HUMANITIES INSTITUTE

CHINESE HISTORY

Course Description
This course covers Chinese history from ancient to contemporary times, with a special emphasis on events and trends. Students will historical texts and will discuss them from different critical stances. Students will demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the works by responding to questions focusing on the economic, political, philosophical, technological, and socio-cultural developments. Students will develop potential interpretations of the causes, impacts, and meanings of historical events by responding to questions. In addition, they will discuss the historical, social, cultural, or biographical contexts of the works' production. This course is intended for students who already possess a bachelor's and, ideally, a master's degree, and who would like to develop interdisciplinary perspectives that integrate with their prior knowledge and experience.

About the Professor
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Contents

ANCIENT PERIOD

PART I : **China in the Bronze Age (3000 BCE-600 BCE)**

Overview

It is not known when the first human migrants reached the territory of contemporary China. Excavations of the earliest archeological sites indicate that some areas of China have been inhabited for between 5000 and 6000 years by people groups who were likely ancestors of today's Chinese. Evidence for this includes pictographic writing found on ancient bones, pottery shards with identifiable food stuffs on it and the like. Civilization in China began to emerge in three distinct areas. One, the area east of the bend of the Yellow River in Henan and Shanxi provinces, is where northern Chinese civilization began to emerge. Another developed in the eastern areas of the Yangzi River Valley and, over the course of time, largely merged with the first. The third developed in the far southeastern regions of China along the border with Vietnam. Both China and Vietnam lay claim to this culture in the far southeast. Unlike the cultures that emerged in the Nile River Valley, the Indus River Valley and the land between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers (the Fertile Crescent), Chinese civilization evolved with very little influence from one of the other of the earliest human civilizations.

Events.

The Xia. The first organized government we have record of in China is the Xia Dynasty. According to the most recent archaeological evidence, it existed from approximately 2205 BCE to roughly 1600 BCE (the early-to-middle Bronze Age years). The Xia people inhabited an area that straddled the Yellow River in what is today the provinces of Shanxi, Henan and possibly as far east as Shandong. The Yellow River nourished ancient Chinese civilization. However, it is also known as "China's Sorrow" because even though the silt it deposited on the north China plains made this land very fertile, it also caused the river to flood catastrophically every few years. It is very difficult to know just how far east the Xia people lived because the Yellow River also changed course dramatically every few hundred years and washed away settlements. Indeed, in the Xia Period, the Yellow River emptied into the Yellow Sea in an alluvial plain that would eventually become the home of the coastal city of Tianjin. Later, the Yellow River emptied into the Yellow Sea south of Shandong Peninsula (a distance of more than 400 miles!) until 1853 CE at which time it returned back north of Shandong Peninsula. The Yellow River was (and remains) a capricious progenitor. It is not known what group, tribe, government or state preceded the Xia. It is possible that there was a previously organized state, but that knowledge has been lost to humanity. In the absence of indisputable archaeological and/or historical evidence, it is also possible that the Xia themselves were more mythical than real. However, the preponderance of evidence suggests they did exist, although we know very little about them. The Xia were followed by a group known as the Shang, about whom we know much more.

The Shang. The Shang Dynasty ruled from approximately 1600 BCE to 1050 BCE. It was a large and well-organized state and was unrivaled in size and strength for much of its existence by any other in the world except for perhaps the New Kingdom in Egypt. Although the heart of the Shang Dynasty was old Xia territory, the area they governed was significantly larger. The borders of Shang territory were: the Yangzi River in the south, the Yellow Sea and East China Sea in the east, the area near Beijing in the northeast and Shaanxi province in the west. The most well-known monarch of the Shang Dynasty was its founder, Cheng Tang or Tang the Successful (r. 1675 BCE-1646 BCE) who, the chronicles tell us, dispatched the last Xia monarch.

The First Historical Monarchs. There were approximately 30 kings of the Shang Dynasty. We know the names of 12 of them. There does not appear to have been a fixed capital city in the early centuries of the dynasty. However, in later years, the capital city was Yin, a large city which we believe encompassed more than 16 square miles. Today, this site is near the contemporary city of Anyang. It is during the Shang period that Chinese writing first emerged. It is not clear what caused the downfall of last Shang monarch. Documents produced more than 1000 years after the collapse of the Shang mention that the Shang monarchs were very fond of wine and strong drink and that this overindulgence caused them to offend Heaven. Other documents paint a much darker portrait of the last Shang monarch, depicting him as a cruel and depraved man who drank from the skulls of vanquished foes. Nonetheless, the Shang were dispatched in an action which started as a large-scale slave revolt. Their former vassal, King Wu "the Martial" (r. 1046 BCE-1043BCE) of the Zhou is credited with overthrowing the Shang. The Zhou Dynasty (1046 BCE-771 BCE) was even larger and more organized than was the Shang, although there does not

appear to have been a revolutionary break between the dynasties. Zhou territory extended south of the Yangzi River and west into Sichuan Province.

The Zhou Dynasty. King Wu recognized that he was more suited to life as a warrior than to the day-to-day administration of a vast kingdom. He is well known for naming his brother, the Duke of Zhou, to the position of power within his kingdom. This was fortuitous because King Wu died two years later, leaving a young son as heir. The Duke of Zhou then acted as regent for a number of years but then voluntarily yielded power when his nephew came of age. There was no known bloodshed in the transition. The Duke of Zhou is remembered for his moral rectitude and is, because Confucius memorialized him in the *Analects*, the single most influential political figure in either the Shang or Zhou periods. It is perhaps the idea of the Duke of Zhou, rather than the man himself, that Confucius characterized as the archetype political leader for all of China. Confucius depicted him as one who governed righteously but with a light hand. For Confucius, it was a time when all was right and true with the government. The Zhou state fragmented in 771 BCE just before Iron Age technology appeared, although vestiges lasted until well into the period of the Warring Kingdoms (475 BCE-221 BCE).

Government

The Structure of Government. The Shang government was organized hierarchically, with ranks, specialized functions, and the like. There was an aristocracy which was feudal in nature and fiefdoms which passed from father to son. However, we do not know much more about the Shang government, their legal system and the like. The chronicles tell us that the first Zhou monarchs built on the old Shang organization rather than reinventing the system, so it is possible, to a certain extent, to extrapolate backwards. As is the case with most ancient governments, the Zhou government was not highly centralized when compared to governments today. It was divided into administrative areas which, over the course of time, became something like hereditary feudatories. These later became the basis of the "kingdoms" of the Warring Kingdoms period, when regionalism overcame the vestiges of central authority. In total, between the collapse of the Western Zhou in the 770s BCE and the unification of China under the Qin in 221 BCE, there were more than 200 recorded kingdoms complete with walled cities, organized militaries and the like. It should be noted that many of these "kingdoms" were very small or situated on the periphery of Chinese civilization. Most were very short lived.

The Military. The Shang military was quite small but generally well organized. It is recorded that they were able to field up to 3000 warriors in battle and keep them there for a season. The government was therefore organized well enough, along with its vassals, to arm itself and defend against significant barbarian threats. In the Zhou period, the monarchs were able to field more than 30,000 warriors and 3000 chariots. This 10-fold increase in military size and strength indicates a commensurate increase in organizational ability and command of resources by the central government.

Culture

Early Religion. Our knowledge of early Bronze Age culture is largely limited to that which archaeologists have been able to reveal through excavations. In particular, our knowledge of the religion practiced in early Bronze Age China is limited to the existence of bone divination. It is believed that a holy man or shaman wrote on animal bones, heated them and interpreted them based on how they responded to heat. He acted as something of an oracle in this rather elaborate ritual. Other vestiges of "civil religion" from the late Bronze Age remain in the form of the Jade Emperor and the concept of heaven, earth and the underworld. The Jade Emperor ruled over the heavenly court. The ruler of earth was known as the Son of Heaven. In this way, the concept of the "Mandate of Heaven" began to emerge to describe the divine right of monarchs to rule in the Zhou period (1046 BCE-771 BCE). Part of the job of the monarch was to maintain harmony between heaven and earth. It is interesting to note that monarchs could and very often did lose the "Mandate of Heaven." In practice, this could happen if a monarch ruled poorly, taxed the people too heavily or otherwise engaged in behavior inappropriate for the Son of Heaven. Earthly harmony was then lost.

The Arts. Bronze Age art forms were also in evidence in China. Craftsmen, potters and sculptors were generally well advanced for the time, particularly in bronze metallurgy. Craftsmen fired colorfully-decorated pottery. Motifs sometimes consisted of geometric patterns and/or human and animal designs. Pottery ran the gamut between richly adorned, ceremonial items to those used in everyday life. Bronze itself, being very, very expensive is not as

ubiquitous as pottery in the archaeological record. It is believed that only the elites were able to possess it. Nonetheless, bronze castings reveal a very high level of sophistication and artistry. Some items that have been discovered are very large, thick and heavy. This indicates that the craftsmen were able to maintain consistent temperatures in the casting and cooling processes.

Literature. In the late Bronze Age, some of the first recorded literary works emerged in China. The most famous is the *Shijing* (Book of Poetry). This work is a compilation of 311 poems gathered between the 11th and 7th centuries BCE. It is believed that some were handed down as ritual songs from the Shang period and other poems are attributed to the Duke of Zhou, who lived in the 11th century. Given the mention of the Duke of Zhou, it is easy to understand that Confucius is given credit for compiling this work, although there is no way to verify this claim. Nonetheless, this book is one of five in the Confucian cannon. It is important to note that the religion espoused by Confucius did not exist in an organized form before he himself began teaching in the 6th century BCE. However, many of the ideals he promoted are believed to have existed in China long before he was born. Other ancient works include the *I Ching* (Book of Changes) and the *Shujing* (Book of Documents).

Society

Social Relationships. Society in Bronze Age China was no longer solely based on the tribal or clan system. There was a monarch, and usually, a central government which relied upon local elites to implement and administer government directives. Society was generally dispersed in rural areas, but there was a thriving urban culture as well, something that indicated a stratified social system. In the cities of the late Bronze Age, Chinese elites valued large architectural edifices for both their practical and symbolic uses. In the Zhou Era (1046 BCE-771 BCE), there was an institution that resembled serfdom for the peasantry, although its contours are not well known. In addition, slavery is known to have existed in some form or another. Relationships between superiors and subordinates are believed to have had a reciprocal, moral component. It was the moral obligation of the rulers to govern fairly and justly, at least according to Confucius, and it was the moral obligation of the peasants to obey just rulers.

Funerary. In the burial tombs of early and middle Bronze Age elites, archaeologists have found the skeletal remains of large numbers of humans as well as animals who had clearly been sacrificed in order to be buried together with the deceased. This evidence of human sacrifice, though troubling for us in the contemporary world, was widely practiced in antiquity. It indicates the extent of the control elites exercised over those around them. As China moved through the Bronze Age, evidence of human sacrifice diminished until it was largely replaced by symbols of humans, such as small clay or bronze figurines, and in the most extreme case, the Terra Cotta Warriors of the First Emperor of the Qin Dynasty (r. 221 BCE-210 BCE).

