

*An Indian's Attempt
to
Understand China*



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Preface

A few weeks back, there was a group discussion about Global Political Scenario. The discussion soon turned to China. A friend, who has travelled to China a couple of times, remarked that the Chinese people have internalized communism and the resulting dictatorial regime. As per him even in private conversations Chinese people do not complain about lack of democratic freedoms; they accept state authority as a fact of life and do not wish to raise a voice against it. He felt that Mao Tse-tung's espousal of power lives on in the hearts of Chinese people as a belief system. This was new to me. Nevertheless, I told him that probably the mindset of Chinese people accepting dictatorial regimes predates Mao Tse-tung. He agreed that the possibility could not be rejected.

The conversation made me realize my ignorance about Chinese history or for that matter about China in general. I decided to learn Chinese history. As I started reading, I was fascinated.

Every country in the world has problems. But, one keeps building myths around countries. This has happened more in the case of China because of ignorance about China. Indians tend to build in their minds a larger-than-life image of China. I was no exception. My study helped me build a closer-to-life image of China.

As I learnt about China, I wanted to share my knowledge with my friends and countrymen. The original idea was to write a short article on the subject. However, as I started writing I realized that the subject was too vast for an article. The net result is this book.

As I present this book, let me make it very clear that this has been written by an Indian for his countrymen. My perspective remains that of an Indian. I agree with India's position that occupation of Tibet by People's Republic of China is illegal and wrong. For me, our neighbor is Tibet and not China.

Writing history of a country (about whom one's knowledge is superficial) is a challenging task. I make no claims about accuracy or perfection. There may well be mistakes or even blunders. I most humbly request my readers to please point out to me any errors whether of facts or language or presentation.

As I said above, this book has been written by a patriotic Indian for his brethren. I do hope that the book will help Indians understand China better. I also hope that with better understanding, India is in a better position to stand up to the difficulties created by China.

Anil Chawla
11 August 2017

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Notes:

1. CE refers to Common Era (also referred to as AD). BCE refers to Before Common Era (also referred to as BC).
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3. The author has no intentions to hurt the sentiments or feelings of any person(s) or class of persons or nation(s) or persons of any nationality. In case due to any statement or opinion in this book, any person is hurt in any manner, the author expresses his regrets for the same.
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A newspaper clipping from 1962 (Photo Courtesy: Wikimedia Commons)

A. Introduction

China is India's big neighbor (even though our neighbor is Tibet and not China). More than one generation of Indians has grown up hearing stories of bravery of Indian soldiers during the war of 1962 – how all the courage and daredevilry of Indian soldiers proved futile and India lost the war. The shadow of defeat has hung over our minds for more than five and half decades. Most Indians, who know history, are well aware that the defeat was a result of failures and mistakes of political leadership of post-independence India. Yet, a defeat is a defeat and it leaves a psychological scar that is difficult to erase. Apparently, China knows this aspect of present-day Indian mind and they keep referring to 1962 through well-planted stories in Chinese media.

Indian psychological scars have not been cleaned despite the fact that India defeated China in 1967 September at Nathu La. Of course, the clashes at Nathu La were not a full-blown war. But they were no minor skirmish. According to Indian Defense Ministry sources, 88 killed and 163 were wounded on the Indian side while 340 killed and 450 were wounded on the Chinese side, during the two incidents in September and October 1967 (Source: Wikipedia). These numbers are not small. The real reason why the victory at Nathu La has failed to register in Indian psyche is due to the way Indians treat their own history. We, Indians do not believe in teaching glorious chapters of our history to our children. Our history books have no mention of Nathu La. Average Indian has heard about the war of 1962 from some film or from some emotional songs. There are no films about our victory at Nathu La. So, public awareness of Nathu La victory is negligible.

A country that does not know her own history cannot be expected to know history of her neighbors. Outside a handful of academicians, Indian knowledge of Chinese history is absolutely zero. China, for Indians is either a big enigma or a big monster to be feared. China's size scares us even though Japan, a much smaller country as compared to India, is not scared of China. In a way fear of China is a mixture of the fear of unknown combined with the psychological scars of 1962. It is high time that India got over these fears. Process of getting rid of fears needs to necessarily start with developing an understanding of one's adversary. Indians need to understand China – not just in military or economic or political terms but in terms of history, culture, religion and philosophy. Indians need to get below the skin of China and understand the Chinese mind.

B. Ancient & Medieval History of China

China, like India, is an ancient civilization. China has a recorded history of more than 3500 years. Let us take a quick look at the history of China.

| Dynasty | From-To | Duration Years | Cause of End |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--|
| Shang Dynasty | 1600 to 1100 BCE | 500 | Army betrayed and joined attacking Zhou king |
| Zhou Dynasty | 1100 to 256 BCE | 844 | 770-256 Qin became powerful; Zhou disintegrated |
| Qin Dynasty | 221 to 206 BCE | 15 | Death of Shi Huangdi led to turmoil |
| Han Dynasty | 206 BCE to 220 CE | 426 | Peasant uprisings |
| Period of Disunion | 221 to 589 CE | 368 | Reuniting of China by Sui emperor |
| Sui Dynasty | 589 to 618 CE | 29 | Revolt due to construction of Grand Canal |
| T'ang Dynasty | 618 to 907 CE | 289 | Defeat by Arabs; Fights between palace eunuchs and regional governors; Revolts by commanders; Peasant uprising |
| Song Empire | 960 to 1279 CE | 319 | Defeats against Liao dynasty, Tanguts, Vietnam, Jurchen and finally Mongols (Yuan dynasty). |
| Yuan Dynasty - Kublai Khan | 1252 - 1279 CE | 27 | Famine and floods; Peasant uprisings |
| Ming Dynasty | 1368 - 1644 CE | 276 | Collapse of governance; Power of eunuchs; Rise of Jurchen; Peasant uprisings |
| Qing Dynasty | 1644 - 1912 CE | 268 | Corruption and neglect; Taiping Civil War; Other Rebellions; Opium Wars |

B1. Shang Dynasty – 1600-1100 BCE

City of An-yang was the centre of Shang Dynasty. The area controlled by Shang rulers was relatively small, but Shang cultural influence spread through a large part of central China.



Location of Shang Dynasty

By Lamassu Design Gurdjeff (talk) - Image by Author, CC BY-SA 3.0,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=10381870>

The stability of the country during the Shang Dynasty led to numerous cultural advances such as industrialized bronze casting, the calendar, religious rituals, and writing. Shang rulers introduced many elements which have remained characteristic of Chinese culture. Bronze chopsticks, for example, have been found in a Shang tomb. Shang practiced worship of ancestors – a tradition that the Chinese follow till today.

In Shang society ancestor worship was limited to the king and a few noble families. The good will of the king's ancestors was considered crucial to the whole of society, because they were considered as community's link with the gods. Over centuries the king started being known as the Son of Heaven.

In subsequent dynasties, and particularly after the time of Confucius, ancestor worship spread downwards through the Chinese community. It became a crucial part of the culture of the Confucian civil servants, the mandarins. Even at present, the shrine to ancestors – the Temple of Heaven in Beijing – is the focal point of China's national religion.



B2. Zhou Dynasty – 1100-256 BCE

Around about 1050 BCE, Zhou dynasty was established in China. It came from a frontier kingdom between civilization and marauding tribes, westward of An-yang. After forming a confederation of other neighboring states, the Zhou overwhelmed the Shang rulers. The new capital was at Ch'ang-an (now known as Xi'an), close to the Wei river. Zhou controlled the entire area of central China, from the Huang Ho to the Yangtze. They did so through a network of numerous subordinate kingdoms, in a system akin to feudalism. Tension and constant warfare gave the period its character.

A lasting result of these troubled centuries was the adoption of ideas of **K'ung Fu Tzu**, known to the west as Confucius. Confucius was essentially a teacher of worldly principles. Confucian ideals are deeply conservative, based on an unchanging pattern of respect upwards, to those higher in rank (older members of a family, senior members of a community), which brings with it a corresponding obligation downwards. The pattern is extended outside this immediate world, with the highest respect accorded to the dead - in the form of ancestor worship. Confucianism is more like a utopian bureaucracy, with responsible Confucians on hand at every level to oil the machinery of state.

Confucius ran a school in his later years, proclaiming it open to talent regardless of wealth. His young graduates, more intellectually agile than their contemporaries, were much in demand as advisers in the competing kingdoms of China. So the master's ideas spread at a practical level, and his disciples gained wide acceptance

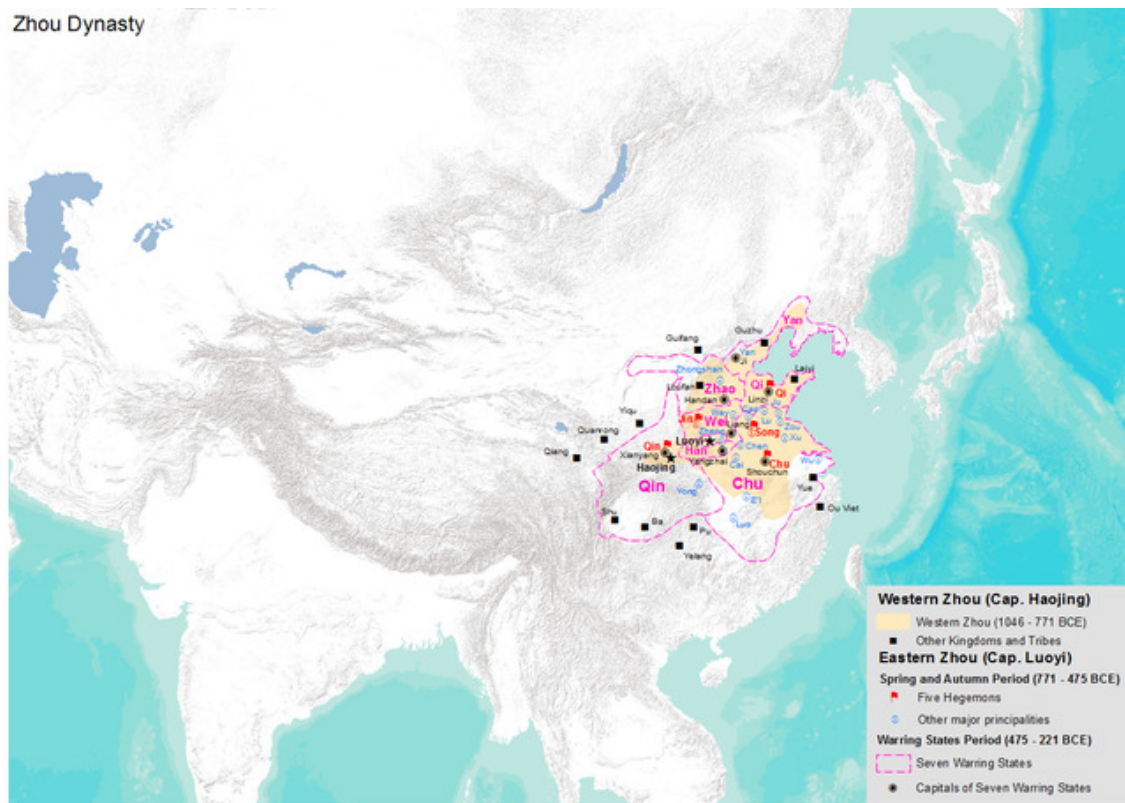
as civil servants. Known in China as scholar officials, they acquired the name 'mandarin' in western languages. The idea of a career open to talent became a basic characteristic of Chinese society. By the 2nd century BCE China's famous examination system had been adopted, launching the world's first meritocracy.

Daoism merged around the same time as Confucianism was gaining ground. Laozi, the supposed founder of Daoism, is traditionally believed to have been an older contemporary of Confucius. The small book which he is supposed to have written dates from no earlier than the 4th century BC. It is an anthology of short passages, collected under the title ***Daodejing***. Immensely influential over the centuries, it is the basis for China's alternative religion. *Daodejing* means 'The Way and its Power'. The way is the way of nature, and the power is that of the man who gives up ambition and surrenders his whole being to nature.

Confucianism and Daoism are like two sides of the same coin. They are opposite and complementary. They represent town and country, the practical and the spiritual, the rational and the romantic. A Chinese official is a Confucian while he goes about the business of government; if he loses his job, he will retire to the country as a Daoist; but a new offer of employment may rapidly restore his Confucianism.

Zhou period of Chinese history led to rise of a third system of thought – **Legalism**, which is a much more brutal philosophy. Expressed in a work of the 4th century BC, the **Book of Lord Shang**, responded to lawlessness of the age by demanding more teeth for law. A strict system of rewards and punishments is to be imposed upon society. But the ratio is to be one reward to every nine punishments. The Book of Lord Shang proclaims, "Punishment produces force, force produces strength, strength produces awe, awe produces virtue. Virtue has its origin in punishments".

The **trio of Confucianism, Daoism and Legalism** has defined thought of kings and populace of China till the present date. While there are no kings today, the underlying thought process in China continues to have its roots in the trio.



Zhou Dynasty

By SY - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=60693860>

In 771 BCE the Zhou were driven east from Xi'an, by a combination of barbarian tribes and some of their own dependent kingdoms. They re-established themselves at Loyang, where they remained the nominal rulers of China (known as Eastern Zhou) until 256 BCE. During this long period their status was largely ceremonial and religious. Their main role was to continue the sacrifices to their royal ancestors.

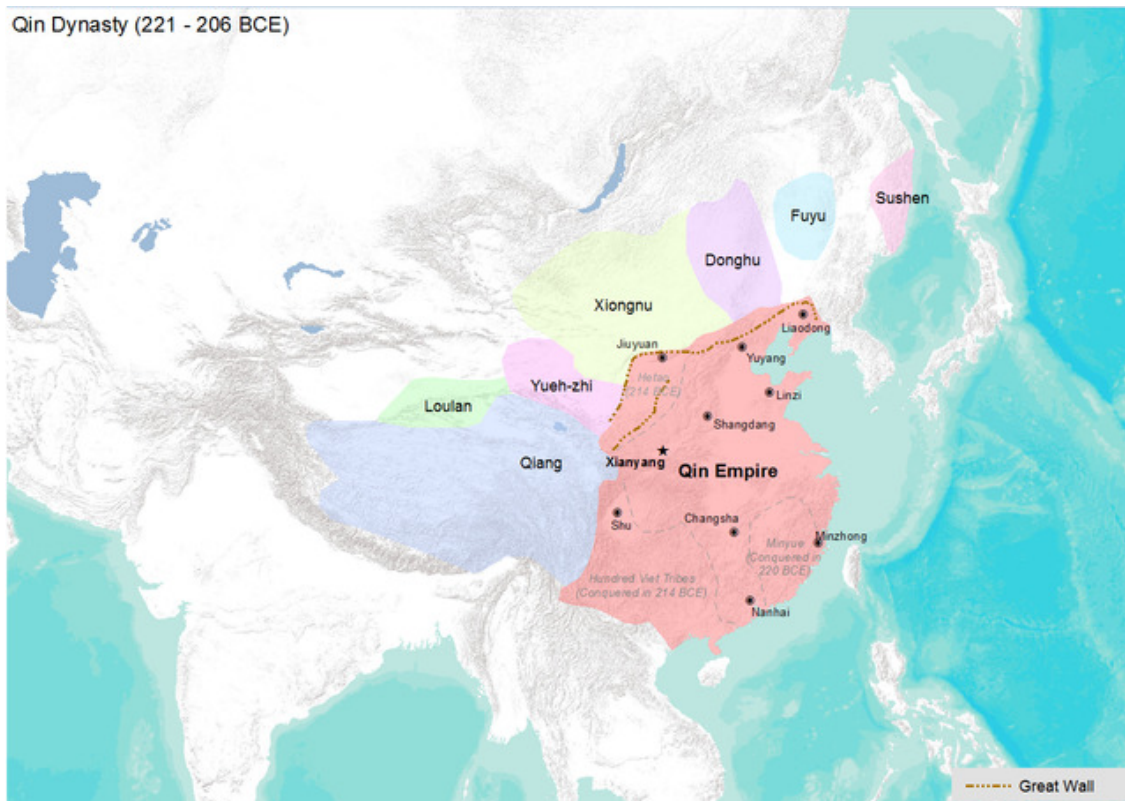
The long history of the Zhou Dynasty is normally divided in two different periods: Western Zhou (1046-771 BCE) and Eastern Zhou (770-256 BCE), so called following the move of the Zhou capital eastwards where it was safer from invasion.

B3. Qin Dynasty – 221-206 BCE

By the 4th century BCE the numerous Zhou kingdoms had been reduced, by warfare and conquest, to just seven. The most vigorous of these was the Qin (pronounced as Chin) kingdom, occupying the Wei valley.

The Qin had learnt from their tribal neighbors how to fight from the saddle, instead of the cumbersome war chariots used by the Zhou kingdoms. Legalism gave them a healthy disregard for Confucian pretensions of more sophisticated kingdoms.

In 256 BCE the Qin overran Zhou, bringing to an abrupt end a dynasty which had lasted on paper more than 800 years. In the following decades they conquered each of the other five kingdoms. The last was subdued in 221 BCE.



By SY - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=60693858>

The whole of central China was for the first time under a single unified control, in effect creating a Chinese empire. The Qin ruler who had achieved it gave himself an appropriate new title, **Shi Huangdi, the 'first sovereign emperor'**. His Qin kingdom (pronounced 'Chin') probably provides the name which most of the world has used ever since for this whole region of the earth - China. Some scholars dispute this and believe that the word China has Sanskrit origins.

Shi Huangdi government was highly bureaucratic, and was administered by a hierarchy of officials, all serving the First Emperor. The Qin put into practice the teachings of Han Feizi, allowing the First Emperor to control all of his territories, including those recently conquered.

All aspects of life were standardized, from measurements and language to more practical details, such as the length of chariot axles.



An artist's portrayal of Qin Shi Huang's book burnings Source: libcom.org

Shi Huangdi rapidly sets in place a dictatorship of uniformity, based on terror. Much use is made of a scale of five standard punishments - branding on the forehead, cutting off the nose, cutting off the feet, castration and death. The only approved commodities in this empire were items of practical use. These did not include books or Confucians. In 213 BCE it was ordered that all books (except those on medicine, agriculture and divination) were to be burnt. A year later 460 Confucian scholars were executed.

The burning of books was meant to prevent the subjects from learning other philosophies and ways of thinking that were not approved by the government. Books, at this point in time, were only writings on bamboo sticks that were bound together. This event caused a great historical loss of many philosophical ideas with only the official philosophy of the government, legalism, surviving.

In many ways, Mao Tse-tung (Chairman Mao, Chinese Communist Revolutionary, 1893-1976) has often been compared to Qin Shi Huang. Both were ruthless leaders who singly controlled all of China. In 1958, during one of Mao's speeches, he himself compared him to Qin Shi Huang. "He only buried 460 scholars alive, while we buried 46,000 scholars alive," he said, "You accuse us of acting like Qin Shi Huang, but you are wrong; we surpassed him 100 times."



The Great Wall of China by Qin

By Ksyrie at the English language Wikipedia, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=2913336>

Notwithstanding the horrors of Qin Emperor's reign, the centralizing effort of the Qin ruler did bequeath some lasting benefits to China. The Chinese understood and realized a political ideal – the natural condition of their isolated land mass is to be a single entity. A practical token of this ideal was left by the Qin emperor in the form of the **Great Wall of China** – a boundary which securely defines China on the only side where nature does not already do so by mountain, jungle or sea.

The death of the first emperor of China is a great mystery. The only known facts are that he died in 210 BCE in his Palace. At this time, there are two current theories about his death. The first is that he died from an illness and the second being that he was murdered.

Work on mausoleum for the emperor began in 246 BCE soon after Emperor Qin (then aged 13) ascended the throne, and the project eventually involved 700,000 workers. The mausoleum is known for the **Terracotta Army** (Chinese literally: "Soldier-and-horse funerary statues") is a collection of terracotta sculptures depicting the armies of Qin Shi Huang. It is a form of funerary art buried with the emperor and whose purpose was to protect the emperor in his afterlife.



Terracotta Army, Museum of the grave of Qin Shi Huang

By Zossolino - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=48964647>

Turmoil followed the death of Shi Huangdi. During it his chief minister, Li Ssu, received his own dose of Legalist medicine. His downfall was engineered by a palace eunuch, who arranged for him to suffer each of the first four punishments in turn and then, without nose, feet or genitals, to be flogged and cut in two at the waist.

A series of peasant rebellions, resulting from the brutality of the regime, accompanied the rapid collapse of the Qin dynasty. From the chaos there emerged the first undeniably great Chinese dynasty, the Han.

B4. Han Dynasty – 206 BCE – 220 CE

The Han is the first of the five great Chinese dynasties, each of them controlled the entire area of China for a span of several centuries. The others are the T'ang (7th-10th centuries), Song (10th-13th), Ming (14th-17th) and Qing (17th-20th).

The Han was long before any of these, and it lasted - with one minor interruption - longer than any other. At its peak the imperial power stretched from the Pamir Mountains in the west to Korea in the east and to Vietnam in the south. With justification the Han dynasty is mentioned as a golden age, and the Chinese have often described themselves as the 'sons of Han'.

The Han kingdom was one of the five states engulfed between 230 and 221 BCE by the Qin emperor. During the rebellions which followed his death, the Han throne was seized in 206 by a man of peasant origin. After four years of warfare he was strong

enough to claim the Qin empire. As founder of a great dynasty he was later given the title Kaozi - 'exalted ancestor'.

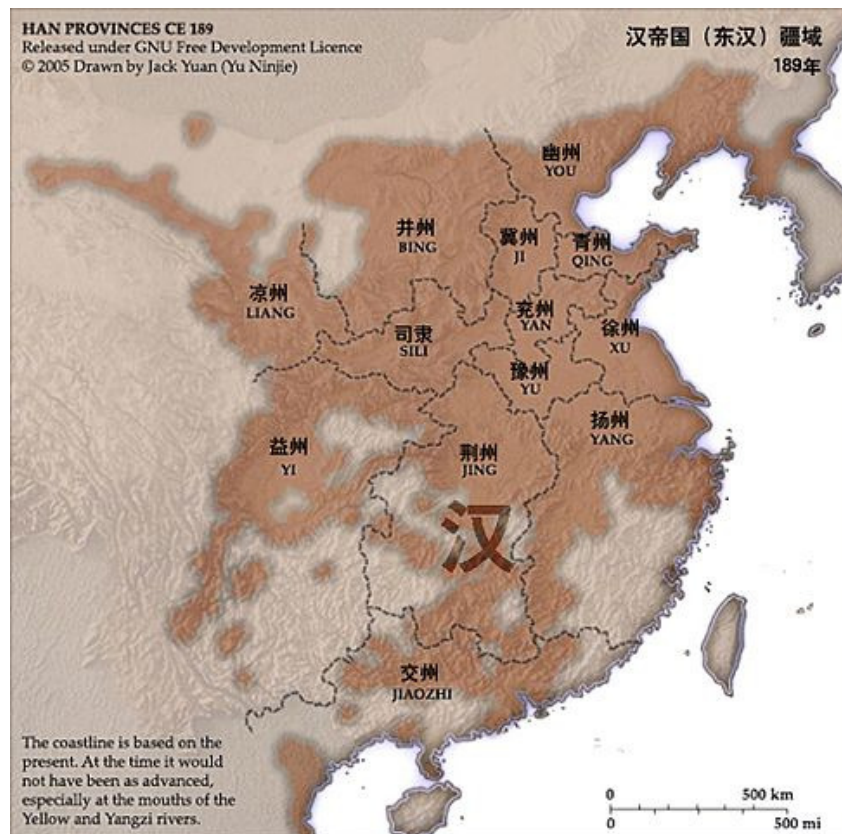
True to his origins, Kaozi was a rough character, with little respect for the Chinese official classes. The first great Chinese historian, Sima Qian, writing a century later, gave a vivid but improbable glimpse of the man. 'Whenever a visitor wearing a Confucian hat comes to see the emperor, he immediately snatches the hat from the visitor's head and pisses in it'.

In due course, confronted by the practical problems of running the empire, Kaozi overcame his aversion to the Confucians. He even commissioned a Confucian to work on the principles of good government. And his successors made the Confucians the scholar-officials of the state. Under the most powerful of the Han emperors, Wudi (the 'martial emperor'), scholars of other disciplines were banned from court and the Confucian examination system was made a cornerstone of the administrative system.

At the peak of the Han dynasty, under the emperor Wudi, the Chinese empire stretched to its greatest expanse and seemed to need for nothing.

Several important technical advances were made in China during the Han dynasty. In warfare, the Chinese skill in working bronze was applied to the invention of the crossbow. Paper was invented, with a traditional date of CE 105.

The emperor of China commanded, in CE 175, that the six main classics of Confucianism be carved in stone. His purpose was to preserve them for posterity the authentic version of the text. But his enterprise had an unexpected result. Confucian scholars were eager to own these important texts. Now, instead of having them expensively written out, they could make their own copies. Simply by laying sheets of paper on the engraved slabs and rubbing all over with charcoal or graphite, they could take away a text in white letters on a black ground. Development of printing from this needed a few more centuries when Buddhists developed it in Korea.



Han Provinces in CE 189

By The original uploader was Kallgan at Chinese Wikipedia - Transferred from zh.wikipedia to Commons by Shizhao using CommonsHelper., CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=11006696>

For the first 200 years of the dynasty, the Han capital was in the Wei valley - at Xi'an (the same site as Ch'ang-An, the first capital of the Zhou dynasty).

During a brief interlude the throne is seized by a usurper, who forms the Hsin or 'new' dynasty (CE 8-23). The imperial family then recovers the throne and moves the capital further east into the plains. The emperors re-establish themselves at Loyang - again the very place to which the Zhou dynasty moved from Xi'an, nearly eight centuries earlier.

The Han reign in Ch'ang-An is usually referred to as Western Han or Former Han, while the period in Loyang is normally called Eastern Han or Later Han.

At Loyang the Han survived for another 200 years, until eventually toppled in 221 CE **after several decades of peasant uprisings - a pattern of events which has been common at the end of Chinese dynasties.**

By the end of 1st century CE one Han emperor after another died either young or without a chosen heir. When an emperor died without sons, a close relative, such as his cousin, was named emperor. In some cases the new ruler was a child or even an

infant, in which case real power was in the hands of a guardian from the family of the empress, since even infant rulers had to have an empress. This scenario led to all types of cunning schemes in the court.

