rebels began an eight-week attack on the walled foreign compound in Peking. (See Tz'u-hsi)

In response, the allied foreign governments sent some 19,000 soldiers to Peking, capturing the city on Aug. 14, 1900. The invaders looted the city and routed the Boxers, while the empress and her court fled to the north. By the time the rebellion ended, at least 250 foreigners had been killed. It took a year for the parties to the conflict to agree on a settlement, which was entitled the Peace of Peking. This protocol, which was signed in September 1901, was dictated by the Western powers and Japan in such a way as to humiliate China. Heavy fines were levied against the Chinese government, and existing commercial treaties were amended in favor of the Western powers. The foreign coastal defenses were dismantled.

The failure of the Boxer Rebellion to eject the West and the humiliation of the Chinese by the terms of the Peace of Peking generated more support for nationalist revolutionaries. In 1911 the Ch'ing Dynasty collapsed. Revolutionaries led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen then took over the Chinese government, ending more than 2,000 years of monarchy.