Economy

Agriculture. The economy of Bronze Age China was largely agrarian. Many peasants were serfs or subsistence farmers and barely grew enough food to pay their taxes and survive from season to season. Unlike some of the other Bronze Age cultures, bronze implements were slow to be introduced into the daily life of peasants (and equally slow to be used for military purposes). The reason for this is unknown. Nonetheless, some bronze tools have been unearthed in archaeological sites. This indicates that though peasants were able to scratch a living out of the earth, their ability to produce food in excess was likely limited.

Diet. In contrast to conventional wisdom, the Chinese diet in the early and middle Bronze Age was not based on rice. Instead, crops more suited to cultivation on the north China plain were grown including millet, early varieties of wheat, hemp, barely and the like. There is also evidence of the consumption of livestock such as pork and beef. In the southern areas of China where moisture is much more abundant, wet rice agriculture was in use as early as the 4500 BCE. However, it was not introduced into northern China until the late Shang period. Wet rice agriculture is very labor intensive, but good producers were able to grow more than was necessary for consumption by one family. Calories were therefore beginning to be produced in excess in the late Bronze Age, allowing for additional members of society to specialize in pursuits other than agriculture and for a rise in population. As a result, cities grew dramatically larger and more important. Vestiges of pre-wet rice agriculture can be seen in the regional cuisine of contemporary China. For example, the cuisine of north China still shows evidence of more reliance on grains other than rice.

Currency. The monetary system of the Shang period (1600 BCE to 1050 BCE) is unknown. It is believed that there was no minting of coins and the like. Jade was sometimes used as currency, as were some kinds of sea shells. It is not clear what specie taxes were paid in or how markets functioned in the absence of coinage. During the Zhou Era (1046 BCE-771 BCE), coins were minted for the first time. They were made of bronze and copper. They do not appear to have had much intrinsic value, but bore the mark of the monarch and therefore carried the weight of officialdom. However, it is not clear how widespread their use was and how well controlled they were by the government.

Readings

1) Harold Tanner, *China: A History, Volume 1. From Neolithic Cultures through the Great Qing Empire*, (Hackett Publishing, 2010), pp. 3-82.

2) Patricia Buckley Ebrey, ed., *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*. (Free Press, 1993), pp. 1-16.

3) Arthur Waley, trans. *The Book of Songs*, (Grove Press, 1996).

4) Cyril Birch, *Anthology of Chinese Literature: Volume 1. From Early Times to the Fourteenth Century*, (Grove Press, 1994), pp. 39-80.

5) Rowan K. Flad and Pochan Chen, *Ancient Central China: Centers and Peripheries along the Yangzi River*, (Cambridge, 2013) pp. 1-42, 287.

6) Li Feng, *Early China: A Social and Cultural History*, (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 1-161.

Questions for Discussion

1) Amateur historians often ask the question "which society created the world's first civilization?" The Chinese, the Egyptians, the Mesopotamians and the Indians all like to lay claim to being the first. Do you think this is an important and meaningful question to ask? If so, what assumptions underlie these assertions? What are the criteria used to determine civilization? Is it writing, religion, an organized government, the existence of a monarch, cities, advanced agriculture, etc?

2) The "Mandate of Heaven" is a well-established concept in China. It was, initially, an attempt to legitimize authority through an appeal to religion. Can this sort of appeal be found in other civilizations? What are the components of the "Mandate" and can it be broken down into behavior, world-view, economic policy, etc.? Does a ruler know that he has lost the "Mandate" or is it something that historians can see only after a change in leadership has occurred?

3) In the 300-400 year period of transition between the Bronze Age to the Iron Age, several of the world's most important religions were established. Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism all found expression for the first time during this period. Others, such as Judaism, matured into the religions that are recognizable today. Was there something about this time in human history—and in China—in particular were conditions were just right to incubate and nurture all these new religions?

Texts

1) From the *Book of Poetry*, 11th-7th centuries BCE, Number 1

> Here long, there short, is the duckweed;
> On the left, on the right, we gather it.
> The modest, retiring, virtuous, young lady:
> With lutes, small and large, let us give her friendly welcome.
> Here long, there short, is the duckweed;
> On the left, on the right, we cook and present it.
> The modest, retiring, virtuous, young lady:
> With bells and drums let us show our delight in her.

2) From the *Book of Documents*, 3th century BCE, Number 33, compiled by Sima Qian. Attributed to the Duke of Zhou

> From the reign of the Shang founder Tang to that of Di Yi, none did not perform the proper sacrifices and make their virtue bright; none was not a suitable match for Heaven. But then his son, the king Zhou, was greatly dissolute and lax, he attended neither to Heaven, nor to the needs of the people. His people were all as under sentence of death. In the meantime, King Wen did not take the time even to eat a meal while the sun was in the sky, and so he enjoyed the throne of the Zhou people for fifty years.

3) From the *I Ching* (The Book of Changes), Book 1, Part 1, Section 15, *On Modesty*, originally compiled during the Zhou Period

> The destinies of men are subject to immutable laws that must fulfill themselves. But man has it in his power to shape his fate, according as his behavior exposes him to the influence of benevolent or of destructive forces. When a man holds a high position and is nevertheless modest, he shines with the light of wisdom; if he is in a lowly position and is modest, he cannot be passed by. Thus the superior man can carry out his work to the end without boasting of what he has achieved.

PART II : **China in the Iron Age (Classical Period)**

Overview

The period between the slow collapse of the Zhou Dynasty (beginning in the 770s BCE) and the rapid rise of the Qin in the 3rd Century BCE is known by various names—the Western Zhou, the Eastern Zhou, the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States/Kingdoms Period. Each of these uses vastly different dates to provide context for the time and describes different geographical spaces and power structures. It is therefore difficult to describe this period using a short, pithy title. However, this 300-400 year period is one of the most dynamic times in all of Chinese history. Two major new religions were born, there were advances in statehood, iron technology was introduced, new forms of culture found expression and society was reshaped in the image of the First Emperor. Perhaps most importantly, China was unified in 221 BCE—a situation all Chinese rulers have aspired to maintain or recreate. Put succinctly, the concept of "China" was born during this period and is still the primary ideology that dominates the Chinese cultural and political landscape.

Events

Political Fragmentation. It is difficult to provide the precise date when iron was first introduced into China. Archaeologists argue that there is evidence for the appearance of iron by at least 600 BCE, which is a few hundred years after it first appeared in other parts of the world. It is not clear who introduced it or by what means this knowledge was transmitted. But its effects on the largely moribund Zhou Dynasty, a political entity which existed mostly in name only by this time, were limited. The rulers of the Eastern Zhou period (770 BCE-256 BCE) are generally understood to be figureheads. Rulers were custodians of the "Mandate of Heaven," but possessed very little power. Political fragmentation had already occurred. In the years just before the rise of the Qin in the 3rd Century BCE, there were at least 7 great kingdoms: Yan, Qi, Chu, Qin, Wei, Han and Zhao (other states such as Song, Jin and Zheng had ceased to exist years earlier). The monarchs of these kingdoms operated in a Darwinian environment. They had to govern well in the territory they controlled or risk being overthrown by their own aristocracy or military. But they also operated under the endless threat of invasion from one or more of the other Chinese kingdoms or from one or more of the non-Chinese "barbarian" groups on the periphery. Alliances with unreliable and unsavory partners were necessary for survival. Treachery was often the norm and not the exception in both the domestic and foreign realms. In addition, the monarchs of each kingdom sometimes had difficulty keeping their peasantry and skilled laborers from absconding. If conditions became intolerable in one state, migration to another, though not commonplace, sometimes occurred. Good governance mattered.

War Between Kingdoms. The Chinese kingdoms in the 6th and 5th centuries BCE often warred against each other. But these were relatively small affairs at that time, with "gentlemen's agreements" about the rules of warfare and the exchange of prisoners sometimes in evidence. Small armies of several thousand took the field of battle against each other. The total destruction of the enemy, however, was a secondary consideration to the notion that one must not weaken oneself and therefore become a tempting target of one or more of the other monarchs. This situation was destined not to last because as China moved into the 4th century BCE, the intensity of conflict began to escalate. By the early 3rd century, warfare had become a savage affair. Wholesale slaughter of a vanquished foe was increasingly common. Each of the monarchs of the great Chinese kingdoms believed they would one day come to rule all the remaining kingdoms. None would have dared to consider that it would be the Qin.

The Qin. The Qin had arisen in the period when the Chinese states were transitioning from playing at war to seeking to completely crush each other. Indeed, many historians argue that it was the combination of the large-scale introduction of iron technology and the threat posed by the Qin that changed the nature of warfare in China. In the 4th and 3rd centuries BCE, several states had attained ascendency over the others. One of the most prominent and powerful in the late 4th century BCE was the Zhao. The Zhao monarchs had ruled well and controlled reasonably fertile land with a stable peasantry. The Zhao governed territory on the northern periphery of Chinese civilization and often faced the threat posed by raiding Xiongnu, a nomadic people group who have disappeared from the human record. Given their geographic position constantly defending against barbarians, they sought out people groups who were even further on the periphery for an alliance and made contact with the Qin. It was a Zhao monarch who was the first to confer an official title on one of the Qin warriors for military service on the frontier. The other Chinese kingdoms perceived of the early Qin as, at best, semi-barbarian. They were certainly not perceived to be fully Chinese. They inhabited the far, far western reaches of Chinese territory along the Wei River and acted as a buffer

from even more brutal barbarian people groups. This geographic setting, rather than acting solely as a weakness, insulated the Qin from the existential threats posed by the political and military machinations the other Chinese states in the east. Qin territory was relatively easy to defend. This allowed the Qin to develop economically, militarily and culturally facing constant threat, but rarely the threat of complete annihilation. Nonetheless, when they fought, they rarely took prisoners. There was little room for sentimentally on the frontier. Perhaps most importantly, the Qin monarchs created a "state of war"—that is to say—they organized their state for perpetual conflict. There was a clear military-style hierarchy, elements of which were also imposed on the civilian population, and severe consequences for warrior or civilian alike if one failed at ones duty. On the other hand, the Qin recognized excellence and loyalty, promoted warriors who displayed uncommon valor and rewarded peasants who farmed well with additional land and other considerations.

King Zheng. Bringing political order out of chaos in a brutal age was an extremely messy business. Often, it was the most ruthless, callous warrior who won the day. In the case of the unification of China under the Qin in the 3rd century BCE, the victorious armies were often instructed to take no prisoners. Hundreds of thousands of enemy warriors were executed after surrendering in battle. The architect of this bloodshed was King Zheng (260-210 BCE) of the kingdom of Qin. King Zheng inherited the position from his father, King Zhuangxiang, who died in the year 247 BCE. Though King Zheng's paternity has been called into question, his ability to rule as well as reign has never been called into question. He possessed exceptional talent, discernment and decisiveness. But he was also a megalomaniac. As a young man during the time when he still had a regent to help him govern, he was made aware of a plot against him and ordered the gruesome executions of all the plotters, even down to third degree familial relations! From that point on, only those who wished to die slowly and painfully opposed him both at home and in the other kingdoms.