A number of different natural calamities such as tremors, floods, and grasshopper plagues took place during these days and were seen as manifestations of the anger of heaven; prognosticators concluded that the end of the dynasty was close. The situation finally ran out of control. Eunuchs turned into an influential group in the bloody political court conflicts, gaining power and enriching themselves and there was a big protest of thousands of members of the Confucian academy against corruption of the government. In 184 CE a very large peasant uprising known as the Yellow Turban Rebellion (sometimes referred to as the Yellow Scarves Rebellion) threatened the imperial capital.

A warlord named Dong Zhou seized control of the imperial capital in 190 CE and placed a child, Liu Xie, as the new ruler. Liu Xie was also a member of the Han family, but real power was in the hands of Dong Zhou. Dong Zhou killed all the eunuchs and burned Luoyang to the ground. Battle after battle weakened the imperial order until Liu Xie finally abdicated in 220 CE, the last year of the Han period. Wars between warlords and states continued and China would have to wait around 350 years to be unified again.

While no one can deny the great contributions of Han Dynasty to the development of China, Asia and probably the whole world, Later Han is noted more for **palace intrigue, palace eunuchs and corruption in the government** – all of which led to the erosion of the state power and authority.

B5. Period of Disunion – 3rd Century – 6th Century CE

The centuries after the collapse of the Han dynasty were a time of chaos. There were no fewer than ten dynasties and nineteen separate kingdoms during this period. It is often known now as the Six Dynasties (from six in succession which had their capital at Nanjing), or more accurately as the Period of Disunion. During this period, the country saw flourishing of Chinese **Buddhism**.

The first Buddhists reached China, in the 1st century CE. They flourished partly because they were warmly welcomed by the well-established indigenous religion, Daoism.

The Daoists saw the Buddhists as kindred souls, and with good reason. Both religions have priests, monasteries and some form of religious hierarchy. Both believe in a withdrawal from the everyday business of life. Both differ profoundly from the practical, commonsense, worldly philosophy of Confucianism. Soon the two religions became so closely linked that a new Daoist theory evolved. The Buddha is actually **Lao-Tzu** (or Laozi, the founder of Daoism), who was given this other name when he made a secret journey to bring the truth to India.



A stone sculpture of Laozi, located north of Quanzhou at the foot of Mount Qingyuan

By Thanato - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4129186>

Centuries later, when Buddhism was favoured above Daoism by Chinese rulers and when the great wealth of Buddhist monasteries provoked jealousy, the Daoist legend became neatly reversed. If the Buddhists were Daoists under another name, why should they enjoy any special treatment and such spectacular success? Such arguments were the basis of eventual persecution of Buddhists, in the 9th century.



Panorama of the Buddhist sculptures in the main Longmen Grotto

By WikiLaurent - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=12100816>

Buddhist carvings in China stand as visible proof of their wealth and energy. In sheer quantity, if in nothing else, Buddhist carvings in China are a phenomenon in the history of sculpture. One site near the ancient capital of Loyang, at the eastern end of the Silk Road, makes the point very effectively. Any visitor is struck by the profusion of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and Arhats and their guardians. In 1916 a

local magistrate attempted to count them. He arrived at a total of 97,306 separate figures. A more recent study suggested that 142,289 may be nearer the mark.

B6. Sui Dynasty – 589-618 CE

The man, who reunited China in 589, forming the Sui dynasty, was an enthusiastic patron of Buddhism. He took as his title Wen Ti, meaning the Cultured Emperor, and devoted much effort to building Buddhist stupas throughout the land. The local version of a stupa developed into a specifically Chinese form, that of the **pagoda**.



Buddhist temple in Tianjin, China

By Flickr user: gill_penney - <http://www.flickr.com/photos/gillpenney/2218955192/>, CC BY 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=26852882>

His son, Yang Ti (the Emblazoned Emperor), undertook an even more ambitious project, requiring so much forced labour that it contributed to the rapid end of this brief dynasty. But it had economic value and was a stupendous achievement. Yang Ti constructed the **Grand Canal**, linking the Yangtze to the Yellow River and thus to the twin capitals of Loyang and Xi'an.



Grand Canal

By derivative work: Yug (talk)East Asia topographic map.png: Ksiom - East_Asia_topographic_map.png, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=5311435>

By Groverlynn - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=51142376>

B7. T'ang Dynasty – 618-907 CE

Rebellion broke out against the second Sui emperor in 613, partly provoked by the burden of constructing his Grand Canal. In 616, fleeing from his capital at Xi'an, he and his court were towed down the canal to temporary safety in his specially designed barges. Two years later he was assassinated by his own troops.

Meanwhile one of the emperor's high officials had seized power in Xi'an. By 618 he was in a position to declare himself the founder of a new dynasty, the T'ang. China entered its most dynamic era, a period rivaled only by the first two centuries of the Han dynasty.

Chinese culture under the T'ang reached new heights in ceramics and literature. The Chinese style also influenced Korea and Japan, and the two also gave an increasingly warm welcome to Chinese Buddhism. Imperial control now extended once again from desert oases along the Silk Road in the northwest to parts of Manchuria in the northeast and to Vietnam in the south.



T'ang Dynasty c. 700

By Ian Kiu - Tang Dynasty 700 AD from "The T'ang Dynasty, 618-906 A.D.-Boundaries of 700 A.D." Albert Herrmann (1935). History and Commercial Atlas of China. Harvard University Press., CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4641484>

The T'ang in Decline – 751-906 CE

With the exception of printing, the great T'ang achievements took place in the first half of the dynasty. This is a repetitive pattern of Chinese history, for the vigor of the founding emperor of a dynasty - a self-made man - can rarely be matched by descendants who grow up in a palace environment, pampered by eunuchs and shielded from practical experience.

The T'ang were also unfortunate in their neighbors. For the first time since communication with the west was established, during the Han dynasty, there was an expansionist new power on the global scene. The Arabs, with their Muslim faith, had the vitality traditionally considered in China to be characteristic of a new dynasty.

By the mid-8th century, with the Arabs firmly in control of central Asia and the Chinese pressing further west than ever before, a clash was sooner or later

inevitable. It comes, in 751 CE, at the Talas river. The result is a **shattering defeat for the Chinese**.

Seven years later the Arabs again demonstrated their strength with an impertinent gesture at the opposite extreme of the Chinese empire. Arriving in 758 CE along the trade route of the south China coast, they looted and burned Canton.

Between the two Arab incursions, the T'ang administration was gravely weakened by the rebellion of an army commander serving on the northwest frontier. In 755 An Lu-shan marched east and captured both the western and eastern capitals, at Xi'an and Loyang. The emperor fled ignominiously.

Two years later An Lu-shan was murdered by his own son. But the weakened condition of the empire was soon demonstrated again. In 763 the emperor was unable to prevent an invading Tibetan force from briefly capturing Xi'an.

The T'ang dynasty never again recovered its former strength. The next century and a half was characterized by violent struggles between powerful groups. One such clash was between the eunuchs who run the imperial palace, and who were now increasingly given command over the palace armies, and the regional governors controlling troops in the provinces.

Another **clash was between Daoists and Buddhists**. For a few centuries, the Buddhists had been the more favored of the Daoists, who were by now jealous of the foreign upstarts and sought to influence the emperors against their rivals.

In 845 CE the Daoist campaign was finally and decisively successful. The emperor initiated a purge in which 4000 **Buddhist monasteries were destroyed**, together with many more shrines and temples. A quarter of a million monks and nuns were forced back into secular life. A key point during the fall of Chinese Buddhism was its perception as being opposed to family values of Confucianism. Notably, this was also the point of difference between Buddhism and pre-Vedanta Hinduism.

Buddhism has a strong streak of misogyny. There is a fine line between abstinence from sex and treating women as carriers of sin. Buddhism and Vedanta often cross the line. Hinduism, Confucianism, Shintoism and such other religions (excluding Judaic religions) on the other hand lay great stress on sanctity of man-woman marital relationship.



The Giant Wild Goose Pagoda, Chang'an (modern-day Xi'an), built in 652, repaired by Empress Wu Zetian in 704

By Tuxnduke - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Wild_goose_pagoda_xian_china.jpg, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=10540804>

The author believes that around the time when Buddhist monasteries were destroyed in China, a similar process took place in India. Buddhist monks, who were forced to move out of monasteries, found refuge in the new philosophy of Vedanta espoused by Adi Sankara, who has often been called a Hidden Buddhist. Vedanta, like Buddhism and unlike Hinduism, places men who lead a celibate life on high pedestal. Shunning of the world in pursuit of ultimate liberation is common to both Vedanta and Buddhism. Sankara created matths (centers) on the lines of Buddhist monasteries. Success of the repackaged-Buddhism can be understood from the fact that today most Hindus equate Vedanta with Hinduism.

It may be mentioned here that while monasteries and other visible symbols of Buddhism were destroyed, Buddhism did not disappear from Chinese popular religious beliefs. **Buddhism continues to find a significant though not commanding position in the Chinese mind along with the trio of Confucianism, Daoism and Legalism.**

During ninth century CE lawless provincial armies and popular unrest combined to make the country ungovernable. **Rebellious peasants** occupied Xi'an in 881. In 903 a surviving leader of that peasant uprising captured the emperor and killed him with

all his eunuchs. Three years later he set up a dynasty of his own with his capital at Kaifeng. A succession of similar warlords followed his example in a chaotic 50-year span known as the Five Dynasties.

B8. Song Empire – 960-1279 CE

The rapid succession of the Five Dynasties was brought to an end by a warlord who won power in 960. He established the sixth in the sequence on a more firm footing, as the Song dynasty. He did so by reducing the power of regional commanders (keeping the best regiments under his own command at the centre) and by giving greater authority to the civilian administration.

As a result this was the heyday of the Confucians. Ever since the Han dynasty, scholar officials had supposedly been selected by merit in the civil-service exams. But heredity and corruption had often frustrated this intention, reserving the jade insignia of office for the families of the powerful rather than the talented.

Now, under the Song emperors, the search for talent became rigorous. As an early Song ruler put it, 'bosoms clothed in coarse fabrics may carry qualities of jade', and he was determined that such bosoms should not 'remain unknown'.

It was the first government in world history to issue banknotes or true paper money nationally and the first Chinese government to establish a permanent standing navy. This dynasty also saw the first known use of gunpowder, as well as the first discernment of true north using a compass.

Despite all the meritocracy, result was a China weaker in military terms than its predecessors but of greater sophistication. The territory controlled by the Song emperors was gradually reduced under pressure from less civilized intruders, particularly from the north. But enough remained to be the basis of a strong economy and a rich urban culture.

The Song dynasty is divided into two distinct periods, Northern and Southern. During the Northern Song (960–1127 CE), the Song capital was in the northern city of Bianjing (now Kaifeng) and the dynasty controlled most of what is now Eastern China.

The Southern Song (1127–1279 CE) refers to the period after the Song lost control of its northern half to the Jurchen Jin dynasty in the Jin–Song Wars. During this time,

the Song court retreated south of the Yangtze and established its capital at Lin'an (now Hangzhou). Although the Song dynasty had lost control of the traditional "birthplace of Chinese civilization" along the Yellow River, the Song economy was still strong, as the Southern Song Empire contained a large population and productive agricultural land.

Northern Song: 960-1127 CE



Location of Northern Song Dynasty

By China - Song Dynasty - cs.svg; User:Mozzanderivative work: Kanguole - China 11a.jpg; User:LiDaobingChina - Song Dynasty - cs.svg; User:Mozzan, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=39938105>

For the first half of the dynasty, known as Northern Song, the capital was at Kaifeng - an important centre where the Grand Canal joins the Yellow River. The city included 16 square miles within its walls and had an estimated population of more than a million people. It was not the only one of its kind. By the end of the dynasty Soozhou, Hangzhou and Canton (already the port for foreign merchants) were all of this size.

In these great cities the Chinese enjoyed the fruits of trade (now carried in exceptionally large merchant ships, and often negotiated in paper money), the

benefits of technology (such as printing) and the aesthetic delights of pottery, painting and poetry.

The Song court maintained diplomatic relations with Chola India, the Fatimid Caliphate of Egypt, Srivijaya, the Kara-Khanid Khanate of Central Asia, the Goryeo kingdom in Korea, and other countries that were also trade partners with Japan. Chinese records even mention an embassy from the ruler of "Fu lin" (the Byzantine Empire), Michael VII Doukas, and its arrival in 1081.

China's closest neighboring states had the greatest impact on its domestic and foreign policy. From its inception under Taizu, the Song dynasty alternated between warfare and diplomacy with the **ethnic Khitans of the Liao dynasty** in the northeast and with the Tanguts of the Western Xia in the northwest. The Song dynasty used military force in an attempt to quell the Liao dynasty and to recapture the Sixteen Prefectures, a territory under Khitan control that was traditionally considered to be part of China proper. Song forces were repulsed by the Liao forces, who engaged in aggressive yearly campaigns into northern Song territory until 1005, when the signing of the Shanyuan Treaty ended these northern border clashes. The Song were forced to provide tribute to the Khitans, although this did little damage to the Song economy since the Khitans were economically dependent upon importing massive amounts of goods from the Song. More significantly, the Song state recognized the Liao state as its diplomatic equal.

The Song dynasty managed to win several military victories over the **Tanguts** in the early 11th century, culminating in a campaign led by the polymath scientist, general, and statesman Shen Kuo (1031–1095). However, this campaign was ultimately a failure due to a rival military officer of Shen disobeying direct orders, and the territory gained from the Western Xia was eventually lost.

There was also a significant war fought against the **Lý dynasty of Vietnam** from 1075 to 1077 over a border dispute and the Song's severing of commercial relations with the Đại Việt kingdom. After Lý forces inflicted heavy damages in a raid on Guangxi, the Song commander penetrated as far as Thăng Long (modern Hanoi). Heavy losses on both sides prompted the Lý commander to make peace overtures, allowing both sides to withdraw from the war effort; **captured territories held by both Song and Lý were mutually exchanged in 1082**, along with prisoners of war.

Palace Intrigue, Reforms and Opposition to Reforms

During the 11th century, political rivalries divided members of the court due to the ministers' differing approaches, opinions, and policies regarding the handling of the Song's complex society and thriving economy. The idealist Chancellor, Fan Zhongyan (989–1052), was the first to receive a heated political backlash when he attempted to institute the Qingli Reforms, which included measures such as improving the recruitment system of officials, increasing the salaries for minor officials, and establishing sponsorship programs to allow a wider range of people to be well educated and eligible for state service.

After Fan was forced to step down from his office, Wang Anshi (1021–1086) became Chancellor of the imperial court. With the backing of Emperor Shenzong (1067–1085), Wang Anshi severely criticized the educational system and state bureaucracy. Seeking to resolve what he saw as state corruption and negligence, Wang implemented a series of reforms called the New Policies. These involved land value tax reform, the establishment of several government monopolies, the support of local militias, and the creation of higher standards for the Imperial examination to make it more practical for men skilled in statecraft to pass.

The reforms created political factions in the court. Wang Anshi's "New Policies Group" (*Xin Fa*), also known as the "Reformers", were opposed by the ministers in the "Conservative" faction led by the historian and Chancellor Sima Guang (1019–1086). As one faction supplanted another in the majority position of the court ministers, it would demote rival officials and exile them to govern remote frontier regions of the empire. One of the prominent victims of the political rivalry, the famous poet and statesman Su Shi (1037–1101), was jailed and eventually exiled for criticizing Wang's reforms.

***Note:** - Attention is drawn to the above situation prevailing in China of about a thousand years ago due to its parallel with the modern-day China. It seems that not much has changed in China during the past thousand years. Su Shi has probably been reborn as Liu Xiaobo, recipient of Noble Peace Prize, and has not been lucky enough to be exiled. Liu Xiaobo died on 13th July 2017 after the Chinese Government refused to let him seek treatment overseas despite Liu's wishes and international pressure.*

While the central Song court remained politically divided and focused upon its internal affairs, alarming new events to the north in the Liao state finally came to its attention. **The Jurchen**, a subject tribe of the Liao, rebelled against them and formed their own state, the Jin dynasty (1115–1234). Initially, the Song Emperor formed an alliance with the Jurchens and even conducted a joint military campaign at sea.

However, the poor performance and military weakness of the Song army was observed by the Jurchens, who immediately broke the alliance, beginning the Jin–Song Wars of 1125 and 1127. After the latter invasion, the Jurchens captured not only the capital, but the retired emperor Huizong, his successor Emperor Qinzong, and most of the Imperial court.

The remaining Song forces regrouped under the self-proclaimed Emperor Gaozong of Song (1127–1162) and withdrew south of the Yangtze to establish a new capital at Lin'an (modern Hangzhou). The Jurchen conquest of North China and shift of capitals from Kaifeng to Lin'an was the dividing line between the Northern and Southern Song dynasties.

Southern Song: 1127-1279 CE

A prince of the imperial family, avoiding capture at Kaifeng, established a new administration at the other end of the Grand Canal, at Hangzhou. Here the Southern Song continued for another 150 years, in territory reduced to a mere fraction of the China of the T'ang Empire.

Although weakened and pushed south beyond the Huai River, the Southern Song found new ways to bolster its strong economy and defend itself against the Jin dynasty. It had able military officers. The government sponsored massive shipbuilding and harbor improvement projects, and the construction of beacons and seaport warehouses to support maritime trade abroad, including at the major international seaports, such as Quanzhou, Guangzhou, and Xiamen. To protect and support the multitude of ships sailing for maritime interests into the waters of the East China Sea and Yellow Sea (to Korea and Japan), Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean, and the Red Sea, it was necessary to establish an official standing navy. The Song dynasty therefore established China's **first permanent navy in 1132**.

With a permanent navy, the Song were prepared to face the naval forces of the Jin on the Yangtze River in 1161, in the Battle of Tangdao and the Battle of Caishi. During these battles the Song navy employed swift paddle wheel driven naval vessels armed with trebuchet catapults aboard the decks that launched gunpowder bombs. Although the Jin forces boasted 70,000 men on 600 warships, and the Song forces only 3,000 men on 120 warships, the Song dynasty forces were victorious in both battles due to the destructive power of the bombs and the rapid assaults by paddle wheel ships. The strength of the navy was heavily emphasized after that. A century after the navy was founded it had grown in size to 52,000 fighting marines.



Southern Song in 1142

By China - Southern Song Dynasty - cs.svg: User:Mozzanderivative work: Kanguole - China 11b.jpg: User:LiDaobingChina - Southern Song Dynasty - cs.svg: User:Mozzan, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=39938152>

The Song government confiscated portions of land owned by the landed gentry in order to raise revenue for these projects, an act which caused dissension and loss of loyalty amongst leading members of Song society but did not stop the Song's defensive preparations. Financial matters were made worse by the fact that many wealthy, land-owning families - some of which had officials working for the government - used their social connections with those in office in order to obtain tax-exempt status.

Although the Song dynasty was able to hold back the Jin, a new foe came to power over the steppe, deserts, and plains north of the Jin dynasty. **The Mongols**, led by Genghis Khan (r. 1206–1227), initially invaded the Jin dynasty in 1205 and 1209, engaging in large raids across its borders, and in 1211 an enormous Mongol army was assembled to invade the Jin.

The Jin dynasty was forced to submit and pay tribute to the Mongols. When the Jin suddenly moved their capital city from Beijing to Kaifeng, the Mongols saw this as a revolt. Under the leadership of Ögedei Khan (r.1229–1241), both the Jin dynasty and Western Xia dynasty were conquered by Mongol forces.

The Mongols were allied with the Song, but this alliance was broken when the Song recaptured the former imperial capitals of Kaifeng, Luoyang, and Chang'an at the collapse of the Jin dynasty. There were many border skirmishes until 1265, when Mongols, under the leadership of **Kublai Khan**, won a significant battle in Sichuan.

From 1268 to 1273, Kublai blockaded the Yangtze River with his navy and besieged Xiangyang, the last obstacle in his way to invading the rich Yangtze River basin. Kublai officially declared the creation of the **Yuan dynasty** in 1271. In 1275, a Song force of 130,000 troops was defeated by Kublai's forces. By 1276, most of the Song territory had been captured by Yuan forces.

In the Battle of Yamen on the Pearl River Delta in 1279, the Yuan army finally crushed the Song resistance. The last remaining ruler, the 8-year-old emperor Emperor Huaizong of Song, committed suicide, along with Prime Minister Lu Xiufu and 800 members of the royal clan.



The Yuan Dynasty of China, c. 1294

By Ian Kiu - Own work, CC BY 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=3082897>

B9. Kublai Khan and the Yüan dynasty - 1252-1279 CE

Kublai Khan had built a magnificent city at Beijing. Its walls were 24 miles in circumference and some 50 feet high. The Mongols called it *Khanbaliq*, the 'city of the Khan'; and under a version of this name, as Cambaluc, it became famous even in Europe.

Kublai Khan, Yuan dynasty, was the first outsider to rule over China. But Kublai Khan was determined not to be an outsider. He even adopted the administrative system of the Chinese bureaucracy. The only difference was that he employed more foreigners than a Chinese emperor would. One of them, Marco Polo (European born in Venice), left a vivid glimpse of Mongol China.

Kublai Khan was sovereign over regions more extensive than any previous Chinese empire. Even allowing for the fact that his authority in the Mongol territories in the west was only nominal (as the great khan), he had under his direct control Mongolia, Tibet, Manchuria, Korea and the whole of China down to the South China Sea.



Emperor of the Yuan Dynasty

Portrait of Kublai Khan drawn shortly after his death on February 18, 1294.

The painting depicts Kublai prior to the onset of obesity from heavy eating and drinking. Kublai's white robes reflect his desired symbolic role as a religious Mongol shaman. Now Located in the National Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan; colors and ink on silk, 59.4 by 47 cm.

By Lua error in mw.wikibase.entity.lua at line 37: data.schema Version must be a number, got nil instead. Anige (also known as Araniko) of Nepal, an astronomer, engineer, painter, and confidant of Kublai Khan - Artdaily.org, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4126240>

Indians may make the mistake of considering Kublai Khan to be a Muslim. Kublai Khan and the Yuan dynasty clearly favored Buddhism. He and his successors did not convert to Islam.

The most prominent, and arguably most influential, component of Kublai Khan's early life was his study and strong attraction to contemporary Chinese culture. Kublai invited Haiyun, the leading Buddhist monk in North China, to Mongolia. Kublai met Haiyun in Karakorum in 1242 and learnt about Buddhism. Haiyun also introduced Kublai to the formerly Daoist and later-day Buddhist monk, Liu Bingzhong. Liu was a painter, calligrapher, poet, and mathematician, and he became Kublai's advisor when Haiyun returned to his temple in modern Beijing.

The Daoists had obtained their wealth and status by seizing Buddhist temples. Mongols had repeatedly demanded that the Daoists cease their denigration of Buddhism. Kublai took steps to end the strife between the Taoists and Buddhists in his territory. Kublai called a conference of Daoist and Buddhist leaders in early 1258. At the conference, the Taoist claim was officially refuted, and Kublai forcibly converted 237 Daoist temples to Buddhism and destroyed all copies of the Daoist texts. Kublai, in this manner, tried to undo the damage at least partially that Buddhists had suffered for more than four centuries in China.

In 1279–80, Kublai decreed death for those who performed slaughtering of cattle according to the legal codes of Islam or Judaism, which offended Mongolian custom.

While Kublai favored Buddhism, he was more tolerant of Islam than any other Chinese emperor. Thirty Muslims served as high officials in the court of Kublai Khan. Eight of the dynasty's twelve administrative districts had Muslim governors appointed by Kublai Khan. Kublai Khan patronized Muslim scholars and scientists, and Muslim astronomers contributed to the construction of the observatory in Shaanxi. Muslim cartographers made accurate maps of all the nations along the Silk Road. Muslim mathematicians introduced Euclidean Geometry, Spherical trigonometry and Arabic numerals in China.

The Mongol administration had issued paper currencies from 1227 onwards. In August 1260, Kublai created the first **unified paper currency called Chao**; bills were circulated throughout the Yuan domain with no expiration date. To guard against devaluation, the currency was convertible with silver and gold, and the government accepted tax payments in paper currency. In 1273, Kublai issued a new series of state sponsored bills to finance his conquest of the Song, although eventually a lack of fiscal discipline and inflation turned this move into an economic disaster. It was required to pay only in the form of paper money. To ensure its use, Kublai's government confiscated gold and silver from private citizens and foreign merchants, but traders received government-issued notes in exchange. Kublai Khan

is considered to be the first fiat money maker. The paper bills made collecting taxes and administering the empire much easier and reduced the cost of transporting coins.

Kublai succeeded in building a powerful empire, created an academy, offices, trade ports and canals and sponsored science and the arts. Having achieved real or nominal dominion over much of Eurasia, and having successfully conquered China, Kublai was in a position to look beyond China. However, Kublai's costly invasions of Vietnam (1258), Sakhalin (1264), Burma (1277), Champa (1282), and Vietnam again (1285) secured only the vassal status of those countries. Mongol invasions of Japan (1274 and 1280), the third invasion of Vietnam (1287–8), and the invasion of Java (1293) failed.

Outline map of present-day People's Republic of China resembles more closely the map of Kublai Khan's reign as compared to any other previous emperor. **Modern day China probably owes more to an outsider** than they like to admit.

B10. Ming dynasty - 1368-1644 CE

Kublai Khan's grandson and successor, Timur, contrived to keep order in the empire for a few years after the great khan's death in 1294. But a series of disasters in the early 14th century unsettled the dynasty. A civil war between rival Mongol princes broke out in 1328. There was widespread famine. Disastrous floods caused armies of peasants to be press-ganged into heavy work on river defenses. Rebel bands began to wreak havoc, demanding ejection of the foreigners and restoration of a Chinese dynasty.

The leader of one such band was a Buddhist monk, of peasant origin, by the name of Zhu Yuanzhang. In 1356 Zhu succeeded in capturing a town which he renamed Nanjing, 'southern capital'. In 1368 Zhu marched to seize the northern capital, Beijing. The Mongols fled north to the steppes, and Zhu announced the start of a new dynasty with himself as emperor. He gave his dynasty a glorious name - Ming, meaning 'brilliant'.

Zhu inaugurated a custom of a similar kind which survived to the end of the Chinese empire. He chose a congenial name for his reign - in this case Hung Wu, 'vast military power'. Chinese emperors from this time onwards were known by the title of their reign. Zhu, the founder of the new dynasty, became the Hung Wu emperor -

though the phrase is often now used as though Hung Wu (or Hongwu) were his own name.



Ming China around 1580 CE

By Ríse Ming.png: Michal Klajban (Hikingisgood.com)derivative work: Jann - This file was derived from Ríse Ming.png.; CC BY-SA 3.0 cz., <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=34923107>

The new emperor was a strict disciplinarian. His officials must invariably run when in his presence, and misdemeanors were punished with public canings. Officials in Ming China were treated like prefects at an old-fashioned boarding school; the button on a mandarin's cap changed through nine different colours as he rose in the strict hierarchy of the civil service. It made for a **well-behaved but un-enterprising society**. Not surprisingly, Ming era has been described by historians as "one of the greatest eras of orderly government and social stability in human history". The Ming was one of the most stable dynasties of China but was also one of the most autocratic of all Chinese dynasties.

In 1380 Hongwu had his Chancellor executed upon suspicion of a conspiracy plot to overthrow him; after that Hongwu abolished the Chancellery and assumed this role as chief executive and emperor, a precedent mostly followed throughout the Ming period. With a growing suspicion of his ministers and subjects, Hongwu established the **Jinyiwei, a network of secret police** drawn from his own palace guard. Some **100,000 people were executed in a series of purges** during his rule.

Hongwu built a 48 km long wall around Nanjing, as well as new palaces and government halls. As early as 1364 Zhu Yuanzhang had begun drafting a new Confucian law code, the *Da Ming Lü*, which was completed by 1397 and repeated certain clauses found in the old Tang Code of 653.



Portrait of the Hongwu Emperor (ruled 1368-1398 CE)

By User Hardouin on en.wikipedia - [1], Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=891486>

The Hongwu emperor issued many edicts forbidding Mongol practices and proclaiming his intention to purify China of barbarian influence. However, he also sought to use the Yuan legacy to legitimize his authority in China and other areas ruled by the Yuan. He adopted many Yuan military practices, recruited Mongol soldiers, and continued to request Korean concubines and eunuchs.

The Hongwu Emperor specified his grandson Zhu Yunwen as his successor. Zhu Yunwen assumed the throne as the Jianwen Emperor (1398–1402) after Hongwu's death in 1398. The most powerful of Hongwu's sons, Zhu Di, who was militarily mighty disagreed with this, and soon a political showdown erupted between him and his nephew Jianwen. After Jianwen arrested many of Zhu Di's associates, Zhu Di plotted a rebellion that sparked a three-year civil war. Under the pretext of rescuing

the young Jianwen from corrupting officials, Zhu Di personally led forces in the revolt; the palace in Nanjing was burned to the ground, along with Jianwen himself, his wife, mother, and courtiers. Zhu Di assumed the throne as the **Yongle Emperor** (1402–1424); his reign is universally viewed by scholars as a "**second founding**" of **the Ming dynasty** since he reversed many of his father's policies.

Yongle demoted Nanjing to a secondary capital and in 1403 announced the new capital of China was to be at his power base in Beijing. Construction of a new city there lasted from 1407 to 1420, employing hundreds of thousands of workers daily.

Beginning in 1405, the Yongle Emperor entrusted his favored eunuch commander as the admiral for a gigantic new fleet of ships designated for international tributary missions.

Yongle also used woodblock printing to spread Chinese culture, and used the military (especially cavalry) to expand China's borders. This included the brief **occupation of Vietnam, from the initial invasion in 1406 until the Ming withdrawal in 1427** as a result of protracted guerrilla warfare led by the subsequent founder of the Vietnamese Lê dynasty.

Decline of the Ming Dynasty



Wanli Emperor (r. 1572-1620)

By Ming Dynasty Imperial Painter - <http://www.ming-yiguan.com/viewthread.php?tid=10849&extra=page%3D1>, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=20977682>

The financial drain of the war in Korea against the Japanese was one of the many problems – fiscal or other – facing Ming China during the reign of the Wanli Emperor

(1572–1620). In the beginning of his reign, Wanli surrounded himself with able advisors and made a conscientious effort to handle state affairs. His Grand Secretary built up an effective network of alliances with senior officials. However, there was no one after him skilled enough to maintain the stability of these alliances; officials soon banded together in opposing political factions. Over time Wanli grew tired of court affairs and frequent political quarreling amongst his ministers, preferring to stay behind the walls of the Forbidden City and out of his officials' sight. Scholar-officials lost prominence in administration as eunuchs became intermediaries between the aloof emperor and his officials; any senior official who wanted to discuss state matters had to persuade **powerful eunuchs** with a bribe simply to have his demands or message relayed to the emperor.



The Forbidden City, the official imperial household of the Ming and Qing dynasties from 1420 until 1924, when the Republican government evicted the abdicated last emperor, Puyi, from the Forbidden City.

CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=243178>

Eunuchs during the Yongle Emperor's reign and afterwards managed huge imperial workshops, commanded armies, and participated in matters of appointment and promotion of officials. The eunuchs developed their own bureaucracy that was organized parallel to but was not subject to the civil service bureaucracy. Although there were several dictatorial eunuchs throughout the Ming, such as Wang Zhen, Wang Zhi, and Liu Jin, **excessive tyrannical eunuch power** did not become evident until the 1590s when the Wanli Emperor increased their rights over the civil bureaucracy and granted them power to collect provincial taxes.

The eunuch Wei Zhongxian (1568–1627) dominated the court of the Tianqi Emperor (r. 1620–1627) and had his political rivals tortured to death. He ordered temples built in his honor throughout the Ming Empire, and built personal palaces created with funds allocated for building the previous emperor's tombs. His friends and family gained important positions without qualifications. Wei also published a historical work lambasting and belittling his political opponents. The instability at court came right as natural calamity, pestilence, rebellion, and foreign invasion came to a peak. The Chongzhen Emperor (r. 1627–44) had Wei dismissed from court, which led to Wei's suicide shortly after.

During the last years of the Wanli era and those of his two successors, an **economic crisis** developed that was centered on a sudden widespread lack of the empire's chief medium of exchange: silver. Apparently, paper currency developed in Kublai Khan's rule had collapsed. Spanish, Portuguese and Dutch used to trade silver from Japan, Peru and other places for Chinese silk. Due to various reasons, the trade collapsed leading to a **shortage of silver** in China causing a dramatic spike in the value of silver. The shortage made paying taxes nearly impossible for most provinces. People began hoarding precious silver as there was progressively less of it, forcing the ratio of the value of copper to silver into a steep decline. In the 1630s a string of one thousand copper coins equaled an ounce of silver; by 1640 that sum could fetch half an ounce; and, by 1643 only one-third of an ounce. For peasants this meant economic disaster, since they paid taxes in silver while conducting local trade and crop sales in copper.

Famines became common in northern China in the early 17th century because of unusually dry and cold weather that shortened the growing season – effects of a larger ecological event now known as the Little Ice Age. **Famine, alongside tax increases, widespread military desertions, a declining relief system, and natural disasters** such as flooding and inability of the government to properly manage irrigation and flood-control projects caused widespread loss of life and normal civility. The central government, starved of resources, could do very little to mitigate the effects of these calamities. Making matters worse, a widespread epidemic spread across China from Zhejiang to Henan, killing an unknown but large number of people. The deadliest earthquake of all time, the Shaanxi earthquake of 1556, occurred during the Jiajing Emperor's reign, killing approximately 830,000 people.



Shaanxi Earthquake Map of Provinces

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Fall of the Ming Dynasty

Final fall of the Ming Dynasty came due to two independent events – (a) Rise of the “Jurchen” tribe under the new name of “Manchu” and (b) Peasant revolt and rebellion.

A Jurchen tribal leader named Nurhaci (r. 1616–26), starting with just a small tribe, rapidly gained control over all the Manchurian tribes. During the Japanese invasions of Joseon Korea in the 1590s, he offered to lead his tribes in support of the Ming and Joseon army. This offer was declined, but he was granted honorific Ming titles for his gesture. Recognizing the weakness of Ming authority, he united all of the adjacent northern tribes and consolidated power in the region surrounding his homeland. In 1610, he broke relations with the Ming court, and in 1618 demanded a tribute from them.

By 1636, Nurhaci's son **Huang Taiji** (or Hong Taiji) renamed his dynasty from the "Later Jin" to the "**Great Qing**" at Mukden, which had fallen to Qing forces in 1621 and was made their capital in 1625. Huang Taiji also adopted the Chinese imperial title *huangdi*, declared the Chongde ("Revering Virtue") era, and changed the ethnic name of his people from "Jurchen" to "Manchu". In 1638 the Manchu defeated and conquered Ming China's traditional ally Joseon with an army of 100,000 troops in the

Second Manchu invasion of Korea. Shortly after, the Koreans renounced their long-held loyalty to the Ming dynasty.



Huang Taiji

By Anonymous Qing Dynasty Court Painter - Palace Museum, Beijing, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=15178138>

A peasant soldier named Li Zicheng mutinied with his fellow soldiers in western Shaanxi in the early 1630s after the Ming government failed to ship much-needed supplies there. In 1634 he was captured by a Ming general and released only on the terms that he return to service. The agreement soon broke down when a local magistrate had thirty-six of his fellow rebels executed; Li's troops retaliated by killing the officials and continued to lead a rebellion based in Rongyang, central Henan province by 1635. By the 1640s, an ex-soldier and rival to Li – Zhang Xianzhong (1606–47) – had created a firm rebel base in Chengdu, Sichuan, while Li's center of power was in Hubei with extended influence over Shaanxi and Henan.

In 1640, masses of Chinese peasants who were starving, unable to pay their taxes, and no longer in fear of the frequently defeated Chinese army, began to form into huge bands of rebels. The Chinese military, caught between fruitless efforts to defeat the Manchu raiders from the north and huge peasant revolts in the provinces, essentially fell apart. Unpaid and unfed, the army was defeated by Li Zicheng – now self-styled as the Prince of Shun – and deserted the capital without much of a fight.

On 26 May 1644, Beijing fell to a rebel army led by Li Zicheng when the city gates were opened by rebel allies from within. During the turmoil, the last Ming emperor hanged himself on a tree in the imperial garden outside the Forbidden City.

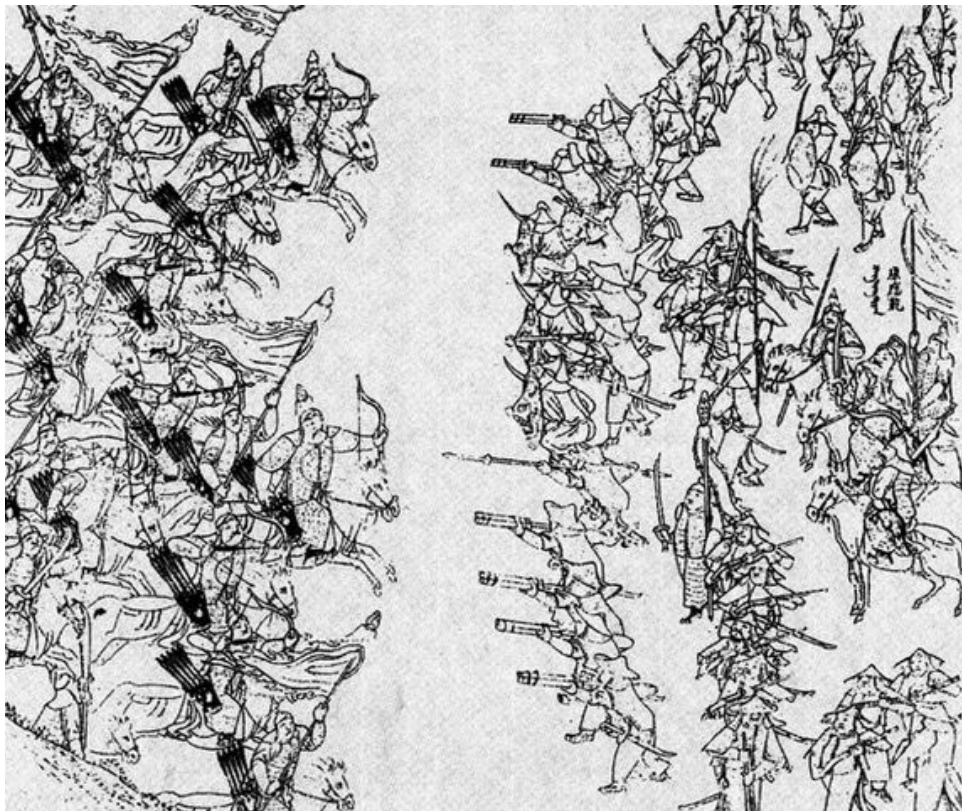
After the fall of Beijing, Manchu forces crossed the Great Wall after the Ming border general Wu Sangui opened the gates. Manchu forces combined with Wu and his forces destroyed the army sent by Li. Manchus and Wu entered the capital and proclaimed the young Shunzhi Emperor ruler of China. Li Zicheng was chased. He died in the summer of 1645 near the northern border in the province of Jiangxi, thus ending the Shun dynasty.

Despite the loss of Beijing and death of the emperor, the Ming were not yet totally destroyed. Nanjing, Fujian, Guangdong, Shanxi, and Yunnan were all strongholds of Ming resistance. However, there were several pretenders for the Ming throne, and their forces were divided. These scattered Ming remnants in southern China after 1644 were collectively designated by 19th-century historians as the Southern Ming. Each bastion of resistance was individually defeated by the Qing until 1662, when the last southern Ming Emperor died.

In 1725 the Qing Yongzheng Emperor bestowed the hereditary title of Marquis on a descendant of the Ming dynasty Imperial family, Zhu Zhilian, who received a salary from the Qing government and whose duty was to perform rituals at the Ming tombs. Later the Qianlong Emperor bestowed the title **Marquis of Extended Grace** posthumously on Zhu Zhilian in 1750, and the title passed on through twelve generations of Ming descendants until the end of the Qing dynasty in 1912. In 1912, after the overthrow of the Qing dynasty in the Xinhai Revolution, some advocated that a Han Chinese be installed as Emperor, either the descendant of Confucius, or the Ming dynasty Imperial family descendant, the Marquis of Extended Grace.

B11. Qing dynasty - 1644-1912 CE

The Qing dynasty was founded not by Han Chinese, who constitute the majority of the Chinese population, but by a sedentary farming people known as the Jurchen, a Tungusic people who lived around the region now comprising the Chinese provinces of Jilin and Heilongjiang. The Manchus are sometimes mistaken for a nomadic people, which they were not. What was to become the Manchu state was founded by Nurhaci, the chieftain of a minor Jurchen tribe. Originally a vassal of the Ming emperors, **Nurhachi** embarked on an intertribal feud in 1582 that escalated into a campaign to unify the nearby tribes. By 1616, he had sufficiently consolidated Jianzhou so as to be able to proclaim himself Khan of the Great Jin in reference to the previous Jurchen dynasty.



The Manchu cavalry charging Ming infantry in the Battle of Sarhu, 1619

By Unknown - <http://www.lasalle.edu/~mcinneshin/356/wk04/images/1619JurchenvsMinginfantry.jpg>, Public Domain,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=12042157>

There were too few ethnic Manchus to conquer China, so they gained strength by defeating and absorbing Mongols, but more importantly, adding Han. The Manchus had to create an entire "Jiu Han jun" (Old Han Army) due to the massive amount of Han Chinese soldiers which were absorbed by both capture and defection. Ming artillery was responsible for many victories against the Manchus, so the Manchus

established an artillery corps made out of Han Chinese soldiers in 1641. It was defected Ming Han Chinese armies which conquered southern China for the Qing.

Han defectors played a massive role in the Qing conquest of China. Han Chinese Generals who defected to the Manchu were often given women from the Imperial Aisin Gioro family in marriage while the ordinary soldiers who defected were often given non-royal Manchu women as wives. Jurchen (Manchu) women married Han Chinese defectors. Manchu Aisin Gioro princesses were also married to sons of Han Chinese officials.

Nurhachi's unbroken series of military successes came to an end in January 1626 when he was defeated by Yuan Chonghuan while laying siege to Ningyuan. He died a few months later and was succeeded by his eighth son, **Hong Taiji**, who emerged after a short political struggle amongst other potential contenders as the new Khan.

Although Hong Taiji was an experienced leader at the time of his succession, his reign did not start well on the military front. The Jurchens suffered yet another defeat in 1627 at the hands of Yuan Chonghuan. As before, this defeat was, in part, due to the Ming's newly acquired Portuguese cannons.

To redress the technological and numerical disparity, Hong Taiji in 1634 created his own artillery corps, from among his existing Han troops who cast their own cannons in the European design with the help of defector Chinese metallurgists. In 1635, the Manchus' Mongol allies were fully incorporated into a separate hierarchy under direct Manchu command. Hong Taiji then proceeded in 1636 to invade Korea again.

After the Second Manchu invasion of Korea, Joseon Korea was forced to give several of their royal princesses as concubines to the Qing Manchu regent Prince Dorgon. In 1650, Dorgon married the Korean Princess I-shun.

The military reforms enabled Hong Taiji to resoundingly defeat Ming forces in a series of battles from 1640 to 1642. This final victory resulted in the surrender of many of the Ming dynasty's most battle-hardened troops, the death of Yuan Chonghuan at the hands of the Chongzhen Emperor (who thought Yuan had betrayed him), and the complete and permanent withdrawal of the remaining Ming forces north of the Great Wall.

Meanwhile, Hong Taiji set up a rudimentary bureaucratic system based on the Ming model. He established six boards or executive level ministries in 1631 to oversee finance, personnel, rites, military, punishments, and public works. Hong Taiji's

bureaucracy was staffed with many Han Chinese, including many newly surrendered Ming officials. The Manchus' continued dominance was ensured by an ethnic quota for top bureaucratic appointments.

Hong Taiji's reign also saw a fundamental change of policy towards his Han Chinese subjects. Nurhaci had treated Han in Liaodong differently according to how much grain they had. Due to a revolt by Han in Liaodong in 1623, Nurhaci, who previously gave concessions to conquered Han subjects in Liaodong, turned against them and ordered that they no longer be trusted; He enacted discriminatory policies and killings against them, while ordering that Han who assimilated to the Jurchen (in Jilin) before 1619 be treated equally as Jurchens were and not like the conquered Han in Liaodong. Hong Taiji instead incorporated them into the Jurchen "nation" as full (if not first-class) citizens, obligated to provide military service.

By 1648, less than one-sixth of the armed forces were of Manchu ancestry. This change of policy not only increased Hong Taiji's manpower, it also greatly encouraged other Han Chinese subjects of the Ming dynasty to surrender and accept Jurchen rule when they were defeated militarily. Through these and other measures Hong Taiji was able to centralize power unto the office of the Khan, which in the long run prevented the Jurchen federation from fragmenting after his death.

Hong Taiji recognized that Ming Han Chinese defectors were needed by the Manchus in order to assist in the conquest of the Ming, explaining to other Manchus why he needed to treat the Ming defector General Hong Chengchou leniently.

One of the defining events of Hong Taiji's reign was the official adoption of the name "Manchu" for the united Jurchen people in November, 1635. The next year, when he was said to be presented with the imperial seal of the Yuan dynasty after the defeat of the last Khagan of the Mongols, Hong Taiji renamed his state from "Great Jin" to "Great Qing" and elevated his position from Khan to Emperor, suggesting imperial ambitions beyond unifying the Manchu territories.

Hong Taiji died suddenly in September 1643 without a designated heir. As the Jurchens had traditionally "elected" their leader through a council of nobles, the Qing state did not have in place a clear succession system. The leading contenders for power at this time were Hong Taiji's oldest son and Hong Taiji's half brother Dorgon. A compromise candidate in the person of Hong Taiji's five-year-old son, Fulin, was installed as the Shunzhi Emperor, with Dorgon as regent and de facto leader of the Manchu nation.

The first seven years of the Shunzhi Emperor's reign were dominated by the regent prince Dorgon. Because of his own political insecurity, Dorgon followed Hong Taiji's example by ruling in the name of the emperor at the expense of rival Manchu princes, many of whom he demoted or imprisoned under one pretext or another. Although the period of his regency was relatively short, Dorgon cast a long shadow over the Qing dynasty.

The Manchus had entered "China proper" because Dorgon responded decisively to Ming General Wu Sangui's appeal. Then, after capturing Beijing, instead of sacking the city as the rebels had done, Dorgon insisted, over the protests of other Manchu princes, on making it the dynastic capital and reappointing most Ming officials. Choosing Beijing as the capital had not been a straightforward decision, since no major Chinese dynasty had directly taken over its immediate predecessor's capital. Keeping the Ming capital and bureaucracy intact helped quickly stabilize the regime and sped up the conquest of the rest of the country. Dorgon drastically reduced the influence of the eunuchs, a major force in the Ming bureaucracy.



A sketch of typical Manza (Chinaman from Ussurian Region of Russia)

Source: Schreider, D. Our Far East. S.-Petersburg:1897 Wikipedia Commons

Not all of Dorgon's policies were popular. The controversial July 1645 edict (the "**haircutting order**") forced adult Han Chinese men to shave the front of their heads and comb the remaining hair into the **queue hairstyle** which was worn by Manchu men, on pain of death. The popular description of the order was: "**To keep the hair, you lose the head; To keep your head, you cut the hair.**" To the Manchus, this policy was a test of loyalty and an aid in distinguishing friend from foe. For the Han

Chinese, however, it was a humiliating reminder of Qing authority that challenged traditional Confucian values. Under the Ming dynasty, adult men did not cut their hair but instead wore it in the form of a top-knot. The order triggered strong resistance to Qing rule in Jiangnan and massive killing of Han Chinese.

It was Han Chinese defectors who carried out massacres against people refusing to wear the queue. Li Chengdong, a Han Chinese general who had served the Ming but surrendered to the Qing, ordered his Han troops to carry out three separate massacres in the city of Jiading within a month, resulting in tens of thousands of deaths. At the end of the third massacre, there was hardly a living person left in this city. Jiangyin also held out against about 10,000 Han Chinese Qing troops for 83 days. When the city wall was finally breached on 9 October 1645, the Han Chinese Qing army led by the Han Chinese Ming defector Liu Liangzuo, who had been ordered to "fill the city with corpses before you sheathe your swords," **massacred the entire population, killing between 74,000 and 100,000 people**. The queue was the only aspect of Manchu culture which the Qing forced on the common Han population. The Qing required people serving as officials to wear Manchu clothing, but allowed non-official Han civilians to continue wearing Hanfu (Han clothing).



Dorgon (17 November 1612 – 31 December 1650), also known as Hošoi Mergen Cin Wang, the Prince Rui, was Nurhaci's 14th son and a prince of the Qing Dynasty

By Unknown - <http://wenwen.soso.com/t/z137154.htm?ch=w.wty.tdzt.>, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=12596304>

On December 31, 1650, Dorgon suddenly died during a hunting expedition, marking the official start of the Shunzhi Emperor's personal rule. Because the emperor was only 12 years old at that time, most decisions were made on his behalf by his mother, Empress Dowager Xiaozhuang, who turned out to be a skilled political operator. After a promising start, Shunzhi's reign was cut short by his early death in

1661 at the age of twenty-four from smallpox. He was succeeded by his third son Xuanye, who reigned as the Kangxi Emperor.

The Kangxi Emperor's reign

The **sixty-one year reign of the Kangxi Emperor was the longest of any Chinese emperor**. Kangxi's reign is also celebrated as the beginning of an era known as the "High Qing", during which the dynasty reached the zenith of its social, economic and military power. Kangxi's long reign started when he was eight years old upon the untimely demise of his father. To prevent a repeat of Dorgon's dictatorial monopolizing of power during the regency, the Shunzhi Emperor, on his deathbed, hastily appointed four senior cabinet ministers to govern on behalf of his young son. The four ministers were chosen for their long service, but also to counteract each other's influences. Most important, the four were not closely related to the imperial family and laid no claim to the throne.

The early Manchu rulers established two foundations of legitimacy which help to explain the stability of their dynasty. The first was the bureaucratic institutions and the neo-Confucian culture which they adopted from earlier dynasties. Manchu rulers and Han Chinese scholar-official elites gradually came to terms with each other. The examination system offered a path for ethnic Han to become officials. Imperial patronage of Kangxi Dictionary demonstrated respect for Confucian learning, while the Sacred Edict of 1670 effectively extolled Confucian family values.

The second major source of stability was the Central Asian aspect of their Manchu identity which allowed them to appeal to Mongol, Tibetan and Uighur constituents. The Qing used the title of Emperor (Huangdi) in Chinese while among Mongols the Qing monarch was referred to as Bogda khan (wise Khan), and referred to as Gong Ma in Tibet. Qianlong propagated the image of himself as Buddhist sage rulers, patrons of Tibetan Buddhism. In the Manchu language, the Qing monarch was alternately referred to as either Huwangdi (Emperor) or Khan with no special distinction between the two usages.

To extend and consolidate the dynasty's control in Central Asia, the Kangxi Emperor personally led a series of military campaigns against the Dzungars in Outer Mongolia. The Kangxi Emperor was able to successfully expel invading forces from these regions, which were then incorporated into the empire. In 1683, Qing forces received the surrender of Formosa (Taiwan) from Zheng Keshuang, grandson of Koxinga, who had conquered Taiwan from the Dutch colonists as a base against the

Qing. Zheng Keshuang was awarded the title "Duke Haicheng". Several Ming princes had accompanied Koxinga to Taiwan in 1661–1662, including the Prince of Ningjing Zhu Shugui and Prince Zhu Honghuan. The Qing sent the 17 Ming princes still living on Taiwan in 1683 back to mainland China where they spent the rest of their lives in exile since their lives were spared from execution.

Winning Taiwan freed Kangxi's forces for series of battles over Albazin, the far eastern outpost of the Tsardom of Russia. The 1689 Treaty of Nerchinsk with Russia was China's first formal treaty with a European power and kept the border peaceful for the better part of two centuries.

After the death of Mongol king, Galdan Boshogtu Khan (1644–1697), his followers, as adherents to Tibetan Buddhism, attempted to control the choice of the next Dalai Lama. Kangxi dispatched two armies to Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, and installed a Dalai Lama sympathetic to the Qing.