Qin Ascendency. Notwithstanding palace intrigue, conflict with other states continued unabated. By 230 BCE, the Qin had become the most powerful, wealthy kingdom in China. They controlled approximately 1/3rd of China's land under cultivation and 1/3rd of its population. The balance of power had decisively shifted in their favor. The final decade of conflict was surprisingly short but predictably brutal. Unfortunately, an absence of war chronicles deprives us of many of the details. The Qin armies slowly conquered each of the 6 other kingdoms one by one beginning with the kingdom of Han in 230 BCE. Zhao fell in 228, most of Yan in 226 and Wei in 225 BCE. The greatest challenge was the kingdom of Chu, which fell in 223 BCE. Finally, the relatively distant kingdom of Qi, after putting up futile resistance, fell in 221 BCE.

The First Emperor. After unifying China politically, King Zheng began the process of consolidation. Not content with just being the victorious King of Qin, he adopted the title of "shihuangdi" 始皇帝—which literally means the "First Emperor." In taking this title, Qin Shihuangdi sent a statement to all of Chinese civilization that he had in mind a massive, all-powerful state with him as the undisputed ruler. All vestiges of the old, feudal system were to be swept away.

The Han. The First Emperor was successful in implementing his revolution. His reforms were comprehensive and durable. However, he is also remembered as one of the most despicable human beings to have ever ruled China in its more than 4000 years of recorded history. The same brutality that allowed him to overwhelm his adversaries on the battlefield was visited upon anyone who opposed him in his vast, new kingdom. While alive, no one dared to oppose him. However, upon his death, the people of China had had enough. Few mourned in passing in 210 BCE. Soon thereafter, there was unrest in the land. By 206 BCE, the dynasty had collapsed. The Qin had lost the Mandate of Heaven.

Liu Bang. In the midst of the brief period of chaos that followed the Qin collapse, a new leader emerged, a commoner named Liu Bang (259-195 BCE). Liu Bang started his career as a low-ranking military officer in the Qin armies but quickly ran afoul of the authorities after the death of the First Emperor. For a while, he and his men were considered bandits and/or rebels. However, he began to successfully command troops in battle, first leading small groups, and then increasingly leading larger armies in the invasion and conquest of the old kingdoms. By 202 BCE, large-scale fighting had ended and Liu Bang had become Emperor Gao, the founding Emperor of the Han Dynasty. The Han period is considered the "golden age" of classical China. Indeed, the dominant ethnic group in China still call themselves the "People of the Han."

Emperor Wu of Han. The Han Dynasty lasted, in one form or another, from 202 BCE to 220 CE. It was, in every way—geographic size, population, culture, economic and military strength—a rival to the Roman Empire. Indeed, it was larger and more powerful than the Roman Empire for most of its existence. These two empires were aware of each other, but had very little contact. There is no known record of official correspondence between the two. The most powerful and prominent ruler of Han China was the Emperor Wu. Emperor Wu ruled for 54 years between 141-87 BCE and oversaw the geographic expansion of the empire to its greatest extent. At one point, the borders of Han China reached from what is today the Kazakhstan/Kyrgyzstan border in the southwest to Korea in the northeast, from Mongolia in the north to Vietnam in the southeast. Like the Roman Empire, Han China was destined to slowly diminish in size, strength and vitality. It was followed by a period of fragmentation which lasted from approximately 220 CE to the 6th century.

Government

De-Feudalization. Upon the cessation of major combat in 221 BCE, the First Emperor imposed much the same structure on the rest of his kingdom that he had used in his home kingdom. In addition, he embarked on a system of "de-feudalization" where all aristocrats of the old kingdoms were stripped of their lands, titles and privileges and given to the state to be disposed of as the Qin saw fit. More than 120,000 former nobles were resettled in the new capital city of Chang'an so that the Emperor could carefully monitor their activities. All military fortifications were pulled down or otherwise destroyed if not needed for defense by the Qin and all weapons were confiscated. As you might imagine, this created immense resentment among the landed elites in the other former kingdoms. Nevertheless, a highly organized, hierarchical structure for society was put into place. Upon the ascendency of the Han, many of the Qin de-feudalization initiatives were relaxed. Though it is not believed that aristocrats of the old kingdoms returned to their ancestral homelands to rule as they pleased, new aristocrats with lands, titles and privileges emerged over the centuries. Nonetheless, the basic governmental structure the First Emperor put into place lasted until the fall of the Han. Indeed, some historians have argued that the system, as envisioned by Qin Shihuangdi, became the ideal form of government for China and lasted in one form or another, for more than 2000 years!

Standardization. Administratively, China was divided into 36 units (known by historians as commanderies) each with three different but generally equal administrators: a civil governor, a military commander and an inspector (sometimes known as a censor). The civilian governor was named by the Emperor and accountable to the Emperor personally. Though not strictly the governor's to command, they had immense power over the civilian population. This was generally not a hereditary position. Above all, governor's job was to keep the peace and to implement the Emperors initiatives. The military commander's job was to face the military threat posed by any internal or external foe. The inspector's job was to investigate the situation on the ground and to determine the extent to which the civilian governor and military commander were doing their jobs. He then reported directly back to the Emperor. On the local level, small accountability groups composed of 5 family units were to be the norm. If any member ran afoul of the new, standardized legal system, all 5 family units could be held accountable. And then, of course, the Qin were also know for standardizing weights and measurements, the writing system, road widths (50 paces wide) and even axel widths. As above, most of these movements to standardize systems within China remained in place during the Han period, but were more relaxed than under the Qin.

Culture

Cultural Integration. Culture in Iron Age China (and particularly under the Qin) was dependent on the monarch and the state. The chronicles tell us that the First Emperor (r. 220-210 BCE) was a tyrant who sought to control society and culture at virtually every level. Still, the area ruled by the First Emperor, though slightly less than one-third of the area of contemporary China, was nevertheless a very diverse place. The most important characteristic which indicated at least partial cultural integration of Iron Age culture in China was language. The First Emperor, not content with this state of affairs, successfully standardized the writing system and created a more common language. This made possible all the other elements of common culture— religion, shared heritage and experiences, similar social habits, related cuisine and the arts.

Language. Contemporary Chinese uses ideographs (characters) as a writing system. There is no alphabet nor syllabary—only characters which began to emerge in the early Bronze Age. Archaeological evidence indicates that as early as the 13th century BCE, pictographs identifiable as early characters were written on bones. Over the

centuries, these characters evolved and were systematized into the language we now know as "old Chinese." Linguistic archaeologists believe that old Chinese was likely less tonal than contemporary Mandarin Chinese, but was still based on ideographs. During the Iron Age, old Chinese in its written form was widely used among the elites in the old kingdoms and was the common thread weaving together the disparate kingdoms. It made possible significant people migrations, the exchange of ideas and best practices and eventually, under the Qin, the attempt at full, cultural and social integration. In addition, calligraphy became a well-established art during the classical age and is still practiced today as one of the traditional art forms.

Confucianism. The most important religion to emerge in the Iron Age was Confucianism. Unlike Buddhism, it is indigenous to China. Confucianism originated with the historical figure, Master Kung (Kung Fuzi), who was born in the kingdom of Lu in approximately 551 BCE. Though Confucius lived in a highly fragmented, fluid political environment, generational memory existed of a golden age, a fabled time of stability when sage-rulers governed judiciously and with integrity. Confucius was the quintessential wandering sage, a teacher who moved between the many kingdoms of China offering his knowledge and services to whomever he encountered. Confucius taught that rulers and the ruled should act in a moral fashion and that if everyone understood their place in society and acted in accordance with his teachings, society would function as it had in the days of old. Confucianism was a very public religion in the early Iron Age. It applied the patriarchal family system and filial piety to the state. The emperor was to act as the great father and the people were to follow and revere the emperor as they would their father or ancestors. The most well-known of Confucius teachings are found in the *Analects* (sayings). The *Analects* were compiled by Confucius' disciples in the years after his death. No works written by Confucius himself are known to have ever existed. Confucianism was widely practiced in the years before the Qin came to power, but began to flourish during the period of the Han Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE) when it was adopted by the authorities as a model of moral and social rectitude. Confucianism is not a monotheistic religion, does not have a well-articulated theory on the afterlife and emphasizes the present rather than the hereafter. Today, Confucianism in China is largely a philosophy and is not widely practiced as a religion.

Daoism. Daoism emerged at roughly the same time as Confucianism and is often described by Chinese scholars as its near opposite. Whereas Confucianism was a public religion, Daoism was private. In fact, throughout most of history, many Chinese were willing to embrace both because they addressed different areas of life. Whereas Confucian philosophy is exoteric and provides a practical, moral code for public life, Daoist ideology emphasizes the esoteric, the mystical and provides a guide for private life. There are two major texts in Daoism which are associated with the philosophers Laozi and Zhuangzi. Though there is no evidence that either of these two were real historical figures, they are credited with compiling the foundational texts entitled the *Daodejing* and the *Zhuangzi*. These works are believed to have been compiled over a period of centuries and served to explain the *Way* (the Dao). The philosophy of Daoism does not seek to find the single, objective truth, but rather points to the Dao as one way of understanding truth. Other than the Jade Emperor, it is difficult to speak of a single, monotheistic deity in Daoism. Daoism, like all Chinese religions, has not fared well under the leadership of the government of the People's Republic of China. Other religions, such as Buddhism, have such a small number of followers today that they have very little influence on society in the People's Republic.

The Arts. The Arts in Iron Age China are best exemplified by the Terra Cotta Warriors, which constitute a very small portion of the burial complex of the First Emperor, Qin Shihuangdi. There are believed to be several terra cotta armies, each of which was to protect the emperor in the afterlife, but only one has been partially excavated. The one area which has been partially excavated encompasses more than 7 acres and is composed of 3 vaults. In the vaults are at least 8000 statues of soldiers, hundreds of horses, chariots and other war implements all situated in battle formation. The statues are approximately life sized, made of clay, painted, with none of the warriors' faces the same. Indeed, many archeologists believe that each of the warriors, which are anatomically correct and lifelike, represent a different person. It took 700,000 laborers from all over the emperor's kingdom more than 36 years to complete the complex.

Sculpture. The skill and sophistication of the sculptors, artists and laborers compares favorably to their counterparts in the Roman Empire. Each of the elements of the production process required the considerable expertise of 5-6 disciplines: sculptors, painters, smithies, metallurgists, chemists and the like. Each of the Terra Cotta Warriors was produced in three different phases. First, the legs were solid clay and had to be fired and cooled slowly and carefully in order to diminish cracking. Second, the torso was hollow and composed of cord-like sections of clay laid upon each other until completed. It was also fired and cooled using a different method than the

legs. Third, the heads were hollow like the torso but were sculpted individually. Perhaps more impressive than the skill shown by the artisans was the organizational skill exhibited by the logisticians who provided the resources necessary to sustain the work force and the materials needed to complete the job. And then, of course, when the First Emperor died, all of this remarkable display was covered over and forgotten for approximately 2200 years.

A UNESCO World Heritage Site. The confluence of a shared concept of the afterlife (religion), the skill of the sculptors, painters and artisans (culture), and the organizational skills of the imperial household (government), provided the world with one of the most important cultural sites in the history of mankind. Only one very small portion of the First Emperor's necropolis has been excavated. In due course, the Chinese government might see fit to open the actual tomb of the First Emperor. If what remains undiscovered is as impressive as what has already been discovered, this UNESCO world heritage site will be rivaled in importance only by the great pyramids of Egypt.