By the end of the 17th century, China was at its greatest height of confidence and political control since the Ming dynasty.

Yongzheng and Qianlong emperors

The reigns of the Yongzheng Emperor (r. 1723–1735) and his son, the Qianlong Emperor (r. 1735–1796), marked the height of Qing power. During this period, the Qing Empire ruled over 13 million square kilometers of territory.

After the Kangxi Emperor's death in the winter of 1722, his fourth son, Prince Yong became the Yongzheng Emperor. When Yongzheng came to power at the age of 45, he felt a sense of urgency about the problems which had accumulated in his father's later years.

He moved rapidly. First, he promoted Confucian orthodoxy and reversed what he saw as his father's laxness by cracking down on unorthodox sects and by decapitating an anti-Manchu writer his father had pardoned. In 1723 he outlawed Christianity and expelled Christian missionaries, though some were allowed to remain in the capital. Next, he moved to control the government. He expanded his father's system of Palace Memorials which brought frank and detailed reports on local conditions directly to the throne without being intercepted by the bureaucracy, and created a small Grand Council of personal advisors which eventually grew into the emperor's *de facto* cabinet for the rest of the dynasty. He shrewdly filled key positions with Manchu and Han Chinese officials who depended on his patronage.



The Yongzheng Emperor, 5th Emperor of the Qing Dynasty

By Anonymous - Royal Academy of Arts, part of the The Three Emperors, 1662 - 1795 exhibition which ran from 12 November 2005 - 17 April 2006 in London. Website might be taken down at some point in future., Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=773905>

When he began to realize that the financial crisis was even greater than he had thought, Yongzheng rejected his father's lenient approach to local landowning elites and mounted a campaign to enforce collection of the land tax. The increased revenues were to be used for "money to nourish honesty" among local officials and for local irrigation, schools, roads, and charity. Although these reforms were effective in the north, in the south and lower Yangzi valley, where Kangxi had wooed the elites, there were long established networks of officials and landowners. Yongzheng dispatched experienced Manchu commissioners to penetrate the thickets of falsified land registers and coded account books, but they were met with tricks, passivity, and even violence. The fiscal crisis persisted.

Yongzheng also inherited diplomatic and strategic problems. A team made up entirely of Manchus drew up the Treaty of Kyakhta (1727) to solidify the diplomatic

understanding with Russia. In exchange for territory and trading rights, the Qing would have a free hand dealing with the situation in Mongolia. Yongzheng then turned to that situation, where the Zunghars threatened to re-emerge, and to the southwest, where local Miao chieftains resisted Qing expansion. These campaigns drained the treasury but established the emperor's control of the military and military finance.

The Yongzheng Emperor died in 1735. His 24-year-old son, Prince Bao, then became the **Qianlong Emperor**. Qianlong personally led military campaigns near Xinjiang and Mongolia, putting down revolts and uprisings in Sichuan and parts of southern China while expanding control over Tibet.

Qianlong's reign saw the launch of several ambitious cultural projects, including the compilation of the *Siku Quanshu*, or *Complete Repository of the Four Branches of Literature*. With a total of over 3,400 books, 79,000 chapters, and 36,304 volumes, the *Siku Quanshu* is the largest collection of books in Chinese history. Nevertheless, Qianlong used Literary Inquisition to silence opposition. The accusation of individuals began with the emperor's own interpretation of the true meaning of the corresponding words. If the emperor decided these were derogatory or cynical towards the dynasty, persecution would begin. Literary inquisition began with isolated cases at the time of Shunzhi and Kangxi, but became a pattern under Qianlong's rule, during which **there were 53 cases of literary persecution**.

Later Years of Qing Dynasty

Beneath outward prosperity and imperial confidence, the later years of Qianlong's reign saw rampant corruption and neglect. Heshen, the emperor's handsome young favorite, took advantage of the emperor's indulgence to become one of the most corrupt officials in the history of the dynasty. Qianlong's son, the Jiaqing Emperor (r. 1796–1820), eventually forced Heshen to commit suicide.

China also began suffering from mounting overpopulation during this period. Population growth was stagnant for the first half of the 17th century due to civil wars and epidemics, but prosperity and internal stability gradually reversed this trend. The introduction of new crops from the Americas such as the potato and peanut allowed an improved food supply as well, so that the total population of China during the 18th century ballooned from 100 million to 300 million people. Soon all available farmland was used up, forcing peasants to work ever-smaller and more intensely worked plots.



The Qing Empire ca. 1820

By Philg88: Attribution Wikimedia Foundation, www.wikimedia.org - Own work Incorporates modified version of File:Empire of the Great Qing (orthographic projection).svg, CC BY 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=32457960>

The Qianlong Emperor once bemoaned the country's situation by remarking "The population continues to grow, but the land does not." The only remaining part of the empire that had arable farmland was Manchuria, where the provinces of Jilin and Heilongjiang had been walled off as a Manchu homeland. The emperor decreed that Han Chinese civilians were forbidden to settle in Manchu homeland. Mongols were forbidden by the Qing from crossing the borders of their banners, even into other Mongol Banners and from crossing into neidi (the Han Chinese 18 provinces) and were given serious punishments if they did in order to keep the Mongols divided against each other to benefit the Qing.

Despite officially prohibiting Han Chinese settlement on the Manchu and Mongol lands, by the 18th century the Qing decided to settle Han refugees from northern China who were suffering from famine, floods, and drought into Manchuria and Inner Mongolia.



Qing dynasty in 1820, with provinces in yellow, military governorates and protectorates in light yellow, tributary states in orange.

By Pryaltonian - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4873648>

In 1796, open rebellion by the White Lotus Society against the Qing government broke out. The White Lotus Rebellion continued for eight years, until 1804, and marked a turning point in the history of the Qing dynasty.

The White Lotus originated as a hybrid movement of Buddhism and Manichaeism that emphasized strict vegetarianism and permitted men and women to interact freely, which was socially shocking. Like other secret societies, they covered up their unusual or illicit activities as "incense-burning ceremonies". The first signs of the White Lotus Society came during the late thirteenth century. Mongol rule over China, the Yuan dynasty, prompted small yet popular demonstrations against its rule. The White Lotus Society took part in some of these protests as they grew into widespread dissent.

The **White Lotus Rebellion**, (1796–1804 CE) was initiated by followers of the White Lotus movement. The rebellion began in 1794, when large groups of rebels claiming White Lotus affiliations rose up within the mountainous region that separated Sichuan province from Hubei and Shaanxi provinces. Although the rebellion was finally crushed by the Qing government in 1804, it marked a turning point in the

history of the Qing dynasty. Qing control weakened and prosperity diminished by the 19th century. The rebellion is estimated to have caused the **deaths of some 100,000 rebels**.

Taiping Rebellion

The Taiping Rebellion or the Taiping Civil War was a massive rebellion or civil war in China that lasted from 1850 to 1864 and was fought between the established Manchu-led Qing dynasty and the millenarian movement of the Heavenly Kingdom of Peace.

The Taiping Rebellion began in the southern province of Guangxi when local officials launched a campaign of religious persecution against a millenarian sect known as the God Worshipping Society led by Hong Xiuquan, who believed himself to be the younger brother of Jesus Christ. The goals of the Taipings were religious, nationalist, and political in nature; they sought the conversion of the Chinese people to the Taiping's version of Christianity, the overthrow of the ruling Manchus, and a wholesale transformation and reformation of the state. Rather than simply supplanting the ruling class, the Taipings sought to upend the moral and social order of China. The war was mostly fought in the provinces of Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui, Jiangxi and Hubei, but over 14 years of war the Taiping Army had marched through every province of China proper except Gansu. The war was the largest in China since the Qing conquest in 1644. It also ranks as **one of the bloodiest wars in human history, the bloodiest civil war and the largest conflict of the 19th century**, with estimates of the war dead ranging from 20–70 million to as high as 100 million, with millions more displaced.

Socially and economically, the Taiping rebels came almost exclusively from the lowest classes. Many of the southern Taiping troops were former miners, especially those coming from the Zhuang. Very few Taiping rebels, even in the leadership caste, came from the imperial bureaucracy. Almost none were landlords and in occupied territories landlords were often executed.

The Taiping Rebellion was a total war. Almost every citizen of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom was given military training and conscripted into the army to fight against Qing imperial forces. Initial success of Taiping Rebels had led to internal feuds, defections and corruption.



Extent of Taiping control in 1854 (in red)

By Zolo - File:Qing Dynasty 1820.png, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=5103811>

During this conflict, both sides tried to deprive each other of the resources needed to continue the war and it became standard practice to destroy agricultural areas, butcher the population of cities, and in general exact a brutal price from captured enemy lands to drastically weaken the opposition's war effort. This war was total in the sense that civilians on both sides participated to a significant extent in the war effort and that armies on both sides waged war on the civilian population as well as military forces.

This resulted in a massive civilian death toll with some 600 towns destroyed and other bloody policies resulting. Since the rebellion began in Guangxi, Qing forces allowed no rebels speaking its dialect to surrender. Reportedly in the province of Guangdong, it is written that 1,000,000 were executed.

Beyond the staggering human and economic devastation, the Taiping Rebellion led to lasting changes to the late Qing dynasty. Power was, to a limited extent, decentralized, and ethnic Chinese officials were more widely employed in high positions. The use of regular troops was gradually abandoned and replaced with personally organized armies. Ultimately, the Taiping Rebellion provided inspiration to

Sun Yat-sen and other future revolutionaries, with some surviving Taiping veterans even joining the Revive China Society.

Notably, British and French troops, equipped with modern weapons, had come to the assistance of the Qing imperial army. With international support on their side, it was in 1864 that Qing armies succeeded in crushing the revolt.

After the outbreak of this rebellion, there were also revolts by the Muslims and Miao people of China against the Qing dynasty, most notably in the **Miao Rebellion (1854–73)** in Guizhou, the **Panthay Rebellion (1856–1873)** in Yunnan and the **Dungan Revolt (1862–77)** in the northwest.

Sino-Sikh War

The Sino-Sikh War (also referred to as the Dogra War) was fought from May 1841 to August 1842, between the forces of Qing China and the Sikh Empire forces led by General Zorawar Singh Kahluria. The war resulted in an overall military stalemate.

Zorawar Singh had captured Ladakh, Kargil, Suru Valley, Baltistan, Gilgit, Hunza and Yagistan principalities between 1835 and 1840; these became part of the unified kingdom of Maharaja Gulab Singh in 1846.



General Zorawar Singh

By Sahuajeet at English Wikipedia, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=22407491>

In 1841, Zorawar Singh invaded western Tibet. Initially, things went well and the Dogra forces crossed Mansarovar Lake and reached Gartok. But the Tibetans resorted to guerrilla tactics and were supported by the Manchu Qing Empire which had taken control of Tibet from the early 18th century; it was secretly aided by the Nepal king. In a pitched battle, Zorawar Singh was beheaded and the invaders

routed. The Qing forces chased the retreating Dogras to Ladakh, but were defeated at the Battle of Chushul (August 1842) and their general beheaded to avenge the death of Zorawar Singh.

The subsequent Treaty of Chushul called for *status quo ante bellum*, with no transgressions or interference in the other country's frontiers, as neither side wanted war. By this time the Sikhs were having problems with the British that resulted in the First Anglo-Sikh War, and the Chinese were caught in the First Opium War with the British East India Company. Even though Sikhs and Chinese were both fighting the British, inability to join hands against a common foe led to weakness of both of them.

Opium Wars

The Opium Wars were two wars in the mid-19th century involving Anglo-Chinese disputes over British trade in China and China's sovereignty. The disputes included the First Opium War (1839–1842) and the Second Opium War (1856–1860). The wars and events between them weakened the Qing dynasty.

Qing China followed a Confucian-Modernist economic philosophy that called for strict government intervention in industry for the sake of preserving societal stability. While the Qing state was not explicitly anti-trade, a perceived lack of need for imports limited pressure on the government to open further ports to international trade. Qing China's rigid merchant hierarchy also blocked efforts to open ports to foreign ships and businesses. Chinese merchants in the interior wanted to avoid market fluctuations caused by importing foreign goods that would compete with domestic production, while the *Hong* houses of Guangzhou (Canton) profited greatly by keeping their city the only entry point for foreign products.

In the 17th and 18th centuries demand for Chinese goods (particularly silk, porcelain, and tea) in Europe created a trade imbalance between Qing Imperial China and Great Britain. European silver flowed into China through the Canton System, which confined incoming foreign trade to Guangzhou (Canton) and the Chinese merchants of the Thirteen Factories. To counter this imbalance, the British East India Company began to auction opium grown in India to independent foreign traders in exchange for silver, and in doing so strengthened its trading influence in Asia. The opium was transported to the Chinese coast where local middlemen made massive profits selling the drug inside China. The influx of narcotics reversed the Chinese trade surplus, drained the economy of silver, and increased the numbers of opium addicts inside the country, outcomes that worried Chinese officials.

In 1839 the Daoguang Emperor, rejecting proposals to legalize and tax opium, appointed viceroy Lin Zexu to solve the problem by banning the opium trade. Lin confiscated around 20,000 chests of opium (approximately 1210 tons) without offering compensation and ordered a blockade of foreign trade in Canton. The British government, although not officially denying China's right to control imports of the drug, objected to this unexpected seizure and dispatched a military force to China. In the ensuing conflict the Royal Navy used naval and gunnery power to inflict a series of decisive defeats on the Chinese Empire, a tactic later referred to as gunboat diplomacy.

In 1842 the Qing Dynasty was forced to sign the **Treaty of Nanking** — the first of what the Chinese later called the unequal treaties — which granted an indemnity and extraterritoriality to Britain, opened five treaty ports to foreign merchants, and ceded Hong Kong Island to the British Empire. The failure of the treaty to satisfy British goals of improved trade and diplomatic relations led to the **Second Opium War** (1856–60), and the Qing defeat resulted in social unrest within China.

The 1850s saw the rapid growth of Western imperialism. Some of the shared goals of the western powers were the expansion of their overseas markets and the establishment of new ports of call. The French Treaty of Huangpu and the American Wangxia Treaty both contained clauses allowing renegotiation of the treaties after 12 years of being in effect. In an effort to expand their privileges in China, Britain demanded the Qing authorities renegotiate the Treaty of Nanking, citing their most favored nation status. The British demands included opening all of China to British merchant companies, legalizing the opium trade, exempting foreign imports from internal transit duties, suppression of piracy, regulation of the coolie trade, permission for a British ambassador to reside in Beijing and for the English language version of all treaties to take precedence over the Chinese language.

In October 1856, Chinese marines in Canton seized a cargo ship called the *Arrow* on suspicion of piracy, arresting twelve of its fourteen Chinese crew members. The **Arrow** had previously been used by pirates, captured by the Chinese government, and subsequently resold. It was then registered as a British ship and still flew the British flag at the time of its detainment, though its registration had expired. The British consul contacted Ye Mingchen, imperial commissioner and Viceroy of Liangguang, to demand the immediate release of the crew, and an apology for the alleged insult to the flag. Ye released nine of the crew members, but refused to release the last three.

On 23 October the British destroyed four barrier forts. On 25 October a demand was made for the British to be allowed to enter the city. Next day the British started to bombard the city. Ye Mingchen issued a bounty on every British head taken. On 29 October a hole was blasted in the city walls and troops entered. Losses were 3 killed and 12 wounded. Negotiations failed and the city was bombarded. On 6 November 23 war junks attacked and were destroyed. There were pauses for talks, with the British bombarding at intervals, fires were caused, then on 5 January 1857, the British returned to Hong Kong.

Through 1857, British forces began to assemble in Hong Kong, they were joined by a French force. In December 1857 they had sufficient ships and men to raise the issue of the non fulfillment of the treaty obligations by which the right of entry into Canton had been accorded.

Although the British were delayed by the Indian War of Independence of 1857, they followed up the *Arrow* Incident and attacked Guangzhou from the Pearl River. Viceroy Ye Mingchen ordered all Chinese soldiers manning the forts not to resist the British incursion. After taking the fort near Guangzhou with little effort, the British Army attacked Guangzhou.

In June 1858 the first part of the war ended with the four **Treaties of Tientsin**, to which Britain, France, Russia, and the U.S. were parties. The Chinese initially refused to ratify the treaties.

The major points of the treaty were:

1. Britain, France, Russia, and the U.S. would have the right to establish diplomatic legations (small embassies) in Peking (now known as Beijing) (a closed city at the time).
2. Ten more Chinese ports would be opened for foreign trade, including Niuzhuang, Tamsui, Hankou, and Nanjing.
3. The right of all foreign vessels including commercial ships to navigate freely on the Yangtze River.
4. The right of foreigners to travel in the internal regions of China, which had been formerly banned.

5. China was to pay an indemnity of four million taels of silver to Britain and two million to France.

On 28 May 1858, the separate **Treaty of Aigun** was signed with Russia to revise the Chinese and Russian border as determined by the Nerchinsk Treaty in 1689. Russia gained the left bank of the Amur River, pushing the border south from the Stanovoy mountains. A later treaty, the Convention of Peking in 1860, gave Russia control over a non-freezing area on the Pacific coast, where Russia founded the city of Vladivostok in 1860.

On 20 May the **First Battle of Taku Forts** was successful, but the peace treaty returned the forts to the Qing army. In June 1858, shortly after the Qing imperial court agreed to the disadvantageous treaties, hawkish ministers prevailed upon the Xianfeng Emperor to resist Western encroachment. The **Second Battle of Taku Forts** took place in June 1859. A British naval force with 2,200 troops and 21 ships, under the command of Admiral Sir James Hope, sailed north from Shanghai to Tianjin with newly appointed Anglo-French envoys for the embassies in Beijing. British and French forces had to beat a retreat. The failure to take the Taku Forts was a blow to British prestige, and anti-foreign resistance reached a crescendo within the Qing imperial court.

The **Third Battle of Taku Forts** took place in the summer of 1860. London once more dispatched an Anglo-French force of 11,000 British troops and 6,700 French troops. They pushed north with 173 ships from Hong Kong and captured the port cities of Yantai and Dalian to seal the Bohai Gulf. On 3 August they carried out a landing near Beitang, some 3 km from the Taku Forts, which they captured after three weeks on 21 August.

The Anglo-French forces clashed with Mongol cavalry on 18 September near Zhangjiawan before proceeding toward the outskirts of Beijing for a decisive battle in Tongzhou. On 21 September, at Baliqiao (Eight Mile Bridge), 10,000 Chinese troops, including the elite Mongol cavalry, were annihilated after doomed frontal charges against concentrated firepower of the Anglo-French forces, which entered Beijing on 6 October.

With the Qing army devastated, the Xianfeng Emperor fled the capital and left behind his brother, Prince Gong, to take charge of peace negotiations. Xianfeng first fled to the Chengde Summer Palace and then to Rehe Province. Anglo-French troops in

Beijing began looting the Summer Palace and Old Summer Palace immediately (as they were full of valuable artwork). The palaces were later burnt down.



Ruins of the "Western style" complex in the Old Summer Palace, burnt down by Anglo-French forces.
By Cleo7903 at English Wikipedia - Transferred from en.wikipedia to Commons. (original text: photo taken by myself. Feb/2005), Public Domain,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4570145>

After the Xianfeng Emperor and his entourage fled Beijing, the June 1858 **Treaty of Tianjin** was ratified by the emperor's brother, **Prince Gong**, in the **Convention of Beijing** on 18 October 1860, bringing **The Second Opium War** to an end.

The content of the Convention of Beijing included:

1. China's signing of the Treaty of Tianjin
2. Opening Tianjin as a trade port
3. Cede No.1 District of Kowloon (south of present-day Boundary Street) to Britain
4. Freedom of religion established in China. (Christians were granted full civil rights)
5. British ships were allowed to carry indentured Chinese to the Americas
6. Indemnity to Britain and France increasing to 8 million taels of silver apiece

7. Legalization of the opium trade

Two weeks later, Russia forced the Qing government to sign a "Supplementary Treaty of Peking" which ceded the Maritime Provinces east of the Ussuri River (forming part of Outer Manchuria) to the Russians who went on to found the port of Vladivostok between 1860–61.

The defeat of the Qing army by a relatively small Anglo-French military force (outnumbered at least 10 to 1 by the Qing army) coupled with the flight (and subsequent death) of the Xianfeng Emperor and the burning of the Summer Palaces was a shocking blow to the once powerful Qing Empire.

Self-strengthening, Reform, Wars, Collapse

From 1860 to 1912, Qing empire made desperate attempts to gain strength but eventually failed.

While the impact of defeat in Second Opium War was too large to ignore, Chinese generals and officials led the suppression of rebellions and stood behind the Manchus. When the Tongzhi Emperor came to the throne at the age of five in 1861, these officials rallied around him in what was called the Tongzhi Restoration. Their aim was to adopt western military technology in order to preserve Confucian values. They put the dynasty back on its feet financially and instituted the Self-Strengthening Movement. The reformers then proceeded with institutional reforms, including China's first unified ministry of foreign affairs, allowing foreign diplomats to reside in the capital; establishment of the Imperial Maritime Customs Service; the formation of modernized armies, as well as a navy; and the purchase from Europeans of armament factories.

The dynasty lost control of peripheral territories bit by bit. In return for promises of support against the British and the French, the Russian Empire took large chunks of territory in the Northeast in 1860. The period of cooperation between the reformers and the European powers ended with the Tientsin Massacre of 1870.

Starting with the Cochinchina Campaign in 1858, France expanded control of Indochina. By 1883, France was in full control of the region and had reached the Chinese border. The Sino-French War began with a surprise attack by the French on the Chinese southern fleet at Fuzhou. After that the Chinese declared war on the French. A French invasion of Taiwan was halted and the French were defeated on land in Tonkin at the Battle of Bang Bo. However Japan threatened to enter the war

against China due to the Gapsin Coup and China chose to end the war with negotiations. The war ended in 1885 with the Treaty of Tientsin (1885) and the Chinese recognition of the French protectorate in Vietnam.

In 1884, pro-Japanese Koreans in Seoul led the Gapsin Coup. Tensions between China and Japan rose after China intervened to suppress the uprising. Japan and China signed the Convention of Tientsin (1885), an agreement to withdraw troops simultaneously. Despite the agreement, tensions continued to simmer between China and Japan. The **First Sino-Japanese War of 1895 was a military humiliation for China**. The Treaty of Shimonoseki (April 1895) recognized Korean independence and ceded Taiwan and the Pescadores to Japan.

On November 1, 1897, two German Roman Catholic missionaries were murdered in the southern part of Shandong Province (the Juye Incident). Germany used the murders as a pretext for a naval occupation of Jiaozhou Bay. The occupation prompted a "scramble for concessions" in 1898, which included the **German lease of Jiaozhou Bay, the Russian acquisition of Liaodong, and the British lease of the New Territories of Hong Kong**.

Widespread drought in North China, combined with the imperialist designs of European powers and the instability of the Qing government, created conditions that led to the emergence of the Righteous and Harmonious Fists, or "Boxers." In 1900, local groups of Boxers proclaiming support for the Qing dynasty murdered foreign missionaries and large numbers of Chinese Christians, then converged on Beijing to besiege the Foreign Legation Quarter. A coalition of European, Japanese, and Russian armies (the Eight-Nation Alliance) then entered China without diplomatic notice, much less permission. Empress of China declared war on all of these nations, only to lose control of Beijing after a short, but hard-fought campaign. She fled to Xi'an. The victorious allies drew up scores of demands on the Qing government, including compensation for their expenses in invading China and execution of complicit officials.

By the early 20th century, mass civil disorder had begun in China, and it was growing continuously. To overcome such problems, Empress Dowager Cixi issued an imperial edict in 1901 calling for reform proposals from the governors-general and governors and initiated the era of the dynasty's "New Policies", also known as the "Late Qing Reform". The edict paved the way for the most far-reaching reforms in terms of their social consequences, including the creation of a national education system and the abolition of the imperial examinations in 1905.

The Guangxu Emperor died on November 14, 1908, and on November 15, 1908, Cixi also died. Puyi, the oldest son of Zaifeng, Prince Chun, and nephew to the childless Guangxu Emperor, was appointed successor at the age of two. However, his reign was short-lived. **On 12 February 1912**, an imperial edict bringing about the abdication of the child emperor Puyi was issued thus **ending the Qing Empire**. A period of instability and warlord factionalism began. The unorganized political and economic systems combined with a widespread criticism of Chinese culture led to questioning and doubt about the future.

C. Modern History of China

C1. Republic of China (1912-1949 CE)

In 1912, after over two thousand years of imperial rule, a republic was established to replace the monarchy. The Qing Dynasty, having just experienced a century of instability, suffered from both internal rebellion and foreign imperialism. A program of institutional reform proved too little and too late. Only the lack of an alternative regime prolonged its existence until 1912.

The establishment of Republican China developed out of the Wuchang Uprising against the Qing on **10 October 1911**. That date is now celebrated annually as the ROC's (Taiwan's) **national day**, also known as the "Double Ten Day". On 29 December 1911, Sun Yat-Sen was elected president by the Nanjing assembly representing seventeen provinces. On 1 January 1912, he was officially inaugurated and pledged "to overthrow the despotic Manchu government, consolidate the Republic of China and plan for the welfare of the people".

Sun, however, lacked the military support. Realizing this, he handed over the presidency to **Yuan Shikai**, the imperial general, who then forced the last emperor, Puyi, to abdicate.



Yuan Shikai, Emperor of China, Reign - 22 December 1915 – 22 March 1916

By Photo by Rio V. De Sieux - The New York Times Current History: The European War (April–June 1915). Volume 3. p. 380., Public Domain,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=634405>

Yuan was officially elected president in 1913. He ruled by military power and ignored the republican institutions established by his predecessor, threatening to execute Senate members who disagreed with his decisions. He soon dissolved the ruling

Kuomintang (KMT) party, banned "secret organizations" (which implicitly included the KMT), and ignored the provisional constitution. An attempt at a democratic election in 1912 ended with the assassination of the elected candidate by a man recruited by Yuan. Ultimately, Yuan declared himself Emperor of China in 1915.

The new ruler of China tried to increase centralization by abolishing the provincial system; however, this move angered the gentry along with the provincial governors, usually military men. Many provinces declared independence and became warlord states. Increasingly unpopular and deserted by his supporters, Yuan gave up being Emperor in 1916 and died of natural causes shortly after.

China declined into a period of warlordism. Sun, forced into exile, returned to Guangdong province in the south with the help of warlords in 1917 and 1922, and set up successive rival governments to the Beiyang government in Beijing; he re-established the KMT in October 1919. Sun's dream was to unify China by launching an expedition to the north. However, he lacked military support and funding to make it a reality.

Meanwhile, the Beiyang government struggled to hold on to power, and an open and wide-ranging debate evolved regarding how China should confront the West. In 1919, a student protest against the government's weak response to the Treaty of Versailles, considered unfair by Chinese intellectuals, led to the May Fourth movement. These demonstrations were aimed at spreading Western influence to replace Chinese culture. It is also in this intellectual climate that the influence of Marxism spread and became more popular. It eventually led to the founding of the Communist Party of China in 1921

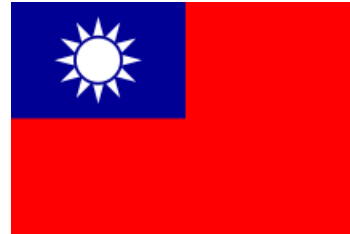
After Sun's death in March 1925, **Chiang Kai-shek** became the leader of the KMT. In 1926, Chiang led the **Northern Expedition** through China with the intention of defeating the Beiyang warlords and unifying the country. Chiang received the help of the Soviet Union and the Chinese Communists; however, he soon dismissed his Soviet advisers. He was convinced, not without reason, that they wanted to get rid of the KMT (also known as the Nationalists) and take over control. Chiang decided to strike first and purged the Communists, killing thousands of them. At the same time, other violent conflicts were taking place in China; in the South, where the Communists had superior numbers, Nationalist supporters were being massacred. These events eventually led to the **Chinese Civil War** between the Nationalists and Communists. Chiang Kai-shek pushed the Communists into the interior as he sought to destroy them, and established a government with Nanking as its capital in 1927.

By 1928, Chiang's army overturned the Beiyang government and unified the entire nation, at least nominally, beginning the so-called **Nanjing Decade**.



Flag 1912-28

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Flag 1928-49

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According to Sun Yat-sen's theory, the KMT was to rebuild China in three phases: a phase of military rule through which the KMT would take over power and reunite China by force; a phase of political tutelage; and finally a constitutional democratic phase. In 1930, the Nationalists, having taken over power militarily and reunified China, started the second phase, promulgating a provisional constitution and beginning the period of so-called "tutelage". The KMT was criticized as instituting totalitarianism, but claimed it was attempting to establish a modern democratic society. Among other things, it created at that time the Academia Sinica, the Central Bank of China, and other agencies. Laws were passed and campaigns mounted to promote the rights of women. The ease and speed of communication also allowed a focus on social problems, including those of the villages. The Rural Reconstruction Movement was one of many which took advantage of the new freedom to raise social consciousness.

Historians have argued that establishing a democracy in China at that time was not possible. The nation was at war and divided between Communists and Nationalists. Corruption within the government and lack of direction also prevented any significant reform from taking place. Chiang realized the lack of real work being done within his administration and told the State Council: "Our organization becomes worse and worse... many staff members just sit at their desks and gaze into space, others read newspapers and still others sleep." The Nationalist government wrote a draft of the constitution on 5 May 1936.

During this time a series of massive wars took place in western China, including the Kumul Rebellion, the Sino-Tibetan War and the Soviet Invasion of Xinjiang. Although the central government was nominally in control of the entire country during this period, large areas of China remained under the semi-autonomous rule of local warlords, provincial military leaders or warlord coalitions. Nationalist rule was strongest in the eastern regions around the capital Nanjing, but regional militarists

retained considerable local authority. The Central Plains War in 1930, the Japanese aggression in 1931 and the Red Army's Long March in 1934 led to more power for the central government, but there continued to be foot-dragging and even outright defiance, as in the Fujian Rebellion of 1933–34.

Second World War

Japan initiated the seizure of Manchuria in September 1931 and established ex-Qing emperor Puyi as head of the puppet state of Manchukuo in 1932. The loss of Manchuria, and its vast potential for industrial development and war industries, was a blow to the Kuomintang economy.

The Japanese began to push from south of the Great Wall into northern China and the coastal provinces. Chinese fury against Japan was predictable, but anger was also directed against Chiang and the Nanking government, which at the time was more preoccupied with anti-Communist extermination campaigns than with resisting the Japanese invaders. The importance of "internal unity before external danger" was forcefully brought home in December 1936, when Chiang Kai-shek, in an event now known as the Xi'an Incident, was kidnapped and forced to ally with the Communists against the Japanese in the Second Kuomintang-CCP United Front against Japan.



The corpses of massacred victims on the shore of the Qinhuai River with a Japanese soldier standing nearby

By Originally Moriyasu Murase, Derivative work of a photograph taken by Moriyasu Murase, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=978955>

A skirmish between Chinese and Japanese forces outside Beijing on 7 July 1937 led to open, though undeclared, warfare between China and Japan. Shanghai fell after a three-month battle during which Japan suffered extensive casualties, both in its army and navy. The capital of Nanking fell in December 1937. It was followed by an orgy of mass murders and rapes known as the **Nanking Massacre**.

The national capital was briefly at Wuhan, then removed in an epic retreat to Chongqing, the seat of government until 1945.

The United Front between the Kuomintang and Communist Party of China (CCP) took place with salutary effects for the beleaguered CCP, despite Japan's steady territorial gains in northern China, the coastal regions and the rich Yangtze River Valley in central China. After 1940 conflicts between the Kuomintang and Communists became more frequent in the areas not under Japanese control. The entrance of the United States into the Pacific War after 1941 changed the nature of their relationship. The Communists expanded their influence wherever opportunities presented themselves through mass organizations, administrative reforms and the land and tax-reform measures favoring the peasants and the spread of their organizational network, while the Kuomintang attempted to neutralize the spread of Communist influence.

In 1945 the Republic of China emerged from the war nominally a great military power but actually a nation economically prostrate and on the verge of all-out civil war. The economy deteriorated, sapped by the military demands of foreign war and internal strife, by spiraling inflation and by Nationalist profiteering, speculation and hoarding. Starvation came in the wake of the war, and millions were rendered homeless by floods and the unsettled conditions in many parts of the country.

The situation was further complicated by an Allied agreement at the Yalta Conference in February 1945 that brought Soviet troops into Manchuria to hasten the termination of war against Japan. Although the Chinese had not been present at Yalta, they had been consulted and had agreed to have the Soviets enter the war in the belief that the Soviet Union would deal only with the Kuomintang government. In reality, Soviet presence in northeast China enabled the Communists to move in long enough to arm themselves with the equipment surrendered by the withdrawing Japanese army.

After Second World War

During World War II the United States emerged as a major player in Chinese affairs. As an ally it embarked in late 1941 on a program of massive military and financial aid to the hard-pressed Nationalist Government. In January 1943 the United States and Britain led the way in revising their treaties with China, bringing to an end a century of unequal treaty relations.

Within a few months a new agreement was signed between the United States and the Republic of China for the stationing of American troops in China for the common war effort against Japan. In December 1943 the Chinese Exclusion Acts of the 1880s and subsequent laws enacted by the United States Congress to restrict Chinese immigration into the United States were repealed.

The wartime policy of the United States was initially to help China become a strong ally and a stabilizing force in postwar East Asia. As the conflict between the Kuomintang and the Communists intensified, however, the United States sought unsuccessfully to reconcile the rival forces for a more effective anti-Japanese war effort.

Following the surrender of Japan, Taiwan was handed over from Japan to the Republic of China on 25 October 1945. Toward the end of the war, United States Marines were used to hold Beijing and Tianjin against a possible Soviet incursion, and logistic support was given to Kuomintang forces in north and northeast China. During the war, China was one of the Big Four Allied Powers of World War II.

Through the mediating influence of the United States a military truce was arranged in January 1946, but battles between the Kuomintang and Communists soon resumed. Public opinion of the administrative incompetence of the Republic of China government was escalated and incited by the Communists. Realizing that no American efforts short of large-scale armed intervention could stop the coming war, the United States withdrew the American mission in early 1947. The Chinese Civil War became more widespread; battles raged not only for territories but also for the allegiance of cross-sections of the population. The United States aided the Nationalists with massive economic loans and weapons but no combat support.

Belatedly, the Republic of China government sought to enlist popular support through internal reforms. The effort was in vain, however, because of rampant government corruption and the accompanying political and economic chaos. By late

1948 the Kuomintang position was bleak. The demoralized and undisciplined Kuomintang troops proved to be no match for the motivated and disciplined Communist People's Liberation Army, earlier known as the Red Army. The Communists were well established in the north and northeast.

Although the Kuomintang had an advantage in numbers of men and weapons, controlled a much larger territory and population than their adversaries and enjoyed considerable international support, they were exhausted by the long war with Japan and in-fighting among various generals. They were also losing the propaganda war to the Communists, with a population weary of Kuomintang corruption and yearning for peace.

C2. Chinese Civil War

The **Chinese Civil War** was fought between the Kuomintang (KMT)-led government of the Republic of China and the Communist Party of China (CPC). Although many authorities pay particular attention to the four years from 1945 to 1949, others date the conflict from the civil war that began in August 1927.

The conflict took place in two stages: the first between 1927 and 1937, and the second from 1946 to 1950, with the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) separating them. The war marked a major turning point in modern Chinese history, with the CPC gaining control of almost the entirety of Mainland China and establishing (1949) the People's Republic of China (PRC) to replace the KMT's Republic of China(ROC). It resulted in a lasting political and military standoff between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait, with the ROC in Taiwan and the PRC in mainland China both officially claiming to be the legitimate government of all of China.

The war represented an ideological split between the Communist CPC and the KMT's brand of nationalism.

In early 1927, the KMT-CPC rivalry led to a split in the revolutionary ranks. The CPC and the left wing of the KMT had decided to move the seat of the KMT government from Guangzhou to Wuhan, where communist influence was strong. On April 7, Chiang and several other KMT leaders held a meeting, during which they proposed that Communist activities were socially and economically disruptive and had to be undone for the national revolution to proceed. On April 12, in Shanghai, the KMT

was purged of leftists with the arrest and execution of hundreds of CPC members. On 1 August 1927, CPC took arms and clashed with the KMT government. This conflict led to the creation of the Red Army. This marked the beginning of a ten-year armed struggle, known in mainland China as the "Ten-Year Civil War" which ended when Chiang Kai-shek was forced to form the Second United Front against invading forces from Japan.

Under the terms of the Japanese unconditional surrender dictated by the United States, Japanese troops were ordered to surrender to KMT troops and not to the CPC, which was present in some of the occupied areas. In Manchuria, however, where the KMT had no forces, the Japanese surrendered to the Soviet Union. Chiang Kai-shek ordered the Japanese troops to remain at their post to receive the Kuomintang and not surrender their arms to the Communists. Soviet leader Joseph Stalin commanded his forces to give Mao Zedong most Imperial Japanese Army weapons that were captured.

The truce between KMT and CPC fell apart in June 1946 when full-scale war between the two forces broke out on June 26. China then entered a state of civil war that lasted more than three years.

By the end of the Second Sino-Japanese War, the power of the Communist Party grew considerably. Their main force grew to 1.2 million troops, with a militia of 2 million. Their "Liberated Zone" contained 19 base areas, including one-quarter of the country's territory and one-third of its population; this included many important towns and cities.

The CPC was able to utilize a large number of weapons abandoned by the Japanese, including some tanks, but it was not until large numbers of well-trained KMT troops began surrendering and joining the Communist forces that the CPC was finally able to master the hardware. However, despite the disadvantage in military hardware, the CPC's ultimate trump card was its land reform policy. The CPC continued to make the irresistible promise in the countryside to the massive number of landless and starving peasants that by fighting for the CPC they would be given their own land once the victory was won. This strategy enabled the CPC to access an almost unlimited supply of manpower for both combat and logistical purposes, despite suffering heavy casualties throughout many of the war's campaigns. For example, during the Huaihai Campaign alone the CPC was able to mobilize 5,430,000 peasants to fight against the KMT forces.

The US strongly supported the Kuomintang forces. Over 50,000 US Marines were sent to guard strategic sites, and 100,000 US troops were sent to Shandong. The US equipped and trained over 500,000 KMT troops, and transported KMT forces to occupy newly liberated zones as well as to contain Communist-controlled areas. American aid included substantial amounts of both new and surplus military supplies; additionally, loans worth hundreds of millions of dollars were made to the KMT. Within less than two years after the Sino-Japanese War, the KMT had received \$4.43 billion from the US—most of which was military aid.

On 20 July 1946 Chiang Kai-shek launched a large-scale assault on Communist territory with 113 brigades (1.6 million troops). This marked the final phase of the Chinese Civil War.

Knowing their disadvantages in manpower and equipment, the CPC executed a "passive defense" strategy. It avoided the strong points of the KMT army and was prepared to abandon territory in order to preserve its forces. In most cases the surrounding countryside and small towns had come under Communist influence long before the cities. The CPC also attempted to wear out the KMT forces as much as possible. This tactic seemed to be successful; after a year, the power balance became more favorable to the CPC. **They wiped out 1.12 million KMT troops**, while their strength grew to about two million men.

By late 1948, the CPC eventually captured the northern cities of Shenyang and Changchun and seized control of the Northeast after suffering numerous setbacks while trying to take the cities. The New 1st Army, regarded as the best KMT army, was forced to surrender after the CPC conducted a brutal six-month siege of Changchun that resulted in more than 150,000 civilian deaths from starvation.

The capture of large KMT units provided the CPC with the tanks, heavy artillery and other combined-arms assets needed to execute offensive operations south of the Great Wall. By April 1948 the city of Luoyang fell, cutting the KMT army off from Xi'an. Following a fierce battle, the CPC captured Jinan and Shandong province on September 24, 1948. The Huaihai Campaign of late 1948 and early 1949 secured east-central China for the CPC. The outcome of these encounters were decisive for the military outcome of the civil war.

The **Pingjin Campaign** resulted in the Communist conquest of northern China. It lasted 64 days, from November 21, 1948, to January 31, 1949. The People's Liberation Army suffered heavy casualties while securing Zhangjiakou, Tianjin along

with its port and garrison at Dagu and Beiping. The CPC brought 890,000 troops from the northeast to oppose some 600,000 KMT troops. There were **40,000 CPC casualties** at Zhangjiakou alone. They in turn killed, wounded or captured some **520,000 KMT** during the campaign.

After the decisive Liaoshen, Huaihai and Pingjin campaigns, the CPC wiped out 144 regular and 29 non-regular KMT divisions, including 1.54 million veteran KMT troops. This effectively smashed the backbone of the KMT army.

On 21 April, 1949 Communist forces crossed the Yangtze River. On 23 April they captured the KMT's capital, Nanjing. The KMT government retreated to Canton (Guangzhou) until October 15, Chongqing until November 25, and then Chengdu before retreating to Taiwan on December 10. By late 1949 the People's Liberation Army was pursuing remnants of KMT forces southwards in southern China, and only Tibet was left.



Mao Tse-tung declares the founding of the modern People's Republic of China, October 1, 1949

By Orihara1 - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=36210407>

On October 1, 1949, Mao Tse-tung proclaimed the People's Republic of China (PRC) with its capital at Beiping, which was renamed Beijing. Chiang Kai-shek and approximately two million Nationalist Chinese retreated from mainland China to the island of Taiwan in December after the loss of Sichuan.

In December 1949, Chiang proclaimed **Taipei the temporary capital of the Republic of China (ROC)** and continued to assert his government as the sole legitimate authority in China.

By 1984 PRC and ROC had public contacts with each other and cross-straits trade and investment has been growing ever since. The war was officially declared over by the ROC in 1991. Despite the end of the hostilities, the two sides have never signed any agreement or treaty to officially end the war.

During the war both the Nationalists and Communists carried out mass atrocities, with millions of non-combatants deliberately killed by both sides. Some historians have estimated that atrocities in the Chinese Civil War resulted in the **death of between 1.8 million and 3.5 million people** between 1927 and 1949. Atrocities include deaths from forced conscription and massacres.

C3. Great Leap Forward (1958-1962 CE)

The **Great Leap Forward** of the People's Republic of China (PRC) was an economic and social campaign by the Communist Party of China (CPC) from 1958 to 1962. The campaign was led by Chairman Mao Tse-tung (also written as Mao Zedong) aimed to rapidly transform the country from an agrarian economy into a socialist society through rapid industrialization and collectivization. However, it is widely considered to have caused the Great Chinese Famine.

Chief changes in the lives of rural Chinese included the incremental introduction of mandatory agricultural collectivization. Private farming was prohibited, and those engaged in it were persecuted and labeled counter-revolutionaries. Restrictions on rural people were enforced through public struggle sessions and social pressure, although people also experienced forced labor. Rural industrialization, officially a priority of the campaign, saw "its development... aborted by the mistakes of the Great Leap Forward."

It is widely regarded by historians that The Great Leap resulted in tens of millions of deaths. A lower-end estimate is 18 million, while extensive research by Yu Xiguang suggests the **death toll from the movement is closer to 55 million**. Historian Frank Dikötter asserts that "coercion, terror, and systematic violence were the foundation of the Great Leap Forward" and it "motivated one of the most deadly mass killings of human history".

In October 1949, the Chinese Communist Party proclaimed the establishment of the People's Republic of China. Immediately, landlords and wealthier peasants had their land holdings forcibly redistributed to poorer peasants. In the agricultural sectors, crops deemed by the Party to be "full of evil", such as opium, were destroyed and replaced with crops such as rice.

Within the Party, there was major debate about redistribution. A moderate faction within the party argued that change should be gradual and any collectivization of the peasantry should wait until industrialization, which could provide the agricultural machinery for mechanized farming. A more radical faction led by Mao Tse-tung argued that the best way to finance industrialization was for the government to take control of agriculture, thereby establishing a monopoly over grain distribution and supply. This would allow the state to buy at a low price and sell much higher, thus raising the capital necessary for industrialization of the country.

Before 1949, peasants had farmed their own small pockets of land, and observed traditional practices—festivals, banquets, and paying homage to ancestors. It was realized that Mao's policy of using a state monopoly on agriculture to finance industrialization would be unpopular with the peasants. Therefore, it was proposed that the peasants should be brought under Party control by the establishment of agricultural collectives which would also facilitate the sharing of tools and draft animals.

This policy was gradually pushed through between 1949 and 1958 in response to immediate policy needs, first by establishing "mutual aid teams" of 5–15 households, then in 1953 "elementary agricultural cooperatives" of 20–40 households, then from 1956 in "higher co-operatives" of 100–300 families. From 1954 onward peasants were encouraged to form and join collective-farming associations, which would supposedly increase their efficiency without robbing them of their own land or restricting their livelihoods.

By 1958 private ownership was entirely abolished and households all over China were forced into state-operated communes. Mao insisted that the communes must produce more grain for the cities and earn foreign exchange from exports. These reforms were generally unpopular with the peasants and usually implemented by summoning them to meetings and making them stay there for days and sometimes weeks until they "voluntarily" agreed to join the collective.

Apart from progressive taxation on each household's harvest, the state introduced a system of compulsory state purchases of grain at fixed prices to build up stockpiles for famine-relief and meet the terms of its trade agreements with the Soviet Union. Together, taxation and compulsory purchases accounted for 30 percent of the harvest by 1957, leaving very little surplus. Rationing was also introduced in the cities to curb 'wasteful consumption' and encourage savings (which were deposited in state-owned banks and thus became available for investment), and although food could be purchased from state-owned retailers the market price was higher than that for which it had been purchased. This too was done in the name of discouraging excessive consumption.

Besides these economic changes the Party implemented major social changes in the countryside including the banishing of all religious and mystic institutions and ceremonies and replacing them with political meetings and propaganda sessions. Attempts were made to enhance rural education and the status of women (allowing them to initiate divorce if they desired) and ending foot-binding, child marriage and opium addiction. The old system of internal passports was introduced in 1956, preventing inter-county travel without appropriate authorization. Highest priority was given to the urban proletariat for whom a welfare state was created.

People's Communes



**In the beginning, commune members were able to eat for free at the commune canteens.
This changed when food production slowed to a halt.**

By Unknown - <http://caiquansheng1958.blog.163.com/blog/static/294985242010111291436168/>, Public Domain,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=12724220>

An experimental commune was established in April 1958. Here for the first time private plots were entirely abolished and communal kitchens were introduced. By the end of the year approximately 25,000 communes had been set up, with an average of 5,000 households each. The communes were relatively self-sufficient co-operatives where wages and money were replaced by work points.

Based on his fieldwork, Ralph A. Thaxton Jr. describes the people's communes as a form of "apartheid system" for Chinese farm households. The commune system was aimed at maximizing production for provisioning the cities and constructing offices, factories, schools, and social insurance systems for urban-dwelling workers, cadres and officials. Citizens in rural areas who criticized the system were labeled "dangerous". Escape was also difficult or impossible, and those who attempted were subjected to "party-orchestrated public struggle," which further jeopardized their survival. Besides agriculture, communes also incorporated some light industry and construction projects.

Backyard Steel Furnaces



People in the countryside working at night to produce steel

By Unknown - <http://caiquansheng1958.blog.163.com/blog/static/294985242010111291436168/>, Public Domain,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=12724509>

With no personal knowledge of metallurgy, Mao encouraged the establishment of small backyard steel furnaces in every commune and in each urban neighborhood. Huge efforts on the part of peasants and other workers were made to produce steel out of scrap metal. To fuel the furnaces, the local environment was denuded of trees and wood taken from the doors and furniture of peasants' houses. Pots, pans, and other metal artifacts were requisitioned to supply the "scrap" for the furnaces so that

the wildly optimistic production targets could be met. Many of the male agricultural workers were diverted from the harvest to help the iron production as were the workers at many factories, schools, and even hospitals.

Although the output consisted of low quality lumps of pig iron which was of negligible economic worth, Mao had a deep distrust of intellectuals who could have pointed this out and placed his faith in the power of the mass mobilization of the peasants.

Great Sparrow Campaign

The Great Sparrow Campaign also known as the **Kill a Sparrow Campaign** and, officially, as the Four Pests Campaign, was one of the first actions taken in the Great Leap Forward in China from 1958 to 1962. The four pests to be eliminated were rats, flies, mosquitoes, and sparrows.



The Eurasian tree sparrow was the most notable target of the campaign

By Andreas Trepte - File:Tree-Sparrow.jpg, CC BY-SA 2.5, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=5964819>

The "Four Pests" campaigns was introduced in 1958 by Mao Tse-tung, as a hygiene campaign aimed to eradicate the pests responsible for the transmission of pestilence and disease: the mosquitoes responsible for malaria; the rodents that spread the plague; the pervasive airborne flies; and the sparrows – specifically the Eurasian tree sparrow – which ate grain seed and fruit. As a result of this campaign, many sparrows died from exhaustion; citizens would bang pots and pans so that sparrows would not have the chance to rest on tree branches and would fall dead from the sky. Sparrow nests were also destroyed, eggs were broken, and chicks were killed. In addition to these tactics, citizens also resorted to simply shooting the birds down from the sky. These mass attacks depleted the sparrow population, pushing it to near extinction. Furthermore, contests were held among enterprises, government agencies, and schools in cleanliness. Non-material rewards were given to those who handed in the largest number of rat tails, dead flies and mosquitoes, or dead sparrows.

Some sparrows found refuge in the extraterritorial premises of various diplomatic missions in China. The personnel of the Polish embassy in Beijing denied the Chinese request of entering the premises of the embassy to scare away the sparrows who were hiding there and as a result the embassy was surrounded by people with drums. After two days of constant drumming, the Poles had to use shovels to clear the embassy of dead sparrows.

By April 1960, Chinese leaders realized that sparrows ate a large amount of insects, as well as grains. Rather than being increased, rice yields after the campaign were substantially decreased. Mao ordered the end of the campaign against sparrows, replacing them with bed bugs. By this time, however, it was too late. With no sparrows to eat them, locust populations ballooned, swarming the country and compounding the ecological problems already caused by the Great Leap Forward, including widespread deforestation and misuse of poisons and pesticides.

Crop Experiments and Famine

On the communes, a number of radical and controversial agricultural innovations were promoted at the behest of Mao. Many of these were based on the ideas of now discredited Soviet agronomist Trofim Lysenko and his followers. The policies included close cropping, whereby seeds were sown far more densely than normal on the incorrect assumption that seeds of the same class would not compete with each other. Deep plowing (up to 2 m deep) was encouraged on the mistaken belief that this would yield plants with extra large root systems. Moderately productive land was left unplanted with the belief that concentrating manure and effort on the most fertile land would lead to large per-acre productivity gains. Altogether, these untested innovations generally led to decreases in grain production rather than increases.

Meanwhile, local leaders were pressured into falsely reporting ever-higher grain production figures to their political superiors. Participants at political meetings remembered production figures being inflated up to 10 times actual production amounts as the race to please superiors and win plaudits—like the chance to meet Mao himself—intensified. The state was later able to force many production groups to sell more grain than they could spare based on these false production figures

The weather in 1958 was very favorable and the harvest promised to be good. Unfortunately, the amount of labour diverted to steel production and construction projects meant that much of the harvest was left to rot uncollected in some areas.

This problem was exacerbated by a **devastating locust swarm**, which was caused when their natural predators were killed as part of the Great Sparrow Campaign.



Photo courtesy of the Laogai Research Foundation

Source: <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/cannibalism-11222013104349.html>

Exaggerated figures reported by local units were used as a basis for determining the amount of grain to be taken by the State to supply the towns and cities, and to export. This left barely enough for the peasants, and in some areas, starvation set in. A 1959 drought and flooding from the Yellow River in the same year also contributed to famine.

During 1958–1960 **China continued to be a substantial net exporter of grain**, despite the widespread famine experienced in the countryside, as Mao sought to maintain face and convince the outside world of the success of his plans. Foreign aid was refused.