Society

Mobility. In each of the kingdoms of pre-unification China before 220 BCE, society was structured in slightly different ways. Peasants, in particular, had different experiences in the various kingdoms. In most of the eastern kingdoms, peasants were tied to the land through one form of coercion or the other. Though not exactly serfs in the medieval European sense, peasants could not move freely from place to place without the permission of their lords. This led to the problem of peasants absconding—that is to say—peasants moving without permission to a different kingdom where, it was hoped, conditions were better. Others could and did move as well: artisans, scholars, bureaucrats and even military men. This was possible because of a shared language. The Qin (221 BCE-206 BCE) are well known for the incentives they offered to the laboring classes. For a brief period, the Qin provided land to new peasants in a way that was similar to homesteading in the United States during the 19th century. Peasants became free-holders instead of semi-serfs if they improved the land. In due course, this land was brought under cultivation, was taxed and brought under the control of the central authorities. It provided an additional layer of protection against the barbarians on the periphery. These policies relating to the peasantry were modified several times during the Han period (202 BCE-220 CE).

Central Control. The Qin also sought to control all public discourse as a form of public "thought control." The Confucian elites, who had enjoyed some freedom to comment on society during the Warring Kingdoms period, saw their freedom of speech severely curtailed under the Qin. The First Emperor was very unhappy that individuals had the audacity to publicly criticize his initiatives. He responded by limiting the study of philosophy (mostly Confucianism) to topics which would not lead to the questing of state policy. In addition, the writing of history was limited to those topics approved by the state. In essence, by praising the past, Qin policies—through omission—were obliquely called into question. Finally, all writings other than the Qin official state histories, and works on state religion and agriculture were collected and burned. One copy of all works of literature were to be kept in the Imperial library. In a public display of defiance, a number of Confucian scholars refused to abide by Qin Shihuangdi's wishes in 212 BCE. He then terrorized those who opposed him by executing the most prominent 460 scholars in the land. In this way, the First Emperor exercised control over public discourse and society. But he became one of the most hated men in all of Chinese history. As above, when the Han ascended to power, the most severe restrictions on public "thought control" were relaxed.

Economy

Agricultural Advances. The economy of Iron Aga China was largely agrarian. That is not to say that there were not advances in technology which made the lives of working peasants, artisans and laborers much more productive than their ancestors. Indeed, the Chinese economy benefited immensely from the shift from Bronze Age technology to Iron Age technology. Iron implements made possible the expansion of agriculture into marginal lands which had previously not been under cultivation. It was possible in the late Warring Kingdoms period (475 BCE-221 BCE) for your average peasant to possess iron hoes, scythes, plows, axes and more, all of which were utilized in agriculture. Iron was also used in carts used to transport goods and in yokes to harness oxen both on the roads and in the fields. In addition, iron was used for shovels to dig irrigation ditches, in dredging equipment and the like. Finally, iron cooking utensils became widespread during the Iron Age. Because of advances in agriculture, populations increased dramatically. There were also more people shifting from subsistence farming to other endeavors where they were allowed to specialize in skilled professions and become masons, smithies, farriers, carpenters, coopers, and the like.

Others became educators, philosophers, clergy, accountants, bookkeepers and bureaucrats. Still others were dedicated to the art of war and became fletchers, swordsmiths, bowmen, professional soldiers, foundrymen, etc. Many of these professions had existed in the Bronze Age, but in much smaller numbers. Their proliferation in the Iron Age made possible the classical age of human history.

Taxes. As more land was brought under cultivation and the land already under cultivation was made more productive, property and goods could be more effectively taxed. This enriched treasuries, made possible more stable governments and created predictable government budgets. One of the initiatives the Qin (221 BCE-206 BCE) were known for was standardizing the monetary system and for bringing the minting of coinage under the control of the central government. This allowed for the proliferation of markets and facilitated the exchange of goods and services. Taxes were paid both in an amount of the government's choosing and in a specie of its choosing. It was also possible to apply this new-found tax revenue to the military, which was also using new iron weapons to great effect. In essence, the shift from Bronze Age technology to Iron Age technology created the conditions which made possible the unification of China. It also led to some of the greatest bloodshed known to man at that time. As above, taxes were reduced and the economy generally flourished when the Han ascended to power in 202 BCE.

Readings

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Cyril Birch, *Anthology of Chinese Literature: Volume 1. From Early Times to the Fourteenth Century*, (Grove Press, 1994), pp. 81-153

Simon Leys, trans., *The Analects of Confucius*, (Norton Press, 1997), pp. 3-101

Stephen Mitchell trans., *Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu: An Illustrated Journey*, (Frances Lincoln Limited Press, 1999), pp 1-85

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Questions for Discussion

1) Many historians believe that the strength of the Kingdom of Qin derived from its geographic position on the periphery of Chinese civilization. This, however, is debatable. This approach minimizes the role of strong leadership, fails to recognize unorganized or poorly led opponents, does not take into account the effects of natural disasters such as famines, floods, etc. and does not address luck and good timing. Using the information found in the readings and your knowledge of Iron Age China, evaluate which of the above reasons (or one of your own) created the conditions which allowed for the triumph of the Qin.

2) Confucianism and Taoism emerged at roughly the same time. Both religions have shaped and molded Chinese society in profound ways. Confucianism is widely known around the world and credited for helping to create Chinese culture and for influencing the cultures of Korea, Vietnam and Japan, to name a few. Why is Taoism so poorly known around the world? Why does it too not receive equal credit for influencing Chinese culture? In order to answer the question, you will need to be able to articulate the primary tenants of each faith. You will need to know how one of the religions was used to legitimize the ruler of the Han Dynasty and the other was not.

3) The Qin set up a system which lasted (with some minor changes) until the fall of the Han Dynasty in the 3rd century CE. Yet, the Qin (and in particular the first emperor) have been vilified by the Chinese since 210 BCE. Analyze the Chinese approach to official histories, how each succeeding dynasty has authored the work on the loss of the Mandate of Heaven by the preceding dynasty. In other words, how is history understood by the Chinese? What is its purpose and what are the aims of the authors.

4) The concept of the "Iron Age" as an organizing principle for historians has both strengths and weaknesses. Periodization can take many shapes and forms. How do historians determine periods? What are the criteria upon which one may decide that one period has ended and another epoch has begun? Do abstractions such as "Bronze Age," "Classical Period," "Iron Age," "Golden Age" and the like have meaning for China? Once applied to China using one set of criteria, can these be applied across the world using the same criteria?

Texts

1) Lao Tzu. From the *Tao Te Ching*, 7th century BCE

> Those who know don't talk.
> Those who talk don't know.
>
> Close your mouth, block your senses,
> blunt your sharpness, untie your knots,
> soften your glare, settle your dust.
> This is the primal identity.
>
> Be like the Tao.
> It can't be approached or withdrawn from,
> benefitted or harmed, honored or brought into disgrace.
> It gives itself up continually.
> This is why it endures.

2) Confucius. From the *Analects*, 5th century BCE

> The Master said: "At home, a young man must respect his parents; but abroad, he must respect his elders. He should talk little, but with good faith; love all people, but associate with the virtuous. Having done this, if he still has energy to spare, let him study literature."
>
> The Master said: "Do not worry if you are without position; worry lest you do not deserve a position. Do you worry if you are not famous; worry lest you do not deserve to be famous."

3. The Emperor Qin Shihuangdi, 3rd century BCE, on the issue of the control of knowledge. Recorded by the ancient historian Sima Qi'an

> The emperor ordered his ministers to debate this question:
>
> The Prime Minister Li Si said, "The Five Emperors did not emulate each other nor did the Three Dynasties" adopt each other's ways, yet all had good government. This is no paradox, because times had changed. Now Your Majesty has built up this great empire to endure for generations without end. Naturally this passes the comprehension of a foolish pedant. Chunyu Yueh spoke about the Three Dynasties, but they are hardly worth taking as examples. In times gone by different barons fought among themselves and gathered wandering scholars. Today, however, the empire is at peace, all laws and order come from one single source, the common people support themselves by farming and handicrafts, while students study the laws and prohibitions.
>
> "Now these scholars learn only from the old, not from the new, and use their learning to oppose our rule and confuse the black-headed people." As Prime Minister I must speak out on pain of death. In former times when the world, torn by chaos and disorder, could not be united, different states arose and argued from the past to condemn the present, using empty rhetoric to cover up and confuse the real issues, and employing their learning to oppose what was established by authority. Now Your Majesty has conquered the whole world, distinguished between black and white, see unified standards. Yet these opinionated scholars get together to slander the laws and judge each new decree according to their own school of thought, opposing it secretly in their hearts while discussing it openly in the streets. They brag to the sovereign to win fame, put forward strange arguments to gain distinction, and incite the mob to spread rumors. If this is not prohibited, the sovereign's prestige will suffer and factions will be formed among his subjects. Far better put a stop to it!

"I humbly propose that all historical records but those of Qin be burned. If anyone who is not a court scholar dares to keep the ancient songs, historical records or writings of the hundred schools, these should be confiscated and burned by the provincial governor and army commander. Those who in conversation dare to quote the old songs and records should be publicly executed; those who use old precedents to oppose the new order should have their families wiped out; and officers who know of such cases but fail to report them should be punished in the same way.

"If thirty days after the issuing of this order the owners of these books have still not had them destroyed, they should have their face tattooed and be condemned to hard labor at the Great Wall. The only books which need not be destroyed are those dealing with medicine, divination, and agriculture. Those who want to study the law can learn it from the officers. The emperor sanctioned this proposal.

POSTCLASSICAL PERIOD

Overview

The collapse of the Han Dynasty in 220 CE ushered in a period of fragmentation and instability not seen in China for almost half a millennium. Some historians call this the period of the Six Dynasties. Others write about the "Three Kingdoms" period which succeeded the Han and lasted until 280 CE. Still others describe the 16 Kingdoms and the Southern and Northern Dynasties. Unfortunately, these designations do not adequately portray this period. One commonality found among all the rulers of this period was the desire to recreate the greatness and splendor of the Han Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE). None succeeded. In spite of the fact there was no long-standing, unified government, Chinese society progressed. Technologically, there were advances in metallurgy, engineering, mathematics and agriculture. Literature flourished. Buddhism, which had existed in China before as a very small religion, began to flourish. It is perhaps most important to remember that there was a well-established culture in China, with generally agreed-upon social, religious and governmental traditions. Indeed, Chinese culture was quite old by this time. Even though governments and dynasties rose and fell in something close to a predictable cycle, the concept of "China" endured. The knowledge of how to govern a unified China remained. All that was needed to succeed was the right man (or group of men) meeting the right set of circumstances.

Events

The Sui Dynasty (589-618). The Wei River Valley in Shaanxi Province that had nourished the nascent Qin Dynasty in the 3rd century BCE gave birth to another short-lived but important dynasty in 6th century CE China: the Sui. The Sui, like the Qin, had as their capital the city of Chang'an (today known as Xi'an). It is not clear if the first Sui emperor was something closer to a warlord than to local aristocracy in the early years, but history records that he slowly overwhelmed his closest military rivals before proclaiming the establishment of the Sui Dynasty in 581 CE. Within a decade, all of China had fallen to his armies. The most famous Sui monarch, Emperor Yang (569-618), was not content to rule a unified China and invaded Manchuria, Korea, Vietnam and the northern frontier in an effort to recreate the boundaries of the Han Empire. The boldness and audacity of his military adventures had a cost, however. To pay for this, he imposed high taxes and demanded that society actively support him with large numbers of conscripts and the supplies to provision them. This did not endear him to the Chinese people. When his military adventures failed, his empire began to collapse and he was assassinated.

The Tang Dynasty (618-907). In the brief period of chaos that accompanied the collapse of the Sui, a general named Li Yuan (566-636) was able to subdue all of his adversaries. Li was an aristocrat and well versed in the ways of Chinese politics. He proclaimed the establishment of the Tang Dynasty in 618, which historians today remember as the greatest and most powerful of all the Chinese dynasties. Li took the name of Emperor Gaozu. Though of mixed heritage, he is remembered as a visionary leader who restored the old Confucian values to the court and to the entire country. As was the case with the first Han rulers in the 3rd century BCE and old Qin policies, the first Tang monarchs tweaked the pre-existing Sui system of government, relaxed the most onerous policies and oversaw the establishment of a second golden age.

Tang Foreign Policy. The Tang rulers were very aggressive in foreign policy. They succeeded in subduing Korea (through agreement rather than conquest), pushed into Vietnam and made areas protectorates as far west as Turkmenistan. This period in Chinese history is known for the Silk Road, a passage which linked East Asia economically with Persia, the Middle East and even Europe. Tang China had become larger and greater than even the Han Dynasty.

The Empress Wu. In the realm of politics, the Tang period is remembered by the ascension to the throne of the first and only empress—the Empress Wu (624-705). Empress Wu was initially the concubine of the Emperor Taizong (599-649), and then second wife of his son, the Emperor Gaozong (628-683). Gaozong, who is remembered for not being all that interested in the day-to-day administration of the realm when healthy, became ill in 665 and turned over much of the hard work to his second wife. Over the remaining years of his life, she governed in his name and consolidated power in her hands. Upon Gaozong's death, she usurped the throne and ruled in her own name until her death in 705. It is difficult to know how successful she was as an empress because the Confucian elites vilified her to such an extent after her death that it is nearly impossible to separate out truth from fiction in one of the most vicious, far-reaching and thorough smear campaigns ever perpetrated in the history of

China. Among their many complaints was her lack of filial piety because she usurped the throne. This was in strict contravention of Confucian teachings and was, apparently, unforgivable. On the other hand, many, many men have usurped the throne and have not been denigrated in the same way. The visceral hatred of the Empress Wu by the Confucian elites is matched only by the vilification of the Empress Dowager Ci'xi in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The Song Dynasty (960-1279). Like the Han before them, the Tang Dynasty slowly collapsed over a period of a century or so. There were a series of internal revolts, such as the An Lushan rebellion (755-763), and external threats posed by barbarians on the periphery. This, combined with a series of ineffectual rulers and a steadily diminishing treasury, brought the Tang Dynasty to a close in 907. Unlike the period after the collapse of the Han, China did not experience hundreds of years of political chaos and fragmentation. Within 50 years, the Song Dynasty was established. The Song Dynasty was ruled by ethnic Han Chinese and was a large, wealthy and culturally vibrant kingdom. But the extent of territory they controlled was smaller than what their predecessor had ruled. This was complicated by the serious problems they had with border conflicts. Indeed, the northern and western frontiers were lost for hundreds of years. Some parts have still never returned to Chinese control. Perhaps most ominously, the Song began to face the threat posed by early Manchu and Mongol tribes. By 1127, the northern areas of the Song kingdom, from Beijing south to the Yangzi River, were lost to the Jin (the Manchu).

The Mongols. Neither the Jin nor the Turkish-speaking tribes of the west had any idea of the horror of what was about to be visited first upon them, then the Chinese, and finally, most of the rest of the world. The Mongols under Genghis Khan (1162-1227) seemed to come out of nowhere. They were a well-known, but minor threat to the Chinese and had most recently been a tributary group to the Manchu (Jin) in the 12th century. Soon thereafter, Genghis Khan arose to unify the unruly, war-like Mongols. First the Jin in Manchuria and northern China were decimated by the mounted, light cavalry of the Mongol hoards, then several of the Turkish-speaking tribes in western China and Kazakhstan fell. The Mongols took few prisoners and often engaged in the wanton slaughter of soldier, civilian and aristocrat alike—and they sometimes didn't distinguish between Chinese and other ethnicities when on campaign. In several areas, they "killed the land"—which is a nice way of saying they cleansed it of all human inhabitants. This was, of course, not possible in China proper, where the population numbered more than a hundred million. Nonetheless, the Southern Song Dynasty finally succumbed as well in 1279, at which point the population had dropped to approximately 77 million. Meanwhile, the Mongols under the grandson of Genghis Khan, Kublai (1215-1294), proclaimed the establishment of the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) which was a vast and powerful empire. Kublai's cousins and uncles controlled the conquered areas as far west as Eastern Europe and as far south as Syria—and everything in between. Kublai himself laid claim to China, Tibet, Mongolia, Korea, the Siberian Far East and what is today the Russian steppe north and west of Mongolia. This was the largest land empire ever in the history of the world under the control of one man until the 18th century Russian Tsars began to lay claim to the same territory.

The Early Ming Dynasty. The Chinese expelled the Mongols in 1368, though Kublai's successors continued to rule in Mongolia for some time. In the decade or so of fighting beginning in the 1350s, another commoner, Zhu Yuanzhang (1328-1398), arose to establish the final dynasty led by the Han Chinese—the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). The Ming, as might be expected, are remembered for being inward looking. They cast a wary eye at the barbarians north of the border and built a series of interlocking fortifications that today are known as the Great Wall. Earlier Chinese monarchs had often built walls and fortifications to keep out the barbarians in the north—even the First Emperor Qin in the 3rd century BCE—but none were as vast and imposing as the Ming edifices. Given the most recent experiences, the founding Ming Emperor considered the northern barbarians to be an existential threat.

Government

Structure. All emperors in China, from the Qin in the 3rd century BCE down through the end of the Qing in 1911, were considered absolute monarchs. In theory, they ruled by decree, controlled all land and exercised the power of life and death over all in their realm. As subjects, any rights enjoyed by the Chinese were given by the monarch and could be withdrawn by the monarch. In practice, all Chinese emperors relied on aristocrats, who were often treated differently than commoners, and other government officials to help them rule. The monarchs of the post-classical age used many of the same elements of administration that the Han had used in antiquity, but modified them as necessary. There was a highly organized, hierarchical structure for government and for society. There was a clear division between aristocrats, commoner, peasant and artisan. The empire was divided into administrative units.

Each large unit was, in theory, administered by a governor who was usually named by the emperor himself and accountable personally to the emperor. The military was under the direct control of the emperor and was occasionally even commanded on the battlefield by the emperor, although aristocrats raised, maintained and led most campaigns after each dynasty was well established. The office of the inspector (also known as censor) also remained in place to provide reliable reports (sometimes known as memorials) to the emperor.

Vast Population. The plight of the peasants remained much the same. In some dynasties, they were tied to the land using one form or coercion or another. In the Sui (589-618) and Tang (618-907) periods, significant numbers of the peasant population enjoyed something close to "free-holder" status. This was particularly the case if they served in the military. And there were enormous numbers of peasants in Tang China, approximately 80 million. Interestingly, the population under the control of the Tang Emperor represented roughly one-quarter of the world's population, which was double the population of the contemporaneous Umayyad Caliphate and more than quadruple the number of the Carolingian Empire. I might add that troops from the Abbasid Caliphate later encountered Tang troops near Samarkand in Uzbekistan, so these civilizations knew each other quite well. The difficulties inherit in governing this vast and populous empire in a pre-modern age are easy to understand. In order to govern well, the Tang court created the world's first large-scale civil service examination.

The Civil Service Examination. Because of the size of the empire, it was impossible for the imperial household to maintain familial and/or close political ties with the number of high-level and mid-level administrators and aristocrats necessary to govern the empire. To meet this challenge, the Chinese created a meritocracy, which was based largely on one's ability to score well on a test over the Confucian classics. One had to be educated, literate and capable to do well, but in theory, anyone could take the test. Since governmental officials were needed at every level, tests were administered at various levels. All test-takers had to take the test on the local level. Those who scored the highest were allowed to proceed to the regional level. Those who passed at the local level but did not pass at the regional level became local bureaucrats. Those that passed at the regional level but did not score high enough to pass at the national level became government officials on the regional level. And so it went until the top scorers took a test administered, in theory, by the imperial household. In most test cycles, there was one top scorer who would move into a position to later become a governor, chancellor or other top advisor to the emperor. In due course, these Confucian elites became known as Mandarins or degree holders. The testing process was widely followed by the aspirational classes in China. Since most government positions could not be handed down to one's son, each person earned their own position. Those who passed at the highest level achieved national renown and were celebrated in their hometowns as heroes of the realm. In this way, the government at all levels was staffed by competent, moral men who understood and valued the Confucian system. Of course, there was graft and corruption which had to be rooted out every few decades. As impressive as this achievement was, it is perhaps more important to note that this system lasted, with a few interruptions, in one form or another from the Tang period to the 20th century—more than 1000 years.

Culture

The Silk Road. The culture of post-classical China reached its pinnacle under the Tang (618-907). The capital city of Tang China was Chang'an, the eastern terminus of the Silk Road. This was important for the Tang economy, but it had an equally important effect on culture. Chang'an was a vast, cosmopolitan city which brought its inhabitants into close contact with foreigners from all over the world. Exposure to art forms from all over the world created an environment where new forms of painting, sculpture, porcelain and literature found expression. From eastern Persia came paintings of Polo matches; from India came Buddhist icons and statues of various Bodhisattva, to name just a few. These influences are evident in the art of the era. Of course, reverse pollination of culture occurred as well. The Chinese introduced fine porcelain into Mediterranean world, and later, the art of paper making and movable type. Tang artists are perhaps most well-known for sculpture and were world leaders in the molding of figurines of horses. In literature, the poet Li Bai (701-762) is remembered as one of the greatest men of letters of his time. He led an interesting life. Li was a member of the court, expelled for drunkenness and for writing romantic poetry about the emperor and his eunuch; then served the leader of the An Lushan Rebellion in 755 and was charged with treason, was pardoned and exiled; married four times and ended his life as a wandering poet. His poetry is known for its pedestrian tone, rich imagery and celebration of strong drink. As was the case in most monarchies, the crown supported various forms of the arts, from calligraphy, to poetry, to metallurgy, to painting and the like. Royal support for the arts during the early Tang period was sustained and significant.

Mahayana Buddhism. Buddhism flourished during most of the Tang period. In the years since its founding in the 5th century BCE on the border between Nepal and India, Buddhism had slowly become more and more accepted in China. During the early Han period (206 BCE-220 CE), it was a religion with very few followers, in part because it had to compete with two other well-established religions: Confucianism and Daoism. Nonetheless, as it took on more and more Chinese characteristics, it slowly gained followers late in the Han period. In so doing, however, it looked less like the religion which had been an offshoot of Hinduism. We know the branch of Buddhism that flourished in Northeast Asia as Mahayana (greater vehicle) Buddhism. This is to distinguish it from Hinayana (lesser vehicle) Buddhism practiced in Southeast Asia.