With dramatically reduced yields, even urban areas suffered much reduced rations; however, mass starvation was largely confined to the countryside, where, as a result of drastically inflated production statistics, very little grain was left for the peasants to eat. Food shortages were bad throughout the country; however, the provinces which had adopted Mao's reforms with the most vigor, such as Anhui, Gansu and Henan, tended to suffer disproportionately. Sichuan, one of China's most populous provinces, known in China as "Heaven's Granary" because of its fertility, is thought to have suffered the greatest absolute numbers of deaths from starvation due to the vigor with which provincial leader Li Jinquan undertook Mao's reforms. During the

Great Leap Forward, cases of cannibalism also occurred in the parts of China that were severely affected by famine.

The policies of the Great Leap Forward, the failure of the government to respond quickly and effectively to famine conditions, as well as Mao's insistence on maintaining high grain export quotas in the face of clear evidence of poor crop output were responsible for the famine. There is disagreement over how much, if at all, weather conditions contributed to the famine. Also there is considerable evidence the famine was intentional or due to willful negligence.

Deaths

The exact number of famine deaths is difficult to determine, and estimates range from upwards of 30 million, to 55 million people. Because of the uncertainties involved in estimating famine deaths caused by the Great Leap Forward or any famine, it is difficult to compare the severity of different famines. However, if a mid-estimate of 30 million deaths is accepted, **the Great Leap Forward was the deadliest famine in the history of China and in the history of the world.** Approximately 30 million of a population of 600 million people died, or 5 percent. Famine deaths and the reduction in number of births caused the population of China to drop in 1960 and 1961.

Not all deaths during the Great Leap were from starvation. Frank Dikötter estimates that **at least 2.5 million people were beaten or tortured to death and 1 to 3 million committed suicide.** He provides some illustrative examples. People were beaten or killed for rebelling against the government, reporting the real harvest numbers, for sounding alarm, for refusing to hand over what little food they had left, for trying to flee the famine area, for begging food or as little as stealing scraps or angering officials.

Resistance

There were various forms of resistance to the Great Leap Forward. Several provinces saw armed rebellion, though these rebellions never posed a serious threat to the Central Government. Rebellions are documented to have occurred in Henan, Shandong, Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan, Fujian, and Yunnan provinces and in the Tibetan Autonomous Region. Aside from rebellions, there was also occasional violence against cadre members. Raids on granaries, arson and other vandalism, train robberies, and raids on neighboring villages and counties were common.

Nevertheless, it can be said that the **resistance was nominal** compared to the severity of the tragedy.

C4. Cultural Revolution (1966-1976 CE)

The Cultural Revolution, formally the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, was a sociopolitical movement that took place in China from 1966 until 1976. Set into motion by Mao Tse-tung, then Chairman of the Communist Party of China, its stated goal was to preserve 'true' Communist ideology in the country by purging remnants of capitalist and traditional elements from Chinese society, and to re-impose Maoist thought as the dominant ideology within the Party. The movement paralyzed China politically and negatively affected the country's economy and society to a significant degree.

The Revolution was launched in May 1966, after Mao alleged that bourgeois elements had infiltrated the government and society at large, aiming to restore capitalism. To eliminate his rivals within the Communist Party of China, Mao insisted that these "revisionists" be removed through violent class struggle. China's youth responded to Mao's appeal by forming Red Guard groups around the country. The movement spread into the military, urban workers, and the Communist Party leadership itself. It resulted in widespread factional struggles in all walks of life. In the top leadership, it led to a mass purge of senior officials. During the same period Mao's personality cult grew to immense proportions.

Millions of people were persecuted in the violent struggles that ensued across the country, and suffered a wide range of abuses including public humiliation, arbitrary imprisonment, torture, hard labor, sustained harassment, seizure of property and sometimes execution. A large segment of the population was forcibly displaced, most notably the transfer of urban youth to rural regions during the Down to the Countryside Movement. Historical relics and artifacts were destroyed. Cultural and religious sites were ransacked.

Mao officially declared the Cultural Revolution to have ended in 1969, but its active phase lasted until the death of the military leader Lin Biao in 1971. After Mao's death and the arrest of the Gang of Four in 1976, reformers led by Deng Xiaoping gradually began to dismantle the Maoist policies associated with the Cultural Revolution. In 1981, the Party declared that the Cultural Revolution was "responsible

for the most severe setback and the heaviest losses suffered by the Party, the country, and the people since the founding of the People's Republic".



Faces of Buddhas were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution

By Pat B - Flickr: Trip to Ningxia and Gansu, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=17927849>

Policy and Effect

The effects of the Cultural Revolution directly or indirectly touched essentially all of China's population. During the Cultural Revolution, much **economic activity was halted**, with "revolution", regardless of interpretation, being the primary objective of the country. Mao Thought became the central operative guide to all things in China. The authority of the Red Guards surpassed that of the army, local police authorities, and the law in general. Chinese traditional arts and ideas were ignored and publicly attacked, with praise for Mao being practiced in their place. People were encouraged to criticize cultural institutions and to question their parents and teachers, which had been strictly forbidden in traditional Chinese culture.

The start of the Cultural Revolution brought huge numbers of Red Guards to Beijing, with all expenses paid by the government, and the railway system was in turmoil. The revolution aimed to destroy the "Four Olds" (old customs, old culture, old habits, and old ideas) and establish the corresponding "Four News", and this can range from changing of names and cutting of hair, to the ransacking of homes, vandalizing cultural treasures, and desecrating temples. In a few years, countless ancient buildings, artifacts, antiques, books, and paintings were destroyed by Red Guards. The status of traditional Chinese culture and institutions within China was also severely damaged as a result of the Cultural Revolution, and the practice of many traditional customs weakened.

The revolution also aimed to "sweep away all the monsters and demons" that is, all the class enemies who promoted bourgeois ideas within the party, the government, the army, among the intellectuals, as well as those from an exploitative family background. Large numbers of people perceived to be "monsters and demons" regardless of guilt or innocence were publicly denounced, humiliated, and beaten. In their revolutionary fervor, students denounced their teachers, and children denounced their parents. Many died through their ill-treatment or committed suicide. In 1968, youths were mobilized to go to the countryside in the Down to the Countryside Movement so they may learn from the peasantry, and the departure of millions from the cities helped end the most violent phase of the Cultural Revolution.

Though the effect of the Cultural Revolution was disastrous for millions of people in China, there were positive outcomes for some sections of the population, such as those in the rural areas. For example, the upheavals of the Cultural Revolution and the hostility to the intellectual elite are widely accepted to have damaged the quality of education in China, especially at the upper end of education system. However, the radical policies also **provided many in the rural communities with middle school education** for the first time, which is thought to have facilitated the rural economic development in the 70s and 80s. Similarly, a large number of health personnel were deployed to the countryside as **barefoot doctors** during the Cultural Revolution. Some farmers were given informal medical training, and health-care centers were established in rural communities. This process led to a **marked improvement in the health and the life expectancy** of the general population.

After the most violent phase of the 1960s ended, the attack on traditional culture continued in 1973 with the ***Anti-Lin Biao, Anti-Confucius Campaign*** as part of the struggle against the moderate elements in the party. The Cultural Revolution brought to the forefront numerous internal power struggles within the Communist party, many of which had little to do with the larger battles between Party leaders, but resulted instead from local factionalism and petty rivalries that were usually unrelated to the "revolution" itself.

Because of the chaotic political environment, local governments lacked organization and stability, if they existed at all. Members of different factions often fought on the streets, and political assassinations, particularly in predominantly rural provinces, were common. The masses spontaneously involved themselves in factions, and took part in open warfare against other factions. The ideology that drove these factions

was vague and sometimes non-existent, with the struggle for local authority being the only motivation for mass involvement.

Harm to Education and Persecution of Intellectuals

The Cultural Revolution brought China's **education system to a virtual halt** for some time. In the early months of the Cultural Revolution, schools and universities were closed. Primary and middle schools later gradually reopened, but all colleges and universities were closed until 1970, and most universities did not reopen until 1972.

The university entrance exams were cancelled after 1966, to be replaced later by a system whereby students were recommended by factories, villages and military units, and entrance exams were not restored until 1977 under Deng Xiaoping. According to the documents for the prosecution of the Gang of Four, 142,000 cadres and **teachers in the education circles were persecuted, and many noted academics, scientists, and educators died.**



This photograph (1967) shows the humiliation of two men at a mass rally in Shenyang (they were not executed). Yu Ping (department chief) had been accused of being a 'Capitalist Roader', Gu Zhuoxin (secretary of the Secretariat) had been branded a 'traitor to the revolution'.

Source: <http://www.johndclare.net/China9.htm>

Many intellectuals were sent to rural labor camps, and many of those who survived left China shortly after the revolution ended. **Almost anyone with skills over that of the average person was made the target of political "struggle"** in some way.

The entire generation of tormented and inadequately educated individuals is often referred to in the West as well as in China as the 'lost generation'.

During the Cultural Revolution, basic education was emphasized and rapidly expanded. While the years of schooling were reduced and education standard fell, the proportion of Chinese children who had completed primary education increased from less than half before the Cultural Revolution to almost all after the Cultural Revolution, and those who completed junior middle school rose from 15% to over two-third. The educational opportunities for rural children expanded considerably, while those of the children of the urban elite became restricted by the anti-elitist policies.

Struggle Sessions, Purges and Deaths

Millions of people in China were violently persecuted during the Cultural Revolution. Those identified as spies, "running dogs", "revisionists", or coming from a suspect class (including those related to former landlords or rich peasants) were subject to beating, imprisonment, rape, torture, sustained and systematic harassment and abuse, seizure of property, denial of medical attention, and erasure of social identity. At least hundreds of thousands of people were murdered, starved, or worked to death. Millions more were forcibly displaced. Young people from the cities were forcibly moved to the countryside, where they were forced to abandon all forms of standard education in place of the propaganda teachings of the Communist Party of China.

Some people were not able to stand the torture and, losing hope for the future, committed suicide. In the trial of the so-called Gang of Four, a Chinese court stated that 729,511 people had been persecuted, of whom 34,800 were said to have died.

Estimates of the death toll, including civilians and Red Guards, vary greatly. They range upwards to several millions, but an estimate of around **400,000 deaths is a widely accepted minimum figure**. Others assert that in rural China alone some 36 million people were persecuted, of whom between 750,000 and 1.5 million were killed, with roughly the same number permanently injured. **The Holocaust memorial museum puts the death toll between 5 and 10 million**. The true figure of those who were persecuted or died during the Cultural Revolution however may never be known, since many deaths went unreported or were actively covered up by the police or local authorities.

Ethnic Minorities

The Cultural Revolution wreaked much havoc on minority cultures in China. In Inner Mongolia, some 790,000 people were persecuted. Of these, 22,900 were beaten to death and 120,000 were maimed, during a witch hunt to find members of the alleged separatist New Inner Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party.



Cultural Revolution propaganda poster. It depicts Mao Zedong, above a group of soldiers from the People's Liberation Army. The caption says, "The Chinese People's Liberation Army is the great school of Mao Zedong Thought."

By Source, Fair use, <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?curid=30522776>

In Xinjiang, copies of the Qur'an and other books of the Uyghur people were apparently burned. Muslim imams were reportedly paraded around with paint splashed on their bodies.

In the ethnic Korean areas of northeast China, language schools were destroyed. In Yunnan Province, the palace of the Dai people's king was torched, and a massacre

of Muslim Hui people at the hands of the People's Liberation Army in Yunnan, known as the Shadian incident, reportedly claimed over 1,600 lives in 1975.

The effect on Tibet had been particularly severe as it came following the repression after the 1959 Tibetan uprising. The destruction of nearly all of Tibet's over 6,000 monasteries, which began before the Cultural Revolution, were often conducted with the complicity of local ethnic Tibetan Red Guards. Only eight were left intact by the end of 1970s. Many monks and nuns were killed. General population was subjected to physical and psychological torture. There were an estimated 600,000 monks and nuns in Tibet in 1950, and by 1979, most of them were dead, imprisoned or had disappeared.

C5. Wars Involving the People's Republic of China

In less than 70 years of its existence, People's Republic of China (PRC) has been involved in many wars. The countries that it has fought against are mainly – Tibet, South Korea, Republic of China (ROC), Soviet Union and India. In some of these wars, PRC has faced USA and other allies of USA who stepped in to help the country that was in war with PRC.

| War | Allies of PRC | Opponents | Result for PRC |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|---|--|
| Battle of Chamdo - 1950 | | Tibet | Victory - Annexation of Tibet into PRC |
| Korean War 1950-53 | North Korea, Soviet Union | South Korea, USA, UK, Canada, Turkey, Australia, Ethiopia, Philippines, New Zealand, Thailand, Greece, France, Colombia, Belgium, South Africa, Netherlands, Luxembourg | Ceasefire - Chinese-North Korean invasion of South Korea repelled; U.N. invasion of North Korea repelled; Korean Demilitarized Zone established; little territorial change at the 38th parallel border, essentially <i>uti possidetis</i> |
| First Taiwan Strait Crisis 1954-55 | | ROC, USA | Ceasefire - Chinese withdrawal, <i>status quo ante bellum</i> |

| War | Allies of PRC | Opponents | Result for PRC |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Second Taiwan Strait Crisis - 1958 | PRC | ROC, USA | Ceasefire - China ceases bombardment |
| Tibetan Uprising - 1959 | | Chushi Gangdruk | Victory - Uprising suppressed |
| China-Burma border Campaign 1960-61 | Burma | Kuomintang | Victory - Kuomintang evicted from Burma |
| Sino-Indian War 1962 | | India | Victory - Complete Chinese control of Aksai Chin |
| Nathu La and Cho La incidents 1967 | | India | Defeat - Chinese withdrawal from Sikkim |
| Zhenbao Island Incident - 1969 | | Soviet Union | Tactical Soviet Victory - Status quo ante bellum; Strategic Chinese victory - China maintained control of territories. Final closure by Sino-Soviet Border Agreement - 1991 |
| Vietnam War 1965-69 | North Vietnam, Viet Cong, Khmer Rouge, Pathet Lao | South Vietnam, USA, South Korea, Thailand, Australia, New Zealand, Khmer Republic, Kingdom of Laos | Withdrawal - American-led forces withdraw from Indochina. Communist governments take power in South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. South Vietnam is annexed by North Vietnam. Breakdown in Sino-Vietnamese relations leading to the Sino-Vietnamese war. |
| Battle of the Paracel Islands - 1974 | | South Vietnam | Victory - China establishes control over Crescent Group of the Paracels; China controls the entire Paracels. |
| Sino-Vietnamese War - 1979 | | Vietnam | Chinese withdrawal from Vietnam. Continued Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia until 1989. Vietnamese loss of territory. |
| Johnson South Reef Skirmish - 1988 | | Vietnam | Victory - China captures several reefs in Spratly islands |

| War | Allies of PRC | Opponents | Result for PRC |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Third Taiwan Strait Crisis - 1996 | | ROC, USA | Ceasefire - China ceases bombardment |
| Northern Mali conflict - 2012-present | France, Mali, Benin, Ghana, Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Togo, Chad, Burundi, Gabon, South Africa, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Germany | ISIL, Ansar al-Sharia, Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin | Ongoing |

PRC - People's Republic of China

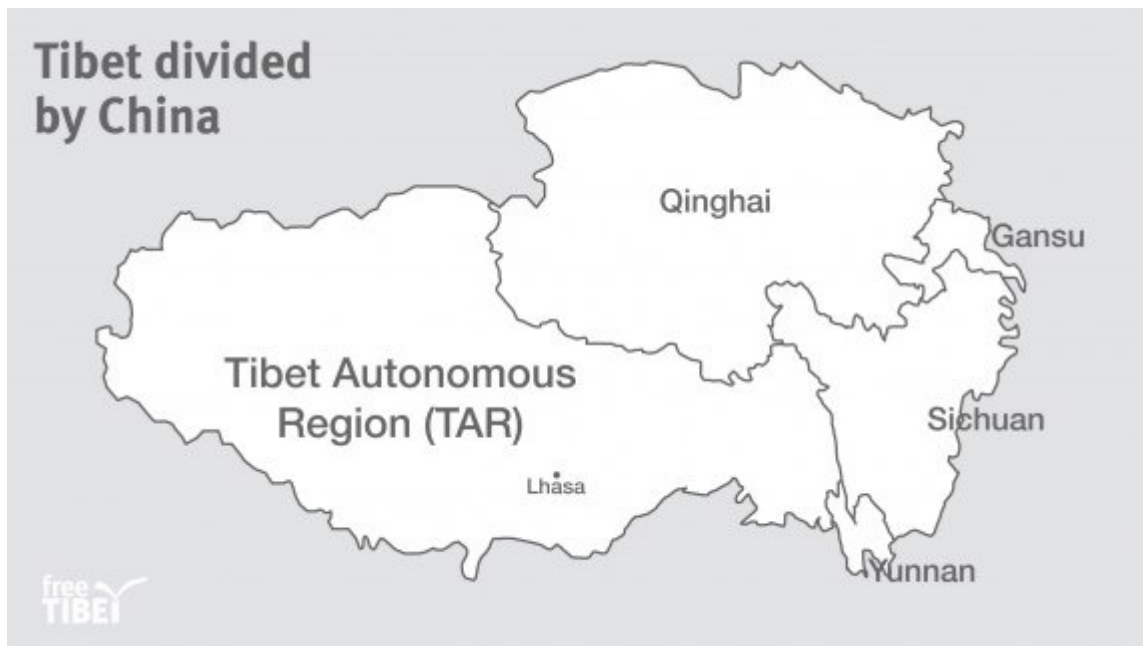
ROC - Republic of China

Source: Wikipedia

Occupation of Tibet

Of the wars fought by China under PRC, China achieved total victory only against Tibet. China annexed Tibet after the war in 1950. The Battle of Chamdo occurred from October 6 through 19, 1950. It was a military campaign by PRC against a *de facto* independent Tibet after months of failed negotiations. The campaign aimed to capture the Tibetan army in Chamdo, demoralize the Lhasa government and to most importantly exert pressure to get Tibetan representatives to agree to negotiations in Beijing and sign terms recognizing China's sovereignty over Tibet. Before her annexation, Tibet was a protectorate of China as well as Britain.

The Tibetan Ganden Phodrang regime was **Protectorate** of the Qing until 1912, when the Provisional Government of the Republic of China replaced the Qing dynasty as the government of China, and signed a treaty with the Qing government inheriting all territories of the previous dynasty into the new republic, giving Tibet the status of a "Protectorate" with high levels of autonomy as it was Protectorate under the dynasty. At the same time, Tibet was also a British Protectorate. However, at the same time, several Tibetan representatives had signed a treaty between Tibet and Mongolia proclaiming mutual recognition and their independence from China, although the Government of the Republic of China did not recognize its legitimacy. With the high levels of autonomy and the "proclaiming of independence" by several Tibetan representatives, this period of Tibet is often described as "***de facto independent***".



Source: <https://freetibet.org/about/china-argument>

Attacking one's protectorate is clearly taking advantage of weakness of a country dependent on oneself. In the comity of nations, this is a sin that makes a big country an undependable patron. Surely, People's Republic of China does not accept this view.

Tibet remains to this day a colony of PRC. Tibetans have been protesting against the occupation of their land by PRC. Free Tibet movement continues to this day under the leadership of The Dalai Lama.

China-Vietnam Wars



Vietnamese artillery pounds away at advancing Chinese troops on Feb. 23, 1979, during the Sino-Vietnamese War

By Source (WP:NFC#4), Fair use, <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?curid=47456596>

Vietnam is a small country compared to China. Yet, over the centuries China has unsuccessfully tried to defeat Vietnam militarily. It is to the credit of the fighting spirit of Vietnamese that they have survived as an independent country defeating the much larger neighbor many times. In fact, except for a very brief period during 1077-1082 CE Song Empire did reign over Vietnam but gave up after guerilla attacks by fiercely nationalist Vietnam made life difficult for Song Empire.

PRC has failed to achieve a decisive victory over Vietnam any time during the past few decades even though PRC has won a few minor skirmishes. In the Sino-Vietnam war of 1979 both sides declared victory with China claiming to have crushed the Vietnamese resistance and Vietnam claiming to have repelled the invasion using mostly border militias. Most observers, however, agree that **Vietnam outperformed the People's Liberation Army of PRC** on the battlefield.

Korean War

The **Korean War** (25 June 1950 – 27 July 1953) began when North Korea invaded South Korea. The United Nations, with the United States as the principal force, came to the aid of South Korea. China came to the aid of North Korea, and the Soviet Union gave some assistance.

The fighting ended on 27 July 1953, when an armistice was signed. The agreement created the Korean Demilitarized Zone to separate North and South Korea, and allowed the return of prisoners. However, no peace treaty has been signed, and the two Koreas are technically still at war.

Wars with India

Most Indians do not realize that India and China are not neighbors and have no common border. After the annexation of Tibet by PRC in 1950, Indo-Tibetan border effectively became Indo-China border and China practically became India's neighbor.

The first time Indian forces faced Chinese forces was when General Zorawar Singh invaded West Tibet in 1840. The war ended in a stalemate with neither side a clear winner. It is said that Zorawar Singh wanted to create a land bridge between Ladakh and Nepal – a laudable objective and a great strategic vision which seems to be lacking in post-independent generations of Indian politicians.

India, under the influence of non-violence as a political principle, made a historical mistake in not acting militarily in 1950 when Chinese forces moved to occupy Tibet. A bold move by India at that would have forced Britain to support since Tibet was a British protectorate. India had a significant army and air force in 1950 (thanks to active participation in World War II). India clearly had a military advantage over China. Unfortunately, Indian leadership squandered away the advantage by their inaction. Prime Minister Nehru did not realize that beautiful speeches at international fora are no substitute for timely action to save friends and neighbors.

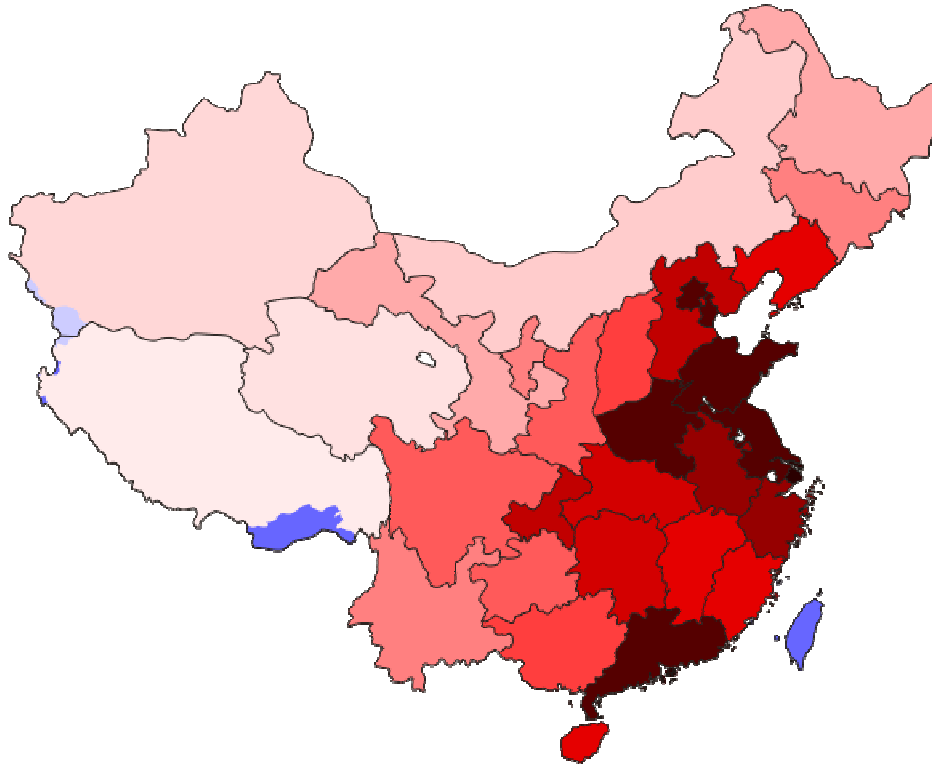
Having missed the bus in 1950, giving shelter to Dalai Lama in 1959 was a case of too little too late. India had shown her weakness and her politician class's failure to take decisive action. Giving shelter to Dalai Lama in such a situation was like a weak sissy boy pricking pin to the local bully.

PRC tested the mettle of ruling elite of India of 50's and 60's before acting militarily in 1962. PRC knew that the gospels of peace had no inner strength to go into an all out war. Fortunately for India, Indian soldiers fought valiantly and gave a tough fight to Chinese forces despite all the blunders committed by the political leadership. For more than a decade Indian army had not been properly armed. The army lacked armaments, equipment, logistic infrastructure, even clothing and shoes. Yet, they fought and pushed back Chinese forces on many fronts. Prime Minister Nehru was so mortally scared of escalation of war into a long conflict that he was prepared to concede but was not prepared to authorize Indian Air Force to play a role in the war. At that time India had an air force (again thanks to World War II) and most of the aircraft was parked close to the war fields. China had no air force. Use of air force would have clearly tilted the balance of the war towards India. Indian history will never pardon Nehru for his blunders of 1962. Sure enough, Nehru lost his charisma after the defeat of 1962 and died two years later.

The victory of 1962 emboldened China. There have been border skirmishes every year since then on Indo-Tibetan border. The skirmish in September and October 1967 at Nathu La and Cho La escalated into fairly large conflict with clear victory for Indian side. The big difference between 1962 and 1967 was change in leadership in India. The country had defeated Pakistan in 1965 and was not afraid of a war as Nehru was. It can be said that in 1962 Indian forces fought with their hands and feet tied by the political leadership, this was not the case in 1967.

D. Ethnic Groups and Religions in China

China's population is over 1.388 billion, the largest of any country in the world.

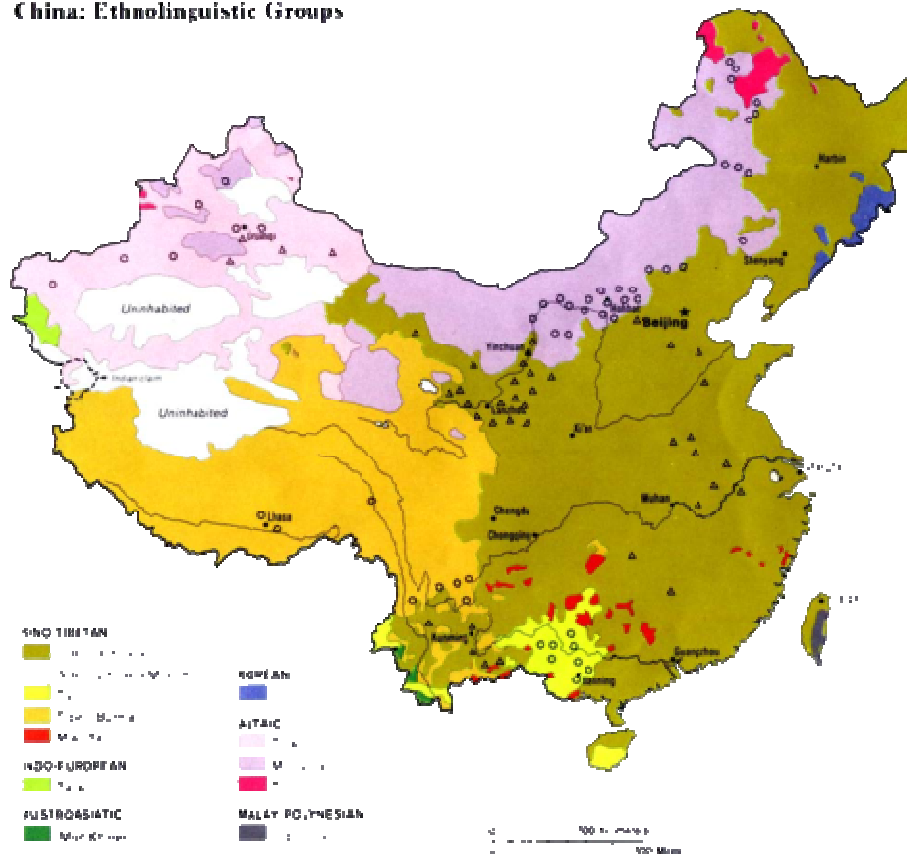


A 2010 population density map of the territories governed by the PRC and the ROC. The eastern, coastal provinces are much more densely populated than the western interior because of the historical access to water.

By Bambuway (talk) - Transferred from en.wikipedia to Commons by SchuminWeb using CommonsHelper.(Original text: I (Bambuway (talk)) created this work entirely by myself.), Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=10426871>

The People's Republic of China (PRC) officially recognizes 56 distinct ethnic groups, the largest of which are **Han, who constitute 91.51% of the total population** in 2010. Ethnic minorities constitute 8.49% or 113.8 million of China's population in 2010. During the past decades ethnic minorities have experienced higher growth rates than the majority Han population, because they are not under the one-child policy. Their proportion of the population in China has grown from 6.1% in 1953, to 8.04% in 1990, 8.41% in 2000 and 8.49% in 2010. Large ethnic minorities (data according to the 2000 census) include the Zhuang (16 million, 1.28%), Manchu (10 million, 0.84%), Uyghur (9 million, 0.78%), Hui (9 million, 0.71%), Miao (8 million, 0.71%), Yi (7 million, 0.61%), Tujia (5.75 million, 0.63%), Mongols (5 million, 0.46%), Tibetan (5 million, 0.43%), Buyi (3 million, 0.23%), and Korean (2 million, 0.15%).

China: Ethnolinguistic Groups



Ethnolinguistic map of the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China (1983)

By Ethnolinguistic_map_of_China_1983.jpg: U.S. Central Intelligence Agency derivative work: Beao - Ethnolinguistic_map_of_China_1983.jpg, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=12218997>

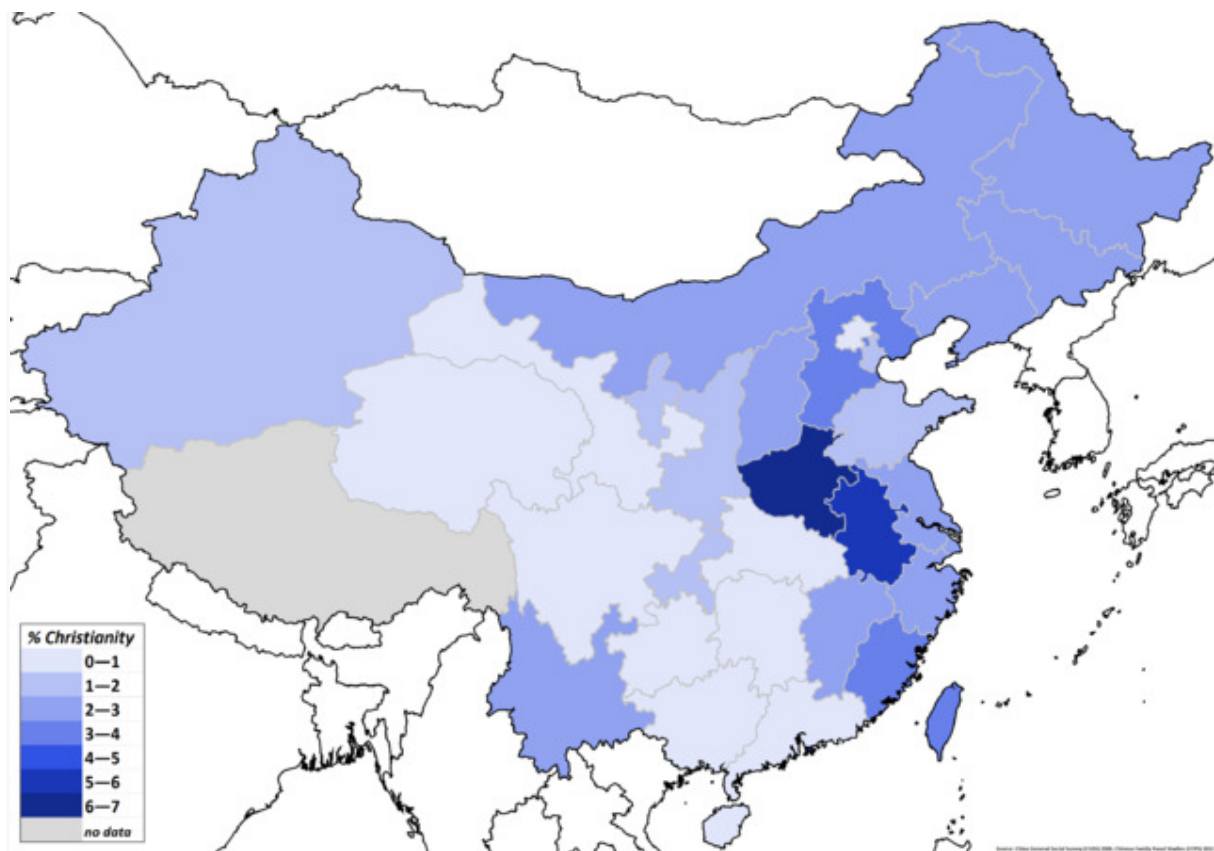
Officially People's Republic of China is atheist. Practice of religion is tightly controlled. Beliefs and thoughts of most of the population are a mix of Confucianism, Daoism, Legalism, Buddhism, Communism and now Capitalism. Christianity and Islam also have their followers though the numbers can only be described as significant minorities.

Christianity in China

Christianity has been one of the religions of China since at least the seventh century and has gained influence over the past 200 years. The number of Chinese Christians has increased significantly since the easing of restrictions on religious activity during economic reforms in the late 1970s; Christians were four million before 1949 (three million Catholics and one million Protestants).

Accurate data on Chinese Christians is hard to access. According to the most recent internal surveys there are approximately 31 million Christians in China today (2.3% of the total population). On the other hand, some international Christian

organizations estimate there are tens of millions more. Chinese over the age of 18 are only permitted to join officially sanctioned Christian groups registered with the government-approved Protestant Three-Self Church and China Christian Council, and Chinese Patriotic Catholic Church. On the other hand, many Christians practice in informal networks and unregistered congregations, often described as house churches or underground churches, the proliferation of which began in the 1950s when many Chinese Protestants and Catholics began to reject state-controlled structures purported to represent them.



Mapping of Christianity in China by province according to the surveys.

By Aethelwolf Emsworth - China General Social Survey 2009 (results reported in: Xiuhua Wang, 2015, p. 15); Chinese Family Panel Studies 2012 for Shanghai, Guangdong, Henan, Liaoning and Gansu, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=43199970>

Some Christian organizations claim that Christianity is growing fast in China and China is destined to become the largest Christian country in the world very soon.



A Roman Catholic church by the Lancang (Mekong) River at Cizhong, Yunnan Province, China. It was built by French missionaries in the mid-19th century, but was burnt during the anti-foreigner movement in 1905 and rebuilt in the 1920s. The congregation is mainly Tibetan, but includes the Han, Naxi, Lisu, Yi, Bai and Hui ethnic groups.

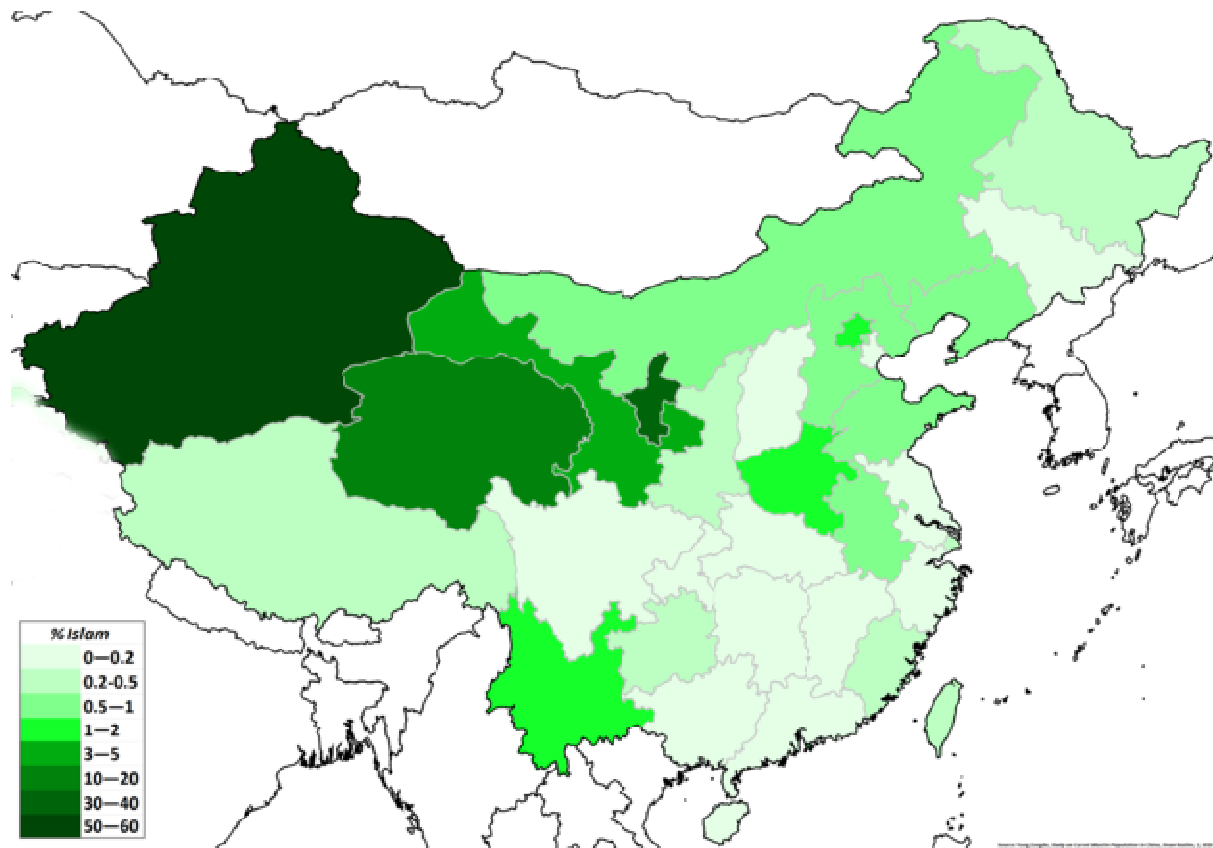
By Jialiang Gao www.peace-on-earth.org - Original Photograph, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=1212604>

Islam in China

Muslims are a significant minority group in China. Hui Muslims are the majority Muslim group in China. The greatest concentration is in Xinjiang, with a significant Uyghur population. Lesser but significant populations reside in the regions of Ningxia, Gansu, and Qinghai. Various sources estimate different numbers of adherents with some sources indicating that 1.5-4% of the total population in China are Muslims.

Muslims live in every region in China. The highest concentrations are found in the northwest provinces of Xinjiang, Gansu, and Ningxia, with significant populations also found throughout Yunnan province in southwest China and Henan province in central China. Of China's 55 officially recognized minority peoples, ten groups are predominantly Sunni Muslim. The largest groups in descending order are Hui (9.8 million in year 2000 census, or 48% of the officially tabulated number of Muslims), Uyghur (8.4 million, 41%), Kazakh (1.25 million, 6.1%), Dongxiang (514,000, 2.5%), Kyrgyz (144,000), Uzbeks (125,000), Salar (105,000), Tajik

(41,000), Bonan (17,000), and Tatar (5,000). However, individual members of traditionally Muslim groups may profess other religions or none at all. Additionally, Tibetan Muslims are officially classified along with the Tibetan people. Muslims live predominantly in the areas that border Central Asia, Tibet and Mongolia, i.e. Xinjiang, Ningxia, Gansu and Qinghai, which is known as the "Quran Belt".



Mapping of Islam by province of China according to a survey reported in 2010

By Aethelwolf Emsworth - Min Junqing, *The Present Situation and Characteristics of Contemporary Islam in China*, JISMOR n. 8, 2010 (p. 29)., Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=46166557>

During the Cultural Revolution, mosques along with other religious buildings were often defaced, destroyed or closed and copies of the Quran were destroyed along with temples, churches, Buddhist and Daoist monasteries, and cemeteries by the Red Guards. During that time, the government also constantly accused Muslims of holding "superstitious beliefs" and promoting "anti-socialist-trends". The government began to relax its policies towards Muslims in 1978. Today, Islam is experiencing a modest revival and there are now many mosques in China. There has been an upsurge in Islamic expression and many nationwide Islamic associations have been organized to co-ordinate inter-ethnic activities among Muslims.

Different Muslim groups in different regions are treated differently by the Chinese government in regards to religious freedom. Religious freedom is present for Hui

Muslims, who can practice their religion, build Mosques, and have their children attend Mosques, while more controls are placed specifically on Uyghurs in Xinjiang. Since the 1980s Islamic private schools (Sino-Arabic schools) have been supported and permitted by the Chinese government among Muslim areas, only specifically excluding Xinjiang from allowing these schools because of separatist sentiment there.



The Great Mosque of Xi'an, one of China's oldest mosques

By No machine-readable author provided. Mr. Tickle assumed (based on copyright claims). - No machine-readable source provided. Own work assumed (based on copyright claims)., CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=287038>

Although religious education for children is officially forbidden by law in China, the Communist party allows Hui Muslims to violate this law and have their children educated in religion and attend Mosques while the law is enforced on Uyghurs. After secondary education is completed, China then allows Hui students who are willing to embark on religious studies under an Imam.

Hui Muslims who are employed by the state are allowed to fast during Ramadan unlike Uyghurs in the same positions, the amount of Hui going on Hajj is expanding, and Hui women are allowed to wear veils, while Uyghur women are discouraged from wearing them and Uyghurs find it difficult to get passports to go on Hajj.

Hui religious schools were allowed a massive autonomous network of mosques. Schools run by a Hui Sufi leader were formed with the approval of the Chinese government even as he admitted to attending an event where Bin Laden spoke.



An ethnic Hui family celebrating Eid ul-Fitr in Ningxia

By Cecikierk - Own work, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=12423222>

There have been many occurrences of violent sectarian fighting between different Hui sects. Several sects refuse to intermarry with each other.

In Tibet, the majority of Muslims are Hui people. Riots have often broken out between Muslims and Tibetans over incidents such as bones in soups and prices of balloons, and Tibetans have accused Muslims of being cannibals who cooked humans in their soup and of contaminating food with urine. Tibetans have often attacked Muslim restaurants. In 2008 mid-March riots, fires set by Tibetans burned the apartments and shops of Muslims resulting in Muslim families being killed and wounded. Due to Tibetan violence against Muslims, the traditional Islamic white caps have not been worn by many Muslims. Scarfs were removed and replaced with hairnets by Muslim women in order to hide. The repression of Tibetan separatism by the Chinese government is supported by Hui Muslims. In addition, Chinese-speaking Hui have problems with Tibetan Hui (the Tibetan speaking Kache minority of Muslims).



Yao Baoxia is a female *ahong*, or imam, at Wangjia Hutong Women's Mosque in Kaifeng, in central China. She sits alongside believers during prayers, not in front of them like male imams. She believes male and female imams are equal in their role as teachers and leaders of prayers.

Source: Ariana Lindquist for NPR; <http://www.npr.org/2010/07/21/128628514/female-imams-blaze-trail-amid-chinas-muslims>

The vast majority of China's Muslims are Sunni Muslims. A notable feature of some Muslim communities in China is the presence of female imams. Another notable feature is women's mosques. No other country has women's mosques.

Hui in China predominately follow the Orthodox form of Islam (58.2% were Gedimu a non-Sufi mainstream tradition that opposed unorthodoxy and religious innovation). However a large minority of Hui are members of Sufi groups. Shia Chinese Muslims are mostly Ismailis including Tajiks of the Tashkurgan and Sarikul areas of Xinjiang.

Mainstream Thought – Folk or Popular Religion

China has long been a cradle and host to a variety of the most enduring religious-philosophical traditions of the world. Confucianism and Taoism, later joined by Buddhism, constitute the "**three teachings**" that have shaped Chinese culture. There are no clear boundaries between these intertwined religious systems, which do not claim to be exclusive, and elements of each enrich popular or folk religion. The emperors of China claimed the Mandate of Heaven and participated in Chinese religious practices.



“Three laughs at Tiger Brook”, a Song dynasty (12th century) painting portraying three men representing Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism laughing together

Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=625764>

Folk or popular religion, the most widespread system of beliefs and practices, has evolved and adapted since at least the Shang and Zhou dynasties. Like Hinduism, Chinese religious-philosophical thought contains loose but well-connected fundamental elements of a theology and spiritual explanation for the nature of the universe. Basically, this set of beliefs involves allegiance to the *shen*, often translated as "spirits," but actually a broad category that includes a variety of gods and immortals. These can be deities of the natural environment or ancestral principles of human groups, concepts of civility, culture heroes, many of whom feature in Chinese mythology and history. For a Western mind, this can be baffling but for a Hindu it is not; since it mirrors the Hindu religious-philosophical belief system.

Like Hindus, Han Chinese do not consider their spiritual beliefs and practices to be a "religion" and in any case do not feel that they must practice any one of them exclusively.

The People's Republic of China, established in 1949, adopted a policy of state atheism. Initially, the new government did not suppress religious practice, but, like its dynastic ancestors, viewed popular religious movements, especially in the

countryside, as possibly seditious. The government condemned religious organizations, labeling them as superstitious. Religions that were deemed "appropriate" and given freedom were those that entailed the ancestral tradition of consolidated state rule. In addition, Marxism viewed religion as feudal. The Three-Self Patriotic Movement institutionalized Protestant Churches in official organizations that renounced foreign funding and foreign control as imperialist. Chinese Catholics resisted the new government's move toward state control and independence of the Vatican. The Cultural Revolution included a systematic effort to destroy religion. For the early revolutionaries communism was a religion and every other belief deserved to be destroyed.

The radical policy relaxed considerably in the late 1970s. Since 1978, the Constitution of the People's Republic of China guarantees "freedom of religion". Constitutional guarantees aside, the authorities continue to regulate the practice of religion.

E. Observations and Comments

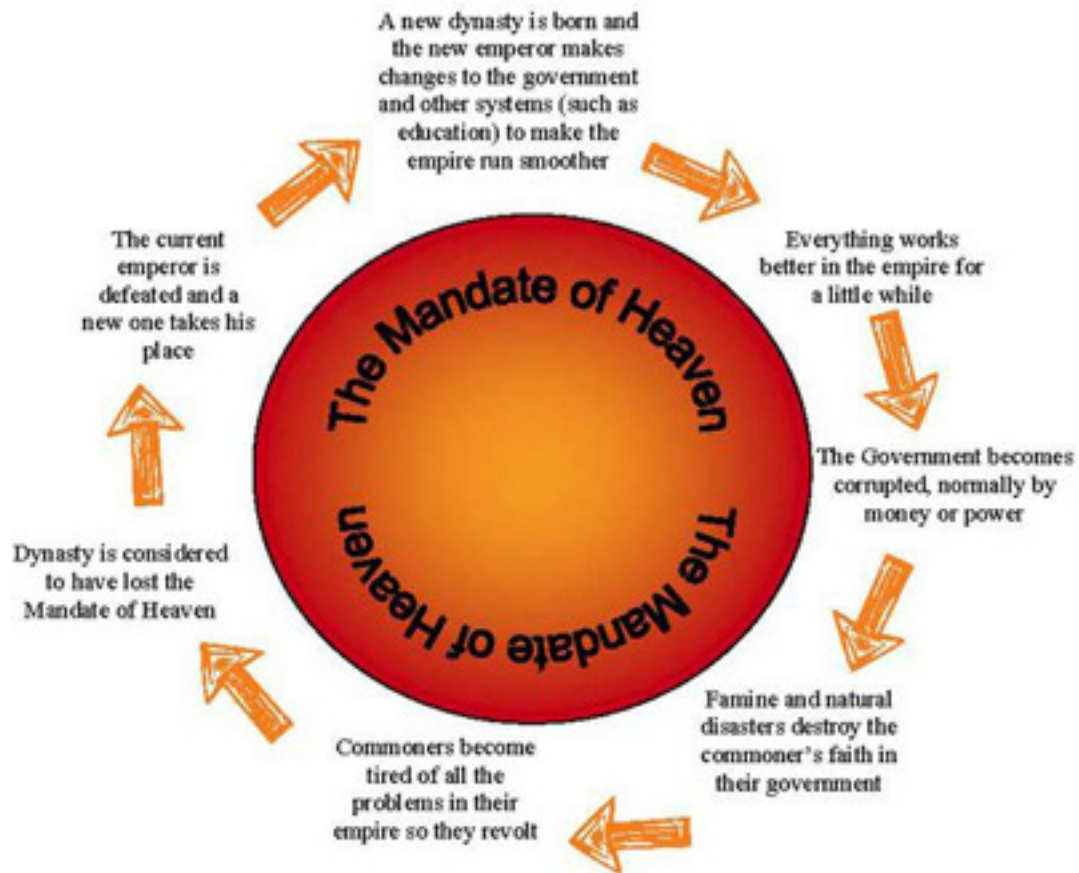
Author's Note - It is most difficult to comment on a nation of more than 1.3 billion with a history of more than 3,500 years. In case of China, the complexity is higher because of its unique mix of Confucianism, Daoism, Legalism, Buddhism, Communism and Capitalism. I am well aware of my limitations. I am also aware that I have never been to China or even near China. Nevertheless, I am undertaking this onerous task. I do not claim any expertise except that of an avid observer. My perspective is of an Indian and not of a Chinese. Sometimes distance enables better perception. Whether in my case, distance and my ignorance about China have improved my perception will be something that you, my learned readers, will judge. In all humility, I present my observations and comments; and request you to kindly be tolerant of any mistakes that I might have committed. Of course, I shall always remain open to listening to constructive criticism and modifying my opinions. Lastly a few words for any reader(s) from China who might read it – I respect your culture and nation greatly. In case any of my comments and / or observations hurt you, please accept my sincere apologies. Please point out to me if I have made any factual mistakes. However, if it is a matter of opinion, we may probably have to learn to disagree amicably as friends.

E1. Totalitarianism

Totalitarianism has been defined as a political system in which the state recognizes no limits to its authority and strives to regulate every aspect of public and private life wherever feasible. In modern context, it is either associated with fascism or communism.

In case of China, the trio of Confucianism, Daoism and Legalism have provided the framework for totalitarian society for more than three thousand five hundred years. The Emperor has always represented the Heaven on earth and anybody questioning the Heaven surely deserves to be punished in the harshest possible manner.

The **Mandate of Heaven** has been a Chinese political and religious doctrine used to justify the rule of the emperor of China. According to this belief, heaven - which embodies the natural order and will of the universe - bestows the mandate on a just ruler, the Son of Heaven. If a ruler is overthrown, this is interpreted as an indication that the ruler was unworthy, and had lost the mandate. It has also been a common belief that natural disasters such as famine and flood are signs of heaven's displeasure with the ruler; so there would often be revolts following major disasters as citizens saw these as signs that the Mandate of Heaven had been withdrawn.



Source: Pinterest and <http://room5worldhistory.blogspot.in/>

The Mandate of Heaven does not require a legitimate ruler to be of noble birth, and dynasties such as the Han and Ming dynasties were founded by men of common origins. The Mandate of Heaven had no time limitations, depending instead on the just and able performance of the rulers and their heirs. The concept is in some ways similar to the European concept of the divine right of kings; however, unlike the European concept, it does not confer an unconditional right to rule. Intrinsic to the concept of the Mandate of Heaven was the right of rebellion against an unjust ruler. Chinese historians interpreted a successful revolt as evidence that Heaven had withdrawn its mandate from the ruler. Throughout Chinese history, times of poverty and natural disasters were often taken as signs that heaven considered the incumbent ruler unjust and thus in need of replacement. The Mandate of Heaven was often invoked by philosophers and scholars in China as a way to curtail the abuse of power by the ruler.

Chinese religious-philosophical concept of Mandate of Heaven creates a single authority unlike in case of Hindu concept of King as an incarnation of Vishnu. Hindu kings, even though considered as incarnations of Vishnu, never had law making

powers. In the absence of legislative powers and even power to decide the amount of taxes that may be levied, a Hindu king was always subject to the laws made by the learned sages. This dual authority served as a system of checks and balances. A Hindu is always inclined to question and debate. Arguments and counter-arguments are constantly recurring feature of Valmikiy Ramayan as well as Mahabharat. This is very different from the simplistic construct of Confucianism-Legalism combine that has dominated the Chinese thought process for thousands of years.



Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, arguing with Henry II and King Louis

Source: <http://www.britainexpress.com/History/Thomas-a-Becket.htm>

Even in the medieval Christian Europe, there was always the duality of Church and the King. Education and judiciary were always the subjects of Church. With all the harshness of medieval Europe, the duality provided a framework for a conflict which in due course led to renaissance and rise of democracy. Chinese religious-philosophical framework admits of no such dualism. Confucianism derives its strength from royal patronage and never seeks to create an independent structure. Confucian scholars were the teachers that provided kings for thousands of years the bureaucrats for ruling the vast country that China always was.

Communism, with all its Chinese modifications of past four decades, does not contradict the Confucianism-Legalism combine. Cultural Revolution (even though it is now criticized by Communist Party of China) did the dirty job of removing old pillars of respect and replacing them with new ones provided by the Party. Chinese people know in their heart that there has to be someone with the Mandate of Heaven. Presently, Communist Party has the Mandate of Heaven and will continue

to hold the mandate in people's mind as long as there are no major natural or economic disasters.

One obviously does not question someone who is a Son of Heaven. Chinese people have suffered a lot from their rulers in distant as well as not-so-distant past. So, execution of a few dissidents or jailing of anyone shouting slogans or even running army tanks on a few hundred students seems like an innocent child's play.



Present leaders of Communist Party of China know very well that they must continue to manage economy in a reasonably decent manner for people to continue to treat them as holders of Mandate of Heaven. It is to the credit of Mao Tse-tung that he continued to rule over China despite the horrors of Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution. Present leaders surely would not like to test their luck and compete with Mao Tse-tung.

Foreign observers would do well to realize that given the totalitarian mindset of the Chinese people, talking of human rights or democratic rights in China will continue to be a meaningless exercise to the point that there are natural or economic upheavals that make the Chinese people question whether the Communist Party continues to hold the Mandate of Heaven.

E2. Bureaucrats

It is no surprise that the country that gave the world paper and paper currency is also credited with inventing paper tigers. Ah! I better be careful. India also has the paper tigers in good measure. And a paper tiger can be more ferocious and vindictive than a real tiger if it knows that you are weak and powerless. The moment it learns about your connections or power, it has the potential to turn into most docile subservient animal known to mankind. Paper tigers will crawl and lick feet when asked to bow by the powerful but will rip open anyone and everyone else.

Just as India has civil services examinations to select IAS, IPS, IFS and IRS officers, Chinese had imperial to select candidates for the state bureaucracy. Although there were imperial exams as early as the Han dynasty, the system became widely utilized as the major path to office only in the mid-Tang dynasty, and remained so until its abolition in 1905.

While imperial examinations were abolished in 1905, bureaucracy was not and cannot ever be abolished. People's Republic of China has created its own bureaucracy with party officials replacing the mandarins of ancient times.



A 15th-century portrait of the Ming official Jiang Shunfu;

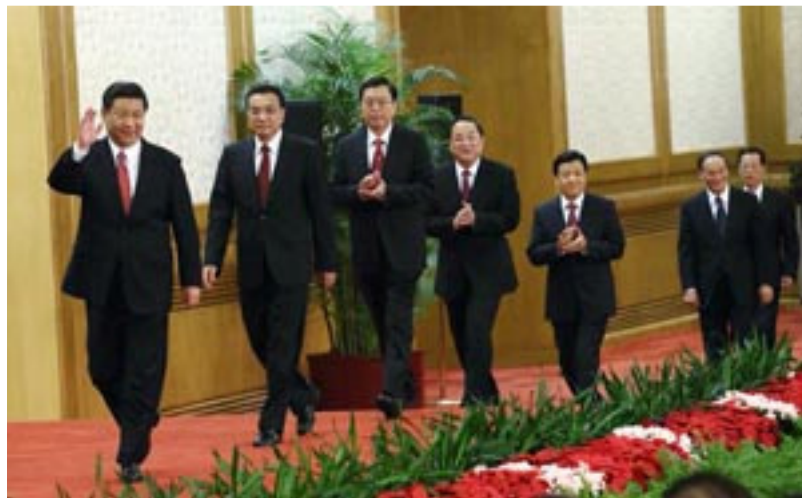
The cranes on his mandarin square indicate that he was a civil official of the first rank.

By Anonymous - <http://depts.washington.edu/chinaciv/clothing/11preqin.htm>, Mingqing renwuxiaoxiang huaxuan (Nanjing: Nanjing Bowuguan, 1979), pl. 16., Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=3508745>

Essential nature of bureaucracy involves the following:

- a) Generalists with no specific knowledge or expertise.
- b) Exercise of power based on authority derived from position in a structure; the moment the person moves away from the position the power disappears.

- c) Clear pecking order - Respect, obedience and devotion to the ones placed higher in the hierarchy and demand of submission from the ones placed lower.
- d) Procedure and order driven rather than based on any application of mind or sense of just and unjust.
- e) Aggressive and ruthless towards all those who are either outside the power structures or are having lower power; while being extremely tame and meek towards the powerful.
- f) Contempt for skilled professionals and people with subject knowledge and higher knowledge in any subject.
- g) Against all forms of innovation, risk-taking and improvement.
- h) Self-serving structure – each one individually acts to preserve one's job and career prospects, while collectively they act to preserve power, authority and privileges of the bureaucratic class.



Members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee
(from left) Xi Jinping, Li Keqiang, Zhang Dejiang, Yu Zhengsheng, Liu Yunshan, Wang Qishan and Zhang Gaoli arrive to meet the press at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on 16 Nov 2012. [Xu Jingxing/China Daily]

Source: http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012cpc/2012-11/16/content_15934494.htm

The above features of bureaucracy are almost universal. We see the above in India where bureaucracy is just about a century old. In China, bureaucracy and its systems are more than two thousand years old. As empires changed, old dynasties were replaced by new ones and emperor was replaced by Chairman or General Secretary of Communist Party of China, the underlying practices and culture of the

bureaucracy remained strongly entrenched in governance with only some minor changes from time to time.

Some observers believe that in the olden days of dynasty, the emperor, who did not have to rise up the bureaucratic levels, sometimes could bring in new thinking and force the bureaucrats to change ways. By contrast, every one of the General Secretaries of Communist Party of China since 1982 (when the post of Chairman was abolished) has been someone who has risen up through the ranks of the party bureaucracy. A lateral entry that can bring in fresh ideas has become almost impossible.

I mentioned above that India has a bureaucracy which may not be much different from China's. However, the key difference between India and China is in the level of control exercised. Indian bureaucracy is under the control of political leadership. Regular elections keep bringing in fresh persons to the top. A person like Arvind Kejriwal can become the Chief Minister of Delhi without any previous experience of working in any political position. An outsider to Delhi's power structure, Narendra Modi, can become the Prime Minister of India. The ability of Indian political and constitutional systems to bring in fresh persons at all levels is a severe brake on the power of Indian bureaucracy. This is not the case in China.

It may not be an exaggeration to say that People's Republic of China brings to the table of the global political arena all the characteristics of the bureaucracy that makes up the governance systems of the country. In other words, **China is her bureaucracy and her bureaucracy is China.**

E3. Palace Eunuchs

The term eunuch generally refers to a man who has been castrated.

From ancient times till the fall of the last emperor of China, castration was both a traditional punishment (one of the Five Punishments) and a means of gaining employment in the Imperial service. Certain eunuchs gained immense power that occasionally superseded that of even the Grand Secretaries.

It is said that the justification for the employment of eunuchs as high-ranking civil servants was that, since they were incapable of having children, they would not be tempted to seize power and start a dynasty. In many cases, eunuchs were considered more reliable than scholar officials.

The Inner Court of China's Forbidden City was the emperor's private realm, where no other men were allowed to linger for too long. Officials, military personnel, and even male relatives of the emperor were required to leave the Inner Court at night. The only men who were allowed to stay in the Inner Court were not men in the fullest sense, but ones that had been rendered sexually impotent through castration. These were the eunuchs of China.

As they attended the Emperor from his birth and the Emperor rarely left the palace they were the only means to reach the Emperor. It was the tight control of access that gave them an immense source of income; a bribe of gold to the appropriate officials was needed to gain the Emperor's ear. They received only a basic subsistence salary but also took a portion of all the goods passing through their often sticky hands. They were seen as the Emperor's personal servants and often at odds with the scholars and nobles who sought an audience with the Emperor. Not just the Emperor had the use of eunuchs; senior members of the Imperial family would also have a smaller number of such servants. At times the eunuchs formed a secret police force, spying on potential threats to the throne and also threats to their own power. Although unable to father children, they were allowed to adopt, and this became a powerful form of patronage. Rich eunuchs would buy a house in Beijing that they could use as long as they were back in the Forbidden City by sunset. The attraction of becoming a eunuch was the potential great wealth that could be attained. Most eunuchs were illiterate. For a significant time of Chinese history, education of eunuchs was banned to avoid them from becoming too powerful.

In China, castration involved cutting off both the penis and the testicles in one operation without anesthesia. Many eunuchs died as a result of the operation; if they survived it could still take six months for the wound to completely heal. The operation was normally carried out in a special room in the Forbidden City. Boys, usually at about the age of ten, seeking to become eunuchs were given opportunities to back out if they showed distress during the preparations. Because of a long held belief that the body should remain complete the castrated parts were preserved and buried with the eunuch so that he may become whole again in the after-life. When fully recovered from the operation the new eunuch would enter an Imperial school dedicated to train young eunuchs to become accomplished Imperial servants. Although castration outside the palace was made illegal, sometimes fathers would perform the operation on their sons in the hope they might then be accepted at court. Many of the boys came from poor families of the northern provinces who fancied the faint chance of attaining great riches. (Source: <http://www.chinasage.info/eunuchs.htm>)

It would seem that the practice of having palace eunuchs died long ago with the end of the last emperor. Yes, in its harsh form of physical castration the practice disappeared more than a century ago and the last surviving eunuch died in 1996. However, the practice lives on in a more sophisticated figurative way.

My experience with political parties in India tells me that every political leader and every political party loves eunuchs, not in a literal sense but in a figurative sense. A good political worker must be like the traditional Palace Eunuch of China – should pose no risk to the ruling dynasty; should never be able to even dream of starting his dynasty; should not be too well educated; should have minimum connections to anyone other than the palace; should be devoted to the emperor and his family without questioning, and so on. When Mrs. Indira Gandhi was the Prime Minister of India, someone commented that she was **the only man in the cabinet**. Of course, no one said that everyone else in the cabinet was a eunuch, but in reality in non-literal terms that could be an accurate description.



Two leaders. Each was “The Only Man” in the respective party and government.

If Mrs. Indira Gandhi could be described as the sole man in her cabinet, the description would surely fit Chairman Mao Tse-tung. Nothing else can explain **why no one in the Central Politburo / Central Committee of Communist Party of China chose to stand up and protest when Chairman Mao's wrong policies led to the deaths of about 30 million Chinese citizens during the Great Leap Forward or when about 1-10 million Chinese citizens died as part of Cultural Revolution.**

Making perfectly normal men and women incapable of raising a voice against the reigning emperor is castration in the figurative sense and has more disastrous results than the abhorrent practice of physical castration. Every political party in the world aims to do it to its members but Communist Party of China had done it at a scale and to such effect as is unimaginable in India and the Western World.

I am unable to comment on the present situation in Communist Party of China. I am also not in a position to relate the large scale figurative castration in People's Republic of China to the historical practice of Palace Eunuchs. I believe that my readers will be able to explore these aspects.



Empress Dowager Cixi of China with palace eunuchs, 1903

Image by Yu Xunling available under a [Creative Commons license](#)

Before I close this section, let us take a look at the difference between Palace Eunuchs and Bureaucrats, historically and presently. Palace Eunuchs were almost always illiterate while bureaucrats were well-educated and gained entry to the palace through an elaborate system of examination. Palace Eunuchs were more devoted and subservient than bureaucrats. Eunuchs were willing to do anything and everything including performing or arranging sexual favors because they owed their position in the palace to continued patronage of the emperor and they had no ego arising from sense of accomplishments, talents or capabilities. Bureaucrats had some semblance of self-respect arising from notions of personal accomplishments, talent and capabilities. No wonder, the emperor preferred Palace Eunuchs over bureaucrats who sometimes had to bribe the Palace Eunuchs to gain an audience with the emperor.

I have no personal knowledge of the present situation in China. Based on my personal experience of political parties and politicians in India, I can say that not much has changed over the centuries as regards Palace Eunuchs and bureaucrats. Even modern day emperors prefer Palace Eunuchs to bureaucrats, while self-respecting scholars and thinkers are almost always avoided like the plague.

E4. Anti-Intellectual

Chinese are wise people who draw from Confucianism, Daoism, Legalism, Buddhism and Communism. But they have a history of hating intellectuals and burning books. The first instance of hatred and anger towards intellectuals is seen in the description of first Han emperor – Kaozi – who took throne in 206 BCE. The first great Chinese historian, Sima Qian, writes about the Kaozi emperor - **'Whenever a visitor wearing a Confucian hat comes to see the emperor, he immediately snatches the hat from the visitor's head and pisses in it'**. That may or may not be true. In any case, the first Han emperor had to get over his hatred for the Confucian scholars and depend on them to run his empire.

Governing an area as large as China would have been impossible but for the Confucian scholars and their students. Yet, many Chinese emperors resorted to killing of Confucian scholars. Emperor Shi Hunagdi (256 BCE) (who buried 460 Confucian scholars alive) to Mao Tse-tung (who killed probably more than 46,000) – Chinese history, ancient as well as modern, is full of instances of genocide of Confucian scholars.

Even during period when Confucian scholars were well respected, there was no tolerance for any scholar of any other ideology. Buddhism survived in China by holding on to Daoism and by not challenging the Confucian thoughts. In 845 CE when power of Buddhism acquired the potential to be a challenge to Daoism, Buddhist monasteries were destroyed and Buddhist practices came under severe attack.



It may not be an exaggeration to say that anti-intellectual streak runs deep in Chinese mind. Mistrust of scholars and thinkers has strong roots. In modern China,

as there is resurgence of emotional connect with Chinese culture and Chinese way of life, the chances of any ideology or thought (other than Confucianism, Daoism, Legalism and Buddhism) being accepted are bleak because such new ideology or thought is seen as a challenge to Chinese way of life.

It may be mentioned here that while Communism gained ground in China due to its appeal to peasants and workers, even Communism and all the excesses of Cultural Revolution have failed to make any significant dent in the traditional psychology of Chinese people at large. Most significantly, while there have been communist scholars and thinkers who contributed to growth of Marxist thought in other parts of the world, there was no such process in China where the **Red Book of Chairman Mao Tse-tung was and still is the first and last book of communism.**

E5. Cruelty / No Mercy for the Weak

Chinese respect strength and are always ready to bow before the strong. But when it comes to dealing with the weak, no one can be crueller than the Chinese. And when it comes to being cruel, the Chinese have no hesitation in killing their own countrymen in large numbers. Probably, the Chinese have killed more of their own brethren in the last century than any other country or ethnic group in the world.

| War / Rebellion | From To | Estimated No. of Persons Killed Million | | |
|---------------------|-----------|---|---------|-------------|
| | Years | Minimum | Maximum | Average |
| Taiping Rebellion | 1850-1864 | 20.0 | 100.0 | 60.0 |
| Chinese Civil War | 1927-1949 | 1.8 | 3.9 | 2.9 |
| Great Leap Forward | 1958-1962 | 18.0 | 55.0 | 36.5 |
| Cultural revolution | 1966-1976 | 0.4 | 10.0 | 5.2 |

Killing or causing the death of almost Forty Five million of one's own population in a period of just about fifty years is a record that no country will like to beat ever.

What was the fault of these people who died the most ghastly death possible? No, they did not belong to a different ethnic group or skin color or language. It is not that the ruling classes had any grudge against the ones who were killed or died. It is just that the ruling classes were not bothered and treated citizen deaths too lightly.

As described earlier, the ruling classes in China consist of the Emperor (by whatever name called – Chairman or General Secretary, in recent times), the bureaucrats and the Palace Eunuchs. Each of the ruling classes has its own insecurities and fears. Each keeps acting to protect its own self-interests and petty privileges. Everything and everyone else is inconsequential.

If this is the attitude of the ruling classes towards their own countrymen, what can small neighboring countries with no military strength expect from Chinese ruling classes? Nothing, if not the worst! It should come as no surprise that China does not have cordial relations with any small neighboring country with probably the only exception being Pakistan.

China's occupation of Tibet should be seen in the light of the above mindset of her ruling classes. Tibet and Dalai Lama made the historical blunder of trusting China to act as Tibet's patron and protector. Of course, the rest is history.

E6. Minorities

Chinese society consists largely of Han Chinese but large parts of border states have large populations of minorities which include either religious minorities or ethnicities other than Han.

Not much is known about these minorities who enjoy no special rights and who struggle to live life as per their own customs and traditions. This is not surprising for a country that can treat her own citizens so harshly as described above.

Ethnic and religious minorities including Tibetans, Muslims, Christians, Manchus and Mongols are small but not insignificant sections of Chinese society. These minorities are living mostly in border areas of China and may be a threat to the country's security and stability in some circumstances – a fact that was recognized by the Chinese authorities during Cultural Revolution when measures against the minorities were moderated based on this realization.

E7. Defeats

While Chinese rulers and army have been most brutal in dealing with their own countrymen, they have faced defeats most of the time. Here is a **list of defeats / stalemates faced by China** during the past 1300 years.

| Year CE | Enemy | War | Remarks |
|-----------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| 751 | Arabs | Battle at Talas River | Shattering Defeat |
| 758 | Arabs | South China Coast | Looted Canton |
| 1075-1082 | Vietnam | War with Ly Dynasty | Initial victory for China. Subsequent attacks by Vietnam led to return of territories to Vietnam and exchange of prisoners. |
| 1125-1127 | Jurchens | Jin-Song Wars | Led to end of Northern Song Empire |
| 1265-1279 | Mongols - Kublai Khan | | Establishment of Yuan Dynasty in 1271 |
| 1406-1427 | Vietnam | | Initial success. Eventually China forced to withdraw from Vietnam. |
| 1592-1597 | Japan | Korean Wars | Stalemate; Neither side a clear winner. |
| 1644-1645 | Manchu (Jurchens) | Crossing of Great Wall and Invasion of Beijing | End of Ming Dynasty |
| 1841-1842 | Sikh Empire | Sino-Sikh War | Stalemate leading to Treaty of Chushul |
| 1839-1842 | England and France | First Opium War | Crushing defeat leading to first of unequal treaties |
| 1856-1860 | England and France | Second Opium War | Crushing defeat leading to collapse of Qing Empire |
| 1894-1895 | Japan | First Sino-Japanese War | Humiliating loss of Korea as a tributary state. Treaty of Shimonoseki recognized Korean independence and ceded Taiwan and the Pescadores to Japan. |
| 1931-1945 | Japan | Second World War | China had lost significantly but the surrender of Japan at the end of the war helped China regain lost territories. |
| 1950-1953 | South Korea, USA and others | Korean War | Ceasefire; With no clear result |
| 1965-1969 | South Vietnam and others | Vietnam War | Withdrawal |
| 1967 | India | Nath-La and Cho La Incidents | Chinese withdrawal from Sikkim |
| 1979 | South Vietnam | Sino-Vietnam War | Chinese withdrawal from Vietnam |

In the above list, minor skirmishes are not included. In particular the defeats suffered by China at the hands of Germany and Russia have not been mentioned.

China has lost to (or faced a stalemate with) Japan, Korea, Vietnam, England, France, Germany, Russia and many other allied countries. In case of India, the score is 1:1 since India lost in 1962 but won in 1967, not counting the Sino-Sikh War of 1841 which ended in a stalemate.

It is impossible to name a single country on which China has achieved decisive victory in war during the past 1300 years. Yes, China conquered Tibet in 1950. But conquering one's own protectorate does not amount to a victory in war. It can only be called a case of back stabbing which brings no honor in the community of warriors.



Viceroyalty of the Qing dynasty
In the above map, the areas shown in light or dark pink were not administered by Viceroyalty of the Qing Dynasty. They were protectorate areas.

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It may also be mentioned here that much of present geographical area of People's Republic of China was not part of the Qing Empire but was only part of its protectorates. People's Republic of China has on one hand claimed to be the successor state of Qing Dynasty and on the other hand has refused to honor the

commitments of protection provided by the Qing rulers to the protected provinces. Annexation of protectorates cannot be compared to victories in war.



World respects the brave and trustworthy. China with her long list of defeats, back stabbings and brutalities on her own citizens can neither be considered respectable nor trustworthy.

F. Global Scenario & China

Every country has a version of history which is very different from the one that outsiders read. The version of Chinese history given above in this book is likely to be unacceptable or unpalatable (may be even objectionable) to most Chinese nationals or persons of Chinese origin. I am sure that the version of history read by them paints their imperial past in most glowing terms. Marx, Lenin and Stalin have long been removed from Chinese bookshelves. Han, T'ang, Song, Ming and Qing are the keywords for the new identities of Chinese people. The Chinese seem to be taking great pride in their imperial past based on the version of history that they have read.

Of course, the five dynasties had their great achievements and it is not my point to denigrate any of them. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that geographical area administered by any of the dynasties (excluding the protectorates and countries that only paid a tribute) was much smaller as compared to the area controlled by present-day People's Republic of China (PRC). No emperor ever administered a geographic area as large as PRC does. No emperor of China ever ruled over as many people as Communist Party of China does.

In the past four decades, China has been extremely successful in ensuring fast growth for their economy based on continuous surge in exports. Some argue that this has been achieved on the basis of manipulations of their currency. Let us not get into that debate. Chinese invented paper currency; so it should come as no surprise that they are masters of it. Four decades ago, the world moved away from pegged exchange rates, the system agreed at Bretton Woods Conference. Present world is living through anarchical times as regards amount of currency that a country can print. Who can blame the Chinese if they took advantage of the anarchy?

It seems that the world cannot do without Chinese goods. To me it carries a sense of déjà vu. In the 17th and 18th centuries demand for Chinese goods (particularly silk, porcelain, and tea) in Europe had created a trade imbalance between Qing Imperial China and Great Britain. China did not want anything from Europe while Europe wanted various Chinese products. The situation seems largely the same today. Did the trade imbalance create prosperity for people of Qing's China? It did not. On the contrary, it led to various disturbances which led to the fall of Qing dynasty.

History seems to be repeating itself. China has a big trade imbalance with almost every country in the world. The imbalance is creating global tensions. It is not my intention to guess how these tensions will shape the future. Undeniably, trade imbalances are adding to foreign currency balances, US treasury papers and other such sovereign assets of China.

It seems that at the moment, Chinese ruling class is riding high on two horses – (a) **dreams of achieving the past imperial glory** and (b) **huge pile of foreign currency assets**. Dreams can be powerful motivators for a country but it must be admitted that dreams are nothing more than, well, dreams. And as for foreign currency assets – in difficult times, huge piles of bank balances and government bonds may become as notional as dreams of glory.

Enforcing a sovereign debt like government treasury bonds requires nothing more than a letter of demand in times of peace. However, it is not as simple and straightforward in times of war. The President of USA has the power to decide to keep on hold or even annul all investments and debts of People's Republic of China, her citizens and companies. This is not a far-fetched scenario. USA has already done it with countries like Iran. Tensions between China and USA are mounting. A flash leading to the USA taking such decisive action may not happen in near future or may happen soon – one cannot guess.

In times of war and other such disturbances when one's paper assets may evaporate overnight, one needs friends, supporters and well-wishers. In the Nineteenth century when China faced Opium Wars, China had no friends willing to help her. The situation is no different today. China has business associates but no friends. Every country in the world wants to do business with China as long as the going is good; but **no country will be ready to shed blood for China**. Even Pakistan, the new-found friend of China, has no emotional connect with China and will not be willing to send her army to help China.

People's Republic of China dreams of global leadership riding on visions of China's imperial history. Through most of imperial history China traded with the world offering the world cheap high quality products but remained an outsider to the world. So, it is no surprise that the present Chinese emperor does not realize what is involved in becoming a global leader.

United States of America emerged as a global leader after World War II. A key fact for emergence of the USA as global leader has been the relationships that the USA

has been able to build with her neighbors and also with European countries. It would have been easy for the USA to assert her power and rake up border disputes with Canada, Mexico and Caribbean Islands. Imagine the situation if the USA had acted to annex say Luxembourg or Liechtenstein? Surely, USA would have succeeded in beating up many small countries but that would have made the USA untrustworthy and the USA would have lost her global leadership position. There can be no denying that the USA owes her present global position in large measure to the support extended by her in reconstruction of Europe after World War II.

China needs to get over her view of their Emperor as Son of Heaven with no equal and with everyone else being only a tribute state. Even in the eighteenth century, the world had refused to kowtow (a ritual which requires an individual to kneel with both knees on the ground and bow so as to touch their forehead to the ground) before their emperor. The world is much less prepared to kowtow today. Even the smallest countries demand to be treated as equals in today's comity of nations.



Present Emperor of China needs to learn to stop behaving like a village bully fighting with everyone and his uncle on every petty matter. It does no good to China's ambition of becoming world leader that the country has a border dispute with a country as small as Bhutan. The Emperor needs to learn that friendship is more valuable than a few sq. meters of land. **Cultivating friends is something that Qing Emperor lacked in 1793. Present Emperor of China also does not know how to do it or probably does not care for it.**

In addition to learning to make friends, China needs to become more trustworthy. Tibet and her protesters keep reminding the world about the back stabbing that happened not long ago.

China needs to introspect. Yes, the Emperor of China wants to lead the world. But in the final reckoning it is the world that decides whether it wants to follow China. And unless the world decides to follow China, there is no way that China can become the world leader. **No, the world is not going to kowtow to the Emperor just because the Emperor is rich.**



Kowtowing in China

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Acknowledgments

I must start by acknowledging that I make no claims about this book being an original work. While opinions expressed in the book are entirely mine, almost every factual detail in this book is from some website. I am not ashamed to admit that many of the paragraphs have been copied and pasted verbatim from the source websites. I have relied extensively on Wikipedia pages, <http://www.historyworld.net> <http://www.ancient.eu> <http://theimmortalemporor.weebly.com/reforms.html> and many other websites. I am most thankful to all the websites, their publishers and their authors who have done great work in keeping the body of information available for researchers and students of history like me. In case any of the publishers feels that I have violated any copyright restrictions, please write to me with details of the specific violation and I shall gladly do the necessary corrections.

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