State Support for Buddhism. Unlike Confucianism, Buddhism minimizes the importance of the temporal world and emphasizes the afterlife. It is therefore easy to understand that in the political chaos following the collapse of the Han in the 3rd century CE that this religion would naturally appeal to larger segments of the population. By the time of the early Tang period, it was a major religion, supported by the crown and given special tax and landholding privileges. However, state sanction of any religion is a problematic situation. A monarch can easily withdraw support, require the clergy to bless a poor decision or otherwise change the religious landscape in very short order. During the reign of the Empress Wu (624-705), the Confucians had been savage critics of her policies and, in particular, her usurpation of the throne. In an effort to undermine their authority, she moved the crown even closer to the Buddhist institutions. Upon her death, the special privileges they had enjoyed were stripped from them. Much of the land they had acquired over hundreds of years was taken and many of the temples themselves were shuttered. In the aftermath of the death of Empress Wu, the practice of Buddhism was not always proscribed by law, but it was clearly frowned upon.

Cultural Backlash. After Empress Wu, Tang China appears to have undergone a conservative backlash in more ways than just religion. The state removed some of the incentives that foreigners enjoyed in the capital city of Chang'an. It was also no longer legal to socialize with foreigners and many left China altogether or went to other cities. Buddhism, as an indisputably foreign religion, suffered as a result as well. And there was a state-sanctioned renaissance of Confucianism. In addition, the rich cultural expressions and outbursts of creativity that had characterized the early Tang period were found with less frequency.

The Mongol Interruption. During the Song period (960-1279), Chinese culture remained vibrant and strong. Indeed, Song period art objects are considered some of the most brilliant in all of Chinese history. However, Chinese culture was shattered by the Mongol invasions, particularly in the north where early fighting was intense and sustained. Though the Mongols did not seek to completely remake or destroy Chinese culture, an action they visited upon other conquered peoples, their influence on China was undeniable. There was a clear break between the culture and society of China before the Mongols and the culture and society of China after the Mongols.

Society

The Scholarly Tradition. Society in post-classical China functioned in much the same way as it had under the Han (206 BCE-220 CE). There were monarchs, aristocrats, artisans, clergy, peasants, laborers, etc. Each played their role in an organized and generally stable society. During the Tang period (618-907), another class of society emerged, the Confucian elite, sometimes also known as degree holders or Mandarins. These government officials helped society function as the population of China skyrocketed. They also created a custom known as the "scholarly tradition" in China, a concept that is well understood and highly valued in East Asia to this day. Scholars, or those with other specialized learning in China, are much more highly valued than in the western world. For hundreds of years in China, it was believed that society could neither function nor progress without learned, moral men to provide a philosophical framework for actions taken by the state. Service to the state and to the emperor was the highest calling to which a man could aspire.

Women in Post-Classical Society. Women, however, could not aspire to serve the state. The Confucian elites articulated a moral code which kept women both out of public service and even out of the public eye. If possible, it was the job of women to stay at home, take care of the household and prioritize either fathers, husbands or sons. Women's goals and aspirations were always secondary to those of the men around her. Strict adherence to this code was complicated for peasants and laborers. Peasant women worked alongside their husbands in the fields and rice paddies.

Foot-binding. In the Song period (960-1279), if not before, there arose the custom of foot binding among those who could afford it. It is not clear why this particular activity began, but it had the effect of crippling any woman who had the misfortune of experiencing it. Late in childhood, girls' toes were doubled under the soles of their feet, bound tightly and kept there as their feet grew. This was a very painful ordeal. Over time, it retarded the growth of bones in the feet and created very small feet that were said to resemble the beauty of a golden lotus. Women with bound feet were unable to walk very far or engage in any sort of work which required them to stand for long periods of time. It was not possible to work in the fields or rice paddies. However, this condition conveyed status and made women more desirable for marriage. Though foot binding was outlawed in the early 20th century, it existed in the rural areas for another decade or so. Today, a tiny number of very elderly women with bound feet survive in China.

Concubinage and Polygamy. Women in China also had to endure the peculiar institution of concubinage. Concubines existed in all societies in the per-modern world. In China, it existed until outlawed in 1949. In general, girls who became concubines were from very humble origins. In this system, young women were sold by their father or older brother to a wealthy and powerful man. She would then become his sexual companion for life. The offspring of concubines were not afforded the same level of legal legitimacy that the children of first, second or third wives enjoyed and could not inherit unless no other heir existed, and most often not even then. However, they existed within a well-established legal framework and were not considered only sex slaves who could be discarded at will without cause. They were a part of the family and treated as such. Nonetheless, the young women sold into these situations rarely had a say in the decision to become a concubine. It was sometimes considered a badge of honor to have a daughter sold as a concubine to a wealthy, powerful man who could also provide financial assistance to the father's household as well. Nonetheless, the concept of free will for women in post-classical China was at best a secondary consideration.

Unmarried Men. It is not clear how large a percentage of women were concubines in post-classical China. However, the practice was widespread. One of the enduring problems in post-classical China was the lack of suitable women available to marry working class men. Polygamy and concubinage among elite men was at the root of the problem. Poor, unmarried men who were never able to marry and start a household of their own were destined to remain on the periphery of society and often became law breakers and trouble makers.

Economy

Grand Engineering Projects. In post-classical China, the Sui (589-618) and Tang (618-907) Dynasties are well known for supporting massive and important infrastructure projects. Some, such as the Grand Canal reshaped the economy of China. The Grand Canal ran north to south linking several major river systems, the Qiantang River near Hangzhou in the south, Yangtze River a little further north, the Yellow River in Shandong province and finally the Hai River near Beijing in the north. It spans 6 modern provinces and is more than 1100 miles long, the longest man made river in the world. Portions of it are still in use today for transporting commerce. The Grand Canal was so important to the economy of China for more than a thousand years and was such a monumental feat of engineering in the post-classical world that it has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage by the United Nations alongside such sites as the Great Pyramids of Egypt, the Acropolis in Greece and the Forbidden City. Though China is known historically for its macro-economic regions, the Grand Canal made possible for the first time the transportation of bulk goods from the densely populated regions of the south to the more sparsely populated regions of the north. This created a functioning, national economy. Rice and other food stuffs, in particular, are well known for being transported in bulk along the Grand Canal. This waterway was so important that if it silted over, which it did from time to time after Yellow River floods, emperors are well known for throwing enormous resources at dredging projects for fear of losing the Mandate of Heaven. In time of war, disabling the Grand Canal which your enemy was using to transport supplies could lead to victory. This project was started in antiquity, but was completed under the Sui. It is one of the reasons that the economy under the Tang grew so fast and was so strong.

Security. The southern areas of post-classical China produced far more rice and other food stuffs than could be consumed in the region. This was facilitated because the crown supported the dispersal of knowledge of advances in agriculture such as crop and field rotation, the use of fertilizers and the like. Irrigation and flood control projects both in the south and the north were high priorities. The Tang are known for rebuilding the system of roads that had been left to decay since antiquity. In addition, the Tang took seriously the problem of security and sought to end enduring problems with banditry and the like. They built post-stations along the most important roads and waterways to maintain law and order. The basis for taxation was land and not goods produced on the land. This

simplified the tax system and made land-owners, not peasants, largely responsible to the authorities. All of these things contributed to a thriving economy.

The Pax Mongolica. The above mentioned initiatives were all labor intensive and required constant monitoring. Law and order, stability and peace, above all, were required to maintain an effective nationwide economy. When this period of relative peace came to an end with the Mongol invasions, the economy of north China disintegrated. Tens of millions of people in the north were removed from the work force and the population collapsed. Of course, the Silk Road thrived under the Mongols. For the first time in history, it was possible for someone with permission from one of the Mongol monarchs to travel without harassment from Beijing all the way through Persia to Europe and back. Silk, porcelain and tea were particularly valued commodities in Europe. Marco Polo from Venice and others such as the historian Rashid Al Din are well known for having made the trip. Of course, the Pax Mongolica was relatively short lived and came at a tremendous cost. Domestically, the Mongols ruled China after the conquest using many of the same Confucian elites who has served the Song (960-1279) and so, after the recovery, maintained the economy at a diminished, but sufficient level.

Economic Recovery under the Ming. When the Ming came to power after the ouster of the Mongols in 1368, the economy of China returned to its traditional boundaries. The Silk Road was no longer safe and freely accessible. The economy in China, though smaller, continued to thrive. Agriculture existed much as it always had. Peasants worked the land, some as free-holders, others tied to the land as something like serfs. In the devastated and depopulated areas of the north, the first Ming emperors provided incentives for peasants to resettle and return land to cultivation. Road and canals were rebuilt and irrigation projects were again prioritized. For a century or so, the economy of Ming China grew dramatically. China prospered.

Readings

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Questions for Discussion

1) The concept of "China" has endured since antiquity. What does this mean? What are the criteria one uses when describing China? Is the concept of "China" defined by geography, religion, language, philosophy, culture—or something else altogether? Or is the concept of "China" largely a myth which the founder of each dynasty used to legitimize their rule? What meaning, if any, does this concept have for contemporary China?

2) The Chinese Civil Service examination system lasted for more than 1000 years. It served the interests of the monarchs of the Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties. What about it contributed to its longevity? What was so important about it that both indigenous and foreign rulers alike used it to staff their bureaucracies? To what extent could it be or has it been used as a model for staffing civil services in other parts of the world?

3) The Confucian elites in post-classical China were furious at Empress Wu of the Tang Dynasty. Yes, she usurped the throne. However, others have done this many times and are not so reviled in history. What about Empress Wu's actions were so intolerable to the Confucian elites? Why have so few other women in China been able to participate in the public sphere? Were the Confucian elites acting out of a sense of religious obligation? Were they acting to protect their own prerogatives? Or were they motivated by something else altogether?

4) The Mongols were a military juggernaut in the post-classical world. They conquered virtually any and all civilizations they encountered. To what extent did the Mongols influence Chinese society? Was their influence lasting or permanent, or was the Yuan Dynasty merely a "bump in the road?" Did they treat China any differently than they treated other conquered civilizations? Were the Mongols assimilated into Chinese civilization, as was the case with most foreign dynasties, or were they able to maintain their own cultural identity? If yes, why were they different than other foreign dynasties? If not, what happened to make assimilation possible?

Texts

1) The poet Li Bai, 8th Century China, translated by Arthur Waley

> The fields are chill, the sparse rain has stopped;
> The colors of spring teem on every side.
> With leaping fish the blue pond is full;
> With singing thrushes the green boughs droop.
> The flowers of the field have dabbled their powdered cheeks;
> The mountain grasses are bent level at the waist.
> By the bamboo stream the last fragment of cloud
> Blown by the wind slowly scatters away.

2) Short story about two men taking the Civil Service Examination in Tang China, translated by Clara Yu, found in Patricia Buckley Ebrey, ed., *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook.* (Free Press, 1993), pg. 130.

> Xu Tang was from Jing county of Xuanshou and had been taking the examinations since he was young. In the same village there was a man named Wang Zun, who had served as a minor government clerk when young. After Xu Tang had taken the examination more than twenty times, Wang Zun was still but a low functionary in the government. Yet, Wang Zun wrote good poetry, although no one knew about it because he kept it secret.
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> One day, Wang Zun resigned from his post and set out for the capital to take the imperial examination. As he was approaching the capital, he met Xu Tang, who was seeing some friends off at the outskirts of the city. "Eh," Xu Tang asked him, "what are you doing here in the capital?"
>
> "I have come to take the imperial examination," answered the former functionary.
>
> Upon hearing this, Xu Tang angrily declared "How insolent you are, you lowly clerk!" Although they were not fellow candidates for the imperial examination, Xu Tang treated him with contempt. But in the end, Wang Zun passed the examination and became very famous. Xu Tang did not pass until five years later.

3) "On Plowing," a quotation from 1159 during the Song period, from a treatise on farming. Translated by Clara Yu, found in Patricia Buckley Ebrey, ed., *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook.* (Free Press, 1993), pg. 189.

> Early and late plowing both have their advantages. For the early rice crop, as soon as the reaping is completed, immediately plow the fields and expose the stalks to glaring sunlight. Then add manure and bury the stalks to nourish the soil. Next plant beans, wheat and vegetables to ripen and fertilize the soil so as to minimize the next year's labor. In addition, when the harvest is good, these extra crops can add to the yearly income. For late crops, however, do not plow until spring. Because the rice stalks are soft but tough, it is necessary to wait until they have fully decayed to plow satisfactorily.
>
> In the Mountains, plateaus, and wet areas, it is usually cold. The fields here should be deeply plowed and soaked with water released from the reservoirs. Throughout the winter, the water will be absorbed and the snow and frost will freeze the soil so that it will become brittle and crumbly. At the beginning of spring, spread the fields with decayed weeds and leaves and then burn them so that the soil will become warm enough for the seeds to sprout. In the way, cold as the freezing springs may be, they cannot harm the crop. If you fail to treat the soil this way, then the arteries of the fields, being soaked constantly by freezing springs, will be cold, and the crop will be poor.

EARLY MODERN PERIOD

Overview

China was generally peaceful and largely prosperous in the early and middle years of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). Though it took some time and a great deal of effort, north China had recovered from the ravages of the Mongol invasions. The tax base was stable and the government was generally honest and efficiently run. Agriculture flourished and the population doubled in little more than a century. By the year 1500, the total population of China had reached at least 120 million. In foreign policy, the Ming were first very interested in exploration and sent out Admiral Zheng He with a massive fleet to traverse the South China Sea, the Straits of Malacca, the Indian Ocean, and down the coast of Africa as far south as Mozambique. However, they found things more interesting at home and never tried again. On land, the Ming wanted, above all, to keep the northern barbarians out and rebuilt the Great Wall, the edifice we see today in China. The Koreans, Vietnamese and most of the other nearby countries accepted Chinese suzerainty. The idea of a unified China and a Sino-centered world view, first popularized under the Qin in the 3rd century BCE, was alive and well. Culturally and socially, Ming China was as vibrant, innovative and productive as any of the earlier periods. However, in the realm of politics, there is rarely a clearer cautionary tale than what happened to the Ming in the later years of the dynasty. Over a period of two short generations, they forfeited the Mandate of Heaven through empire-wide graft, corruption, incompetence and neglect.

Events

Imperial Neglect. The turning point in the Ming era (1368-1644) was the reign of the Emperor Wan Li. The Emperor Wan Li (1563-1620) is not well remembered in the chronicles of Chinese history. Rarely has so much blame be laid at the feet of one man. The Emperor Wan Li ruled forty-eight years, which unfortunately allowed him ample opportunity to damage China. In the early years of his reign he is described as a ruler who was quite capable and interested in good governance. China prospered economically, militarily and culturally. Indeed, historians consider this to be the high-water mark for the later Ming period. However, as he aged, the Emperor began to neglect his duties and allowed his advisors, many of them eunuchs, to make poor administrative decisions for the realm. Much of the administration on the local level continued to function as before. The Confucian bureaucracy saw to that. But in the 1590s, the country found itself at war with the Japanese over Korea, an expensive campaign which succeeded in spite of poor leadership, planning and funding. In other areas of foreign policy, the Imperial Household also had to subsidize (or buy off) the barbarians in the north and west with increasingly large sums of money which came from a diminishing treasury. To meet this shortfall, taxes were raised significantly. Later, the Emperor Wan Li was mostly an absent ruler and refused to carry out his most basic official duties. By the end of his reign, the empire was in crisis. There were regional and local famines and little stored in the granaries to provide aid. Major rebellions were brewing. In short, there were many, many internal and external threats.

The Conquest. A strong and engaged Chinese emperor would have been able to face the threats posed by the Manchu on the northeastern frontier. The Chinese understood well how to play the various Manchu tribes off of one another and had done so repeatedly over the centuries. This time, neither Wan Li nor any of his three successors over a period of twenty-four years after his

death were able to placate the barbarians. When squeezed between the encroaching Manchu in the northeast and the rebel Li Zicheng at the approaches of Beijing in the south, the last Ming emperor, Chongzhen, committed suicide. The Manchu then moved in to "stabilize" the region in 1644.

The Manchu. The Manchu (also known as Jurchen) were from the area north of the Great Wall and south of the Amur River in what is today northeastern China (sometimes known as Manchuria). This is a vast and unforgiving landscape. Manchuria is known for its long, dark winters and bitter cold. Much like the Mongols in the 13th century, the Manchu seemed to come from nowhere. They lived in small tribal and familial units linked by marriage and alliance to one another. Some lived a semi-nomadic lifestyle; others nearer to the Chinese frontier tilled the fields. There were likely fewer than a million Manchu in total. The first leader of renown from this band of Manchu was named Nurhaci (1559-1626), who unified the warring and unruly clans under his command. He organized the disparate warrior bands into armies, invaded Korea and obtained the allegiance of many of the Mongol tribes. He then began raiding into north China proper. Upon his death, he was succeeded by his son Hong Taiji (1592-1643). Hong is widely credited with establishing the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), although he died the year before his troops moved into Beijing.

Han Collaboration. It is telling the extent to which the Confucian elites and Ming aristocrats had come to loathe the Ming emperors in the last years of the Ming era. When the Manchu tribes began to raid into northern China, several Chinese commanders (of Han ethnicity) simply turned on the field of battle to support the Manchu. Amazingly, the Ming had become so despised that many Han generals preferred the unknown barbarian Manchu over the Han monarchs! One after another, Ming generals swore allegiance to the Manchu or fell on the field of battle in north China. The conquest of the rest of China did not come as quickly or as easily. It took several decades for the bloody fighting in the south to be competed. The last Ming claimant to the throne died in 1661. Even then, Qing control of southern China was tenuous. They required the support and collaboration of the Han, Confucian elites and military men of the old regime.

Consolidation. Under the reign of the Emperor Kangxi (1654-1722), the Qing Empire came of age. When three Han generals who had supported the Qing conquest of southern China rose in revolt in what is known as the San Fan Rebellion (War of the Three Feudatories) in 1674, the Emperor Kangxi, in a very risky move, sent armies to destroy them. When this action was taken, it was unclear whether or not this would alienate the Confucian elites and therefore make China ungovernable even if it succeeded militarily. Nonetheless, the success of this campaign consolidated Manchu rule and secured the Qing Dynasty until 1911.

Unparalleled Power. At its height, the Qing Dynasty ruled more territory than any other Chinese dynasty in history, with the possible exception of the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). In addition to what today is China proper, the Qing governed Mongolia, portions of Siberia north of Mongolia, portions of the border area between Tibet and South Asia, and portions of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. The population of Qing China reached 300 million under the reign of the Emperor Qianlong (r. 1735-1796) and is, without a doubt, one of the most populous empires ever in world history. By way of comparison, all of the European states together in the year 1800 had a population of approximately 150 million and the Mughal Empire in South Asia

never reached a population of more than 150 million at its height. The Qing were without peer in the 18th century.

Government

Maintaining the System. The conquest of China beginning in the 1630s and 1640s required the collaboration of the Confucian elites and the people of the Han ethnicity because the population of ethnic Jurchen (Manchu) was too small to complete the job. The problem of how to govern China as a conquest dynasty was just as perplexing and much more complicated. The Qing had won the war, now they had to win the peace. The first monarchs of Qing China (1644-1911), who theoretically exercised absolute power, determined to maintain, but reform, the moribund Ming system. The early Ming monarchs (1368-1644) had found success using the Civil Service examination to staff and maintain the bureaucracy. The system, however, had ceased to work as effectively in the last few decades of the Ming period as it had earlier. Indeed, the late Ming period is known for graft, corruption and neglect in government. Thus, the Qing sought to reestablish and reinvigorate the Civil Service and the Civil Service examination. In the early years of the Qing period, there were several efforts to root out corruption and the system began to function as designed on the lower levels. But there remained the problem of how to staff the upper levels.

Manchu Ministers. To meet the challenge of staffing at the highest levels, the Qing rulers split the duties of "minister of state" into two theoretically equal positions each with a Han (Confucian) minister and a Manchu minister. In practice, the Manchu ministers sometimes just passed down directives from the Imperial household to the Han ministers. The Manchu ministers were therefore more important but the positions did not require a great deal of attention. Of course, reports back to the imperial household had to be written and the Manchu minister, like his Han counterpart, could be held accountable when thing went wrong. There were six ministries of state: civil affairs, finance, rituals, war, justice and public works. Each had two ministers. In this way, the Qing ruled through and maintained the existing Chinese system but rarely had much contact with the dominant Han Chinese ethnicity. The foreign rulers, though not exactly hiding in plain sight, consciously sought to minimize their interaction with the Chinese.

The Military. The Qing military was divided into what is known today as "bannermen" armies. The armies were organized in different ways. Some armies were composed mostly of Manchu soldiers with Manchu generals. Others were composed of mostly Han Chinese soldiers with Han generals who worked with Manchu generals who acted as liaisons. A third type of army was composed of a combination of mostly Mongols, Han and other foreigners as soldiers. The armies were stationed in strategic areas of China where they could be called upon in time of emergency. The armies were known by the color of their banner, which could be solid or solid and framed with a different color. Early in the period of conquest there were six banner armies. Later than number was increased to eight. By the reign of the Emperor Qianlong (r. 1735-1796), the Qing could field armies of more than a hundred thousand.

The Treasury. The coffers of the imperial treasury were generally full after the recovery from the War of the Three Feudatories (1674-1681). The Emperor Kangxi (r. 1661-1722) set up a tax

system which was based on goods produced, on land and on population (head tax). The tax was carefully collected and put to good use for much of the early Qing years. The peasants had to pay their taxes to the village headmen, who then forwarded it on the authorities on the higher levels. The head tax was also used to determine conscription and corvėe quotas. It is worth nothing that though the peasants were not always tied to the land, they were required to provide labor to the state for the purposes of building or rebuilding common infrastructure such as roads, bridges, dikes, irrigation projects and the like. The peasants despised this requirement and did everything they could to shirk this duty. Those who could paid a fee to be freed of this obligation. Others would abscond, making the duty of the remaining peasants that much more difficult. The tax rolls were based initially on Ming surveys and were not regularly updated. By the time the Emperor Qianlong had completed many of his extraordinarily expensive and bloody wars, the treasury was under serious stress.

Culture

Religion. Whereas Confucianism had dominated the religious landscape in China since the late Tang period (618-807) among the Han ethnicity, Buddhism experienced a minor renaissance during the Qing dynasty (1644-1911). The Buddhism practiced by the Qing monarchs, however, was not like that of most of the previous periods. Instead, the Manchu followed Tibetan Buddhism, a form of the religion which emphasizes Lamaism. Lamaism is a form of meditative Buddhism that transmits knowledge and religious convention from the teacher (Lama) to student. In Tibetan Buddhism, it is believed that a series of great Lamas, such as the Dalai Lama or Panchen Lama, are reincarnated bodhisattvas who bring wisdom and knowledge to their students. The Mongols (Yuan Dynasty, 1271-1368) also practiced Tibetan Buddhism, but, like the Qing, did not impose it on the Confucian population. Nonetheless, it was not proscribed. Buddhist practice is often not monotheistic and the Qing monarchs were very willing to lead in corporate, ritual worship at the Temple of Heaven as an element of the civil religion promoted by the crown. Christianity was also evident in China during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and Qing periods. However, the numbers of adherents was very, very small—much smaller than the number of Christians during the Tang and Yuan periods. Still, a number of Roman Catholic Jesuit missionaries made their way to China and provided accounts of life during their stay. These include men such as Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) and Adam Schall Von Bell (1591-1666). It is estimated that as many as one-hundred thousand Christians may have existed in China in the late Qianlong period (1735-1796).

The Literary Arts. In literature during the reign of the Emperor Qianlong, a genre of Chinese fiction writing—the detective story—became popular. Though the Chinese have a long history of reporting on criminal behavior as a way of conveying a morality play, detective stories seemed to have been quite common as a form of popular entertainment as well. One of the most well-known is the *Celebrated Cases of Judge Dee*, a series of three stories of murder and intrigue. The author of this story is unknown. It depicts a man named Judge Dee and is set in the Tang period, although the cases it used for inspiration came from later periods. The extent of the circulation and appeal to the public of this particular work is not well known. However, it serves as an example of an increasingly popular form of literature in the early modern era. Several poets of renown also benefited from the considerable support of the Emperor Qianlong. Examples include Shen Deqian (1673-1769) and Weng Fanggang (1733-1818), contemporaries

who had no problem criticizing each other, but who were very influential in the writing of poetry, the collection and critique of anthologies and in teaching.

Porcelain. In the late Ming era, porcelain was perhaps the finest expression of artistry in China. Indeed, Ming vases and other items made of porcelain made during the period are still among the most highly valued in the world. Chinese potters and sculptors were well known before the Ming period. But, it is during the Ming period that, for example, round, white plates with blue motifs of Chinese landscapes and other objects painted on them became the norm for export objects, although white and blue porcelain existed before. The skill and craftsmanship of these artists was unmatched around the world for decades to come and the secrets of Chinese porcelain manufacturing were carefully guarded.

The Fine Arts. Other objects of art such as monochrome painting and woodblock printing continued to develop. Some Ming and early Qing era innovations included the expanded use of color. In wood block printing, for example, Chinese artists developed a process whereby color could be added in stages to an image. Multiple copies of a single image, when complete, could have five or six different hues, creating the impression of depth and fullness rarely seen earlier.

Society

Structure. Society was structured in the early modern period much as it was in the early Ming period (1368-1644). Though the ruling household had changed in 1644 and a barbarian conquest dynasty had seized power, not a great deal changed in society. There were monarchs, aristocrats, artisans, clergy, peasants, laborers, etc. Each played their role in an organized and generally stable society. Mandarins or degree holders acted as the administrative class and governed much as they had during the early Ming period. The vast majority of the population worked the land just as their ancestors had and most had very little contact with their foreign conquerors. The Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) simply created an additional layer of administration at the very top. This, of course, led to the problem of the government being administratively top-heavy. But, given just how prosperous China was in the 17 and 18th centuries, this structural weakness was not evident until well into the 19th century.

The Retention of Culture. The Qing sought to maintain their distinct culture as members of the Jurchen/Manchu ethnicity. They were well aware just how quickly China had assimilated other conquest dynasties and were determined not to lose their identity. They used the Manchu language in the imperial household and kept two different sets of records for many years: one in Manchu for household deliberations and one in Mandarin for civil administration. They handed down laws which separated all the different ethnicities of China from the Jurchen. For example, during much of the Qing period, it was not legal for a member of the Jurchen/Manchu ethnicity to marry or have sexual relations with someone from any other ethnicity. This was an extremely problematic restriction, however, when one considers that several bannermen armies were stationed long-term far away from Manchuria. Indeed, it was a law that was often broken, particularly later in the Qing period. Interaction, in general, between the ethnicities was not encouraged. This was made somewhat possible because Qing armies often lived in garrison towns when not on campaign. Members of the Manchu ethnicity were also treated differently from the Han under the law. Among the imperial family, it is generally understood that the

Emperor Kangxi (1654-1722) lived and acted in a way which reflected his Jurchen/Manchu heritage, but his grandson, the Emperor Qianlong (1711-1799) struggled to maintain Jurchen/Manchu traditions. Nonetheless, in the late Qing period, it was still possible to distinguish the Manchu ethnicity from the Han ethnicity.

The Queue. Perhaps the most recognizable element of the Manchu conquest in the early modern period was the appearance of the queue in China. It was also one of the most hated symbols forced upon the Han Chinese. The queue is a type of hairstyle. In the Ming period, it was customary for men to have long, flowing hair. Indeed, it was a badge of honor. When the Manchu began the conquest of China, they required all Chinese men to adopt the Jurchen hairstyle, often referred to as the "pigtail." But it is more than that. One also had to shave one's hair from the forehead to at least half-way back on the scalp. Often the pigtail was trimmed only to keep it from dragging the ground when walking. The Han ethnicity chafed under this rule. However, as early as the first raids across the north China/Manchuria frontier in the early 17th century, they forced this upon the Han. It symbolized the acceptance of Qing authority. If, however, a man refused to adopt the queue, he was considered to be in open and visible revolt again the Qing and subject to summary execution. Early in the dynasty, thousands were killed because they refused. A famous slogan of the era was, "keep your hair and lose you head, lose your hair and keep your head." Within a few years, the queue had become customary.

Economy

Agriculture. The economy of early modern China functioned very well in the reign of the Emperor Kangxi (1667-1722) and early in the reign of the Emperor Qianlong (1735-1796). There was a well-established system with peasants and agriculture being the engine of the economy and a high-functioning administrative class. Advances in infrastructure in the early Ming period (1368-1644) and the will to maintain engineering marvels such as the Grand Canal and the Yellow River dikes meant that irrigation and the transportation of bulk commodities by barge were available to facilitate agricultural and economic development. Advances in rice production were significant and the economy grew quickly. Indeed it was transformed in other ways as well. The early modern period saw the importation of important food stuffs from the new world: potatoes, peanuts and corn via the Spanish-controlled Philippines. Many of these food-stuffs were grown in soil that was not conducive to the growing of rice or other traditional Chinese foods. This had the effect of bringing marginal land under cultivation. These calorie-rich items allowed the Chinese population to explode. I might add that these newly productive fields could also be taxed as well. By the end of the reign of the Emperor Qianlong, the population of China had risen to approximately 300 million. Of course, it also freed increasingly larger percentages of the population from subsistence farming and allowed for increased specialization in the economy.

Commerce. With increased specialization came advances in commerce and industry. The late Ming and Qing periods are well known for the creation of guilds for non-agricultural products. Guilds oversaw the supply of goods to make sure that the market was neither flooded nor without goods to sell. Guilds also dispersed and protected trade secrets and provided guidance on the training of apprentices and the like. Artisans and skilled craftsmen, in particular, mentored apprentices for many years until they had developed sufficient expertise. Certain areas of the

Chinese economy in the early modern era were particularly well-known for the production of export items. Among them were silk and porcelain producers. Tea was also produced for export. But it was silk and porcelain that distinguished Chinese commerce. Indeed, fine porcelain in the early modern era so dominated the world market, to say nothing of the domestic market, that in much of the western world, it is still simply called "china." In addition to it being of very high quality, it was also produced in vast quantities.

Industry. In order to meet world demand for fine porcelain, small producers ramped up production. Whereas, in earlier periods, very small cottage-industries had been sufficient to meet demand, these were greatly expanded in the 18th century. Factories began to be built and the production process came to dominate entire villages. Though the Chinese were not among the world leaders in the development of the steam engine, they were producing on a massive scale. It is clear that the Chinese economy in the 18th century was undergoing a fundamental change which can best described as early industrialization.

Self-Sufficiency. The Chinese economy was largely self-contained. Virtually all of the items needed for consumption by the Chinese: food, energy, raw materials, pharmaceuticals, clothing, building supplies and the like were produced domestically. The importation of goods from abroad was largely unnecessary. (Foreign ideas were equally unwelcome.) It is because of international commerce that China began to encounter a group of people who had heretofore been known to them, but who had not really been very important or influential: Europeans. Because the Chinese exported so many goods and products but imported virtually nothing, the Europeans began to become concerned about the imbalance of trade. Chinese merchants demanded payment in silver, the specie in which one paid tax, and when denominated, the unit of currency. Silver therefore began to be in short supply in other parts of the world. The Europeans wanted to parley with Chinese representatives, but the Chinese were totally uninterested. This set off a series of diplomatic rows which left the Europeans seething for decades. In a well-known exchange between the Emperor Qianlong and King George III (1738-1820) of Great Britain, Qianlong rebuffed the British request to trade by saying "I set no value on objects strange or ingenious and have no use for your country's manufactures."

Early Signs of Economic Trouble. Despite the presence of a vibrant and growing economy during the early reign of the Emperor Qianlong, the tax base was unable to keep up with spending demands. Qianlong's military adventurism brought Xinjiang, an enormous and unruly new territory, under Chinese control. But the occupation was extraordinarily expensive and placed serious strain on the treasury. Qianlong was unaccustomed to working within a limited budget and was unwilling or incapable of scaling back. More troubling, as the population grew, there was a commensurate need to expand the bureaucracy. Early in the 18th century, this was understood to be problem to be overcome with the discovery of efficiencies and with an increase in productivity. However, by the end of the 18th century, there simply weren't enough government officials to administer the realm causing the vaunted Chinese economy to slow and to begin to show signs of distress.

Readings

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Timothy Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China*, (University of California Press, 1999), pp. 86-262.

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Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China*, (Stanford University Press, 2001).

Questions for Discussion

1) Continuity and change has long been a theme of the transition period between the Ming Dynasty and Qing Dynasty. To what extent is this description true? What does it mean? Did Ming institutions, ideas and philosophies continue to dominate Qing China, or was there a meaningful cultural and social break at the time of change in leadership? Did the concept of "China" change as China entered the early modern period?

2) Many historians have depicted ethnic relations between the Manchu and Han to be unimportant until the late 19th century? To what extent do you agree with this notion? Were the Manchu able to maintain their ethnic identity until the end? Or at what point in the Qing period were the governing Manchu effectively assimilated into Han Chinese society? Is the issue of ethnicity even an important question to ask of Qing China?

3) Historians of China like to write about the greatness of the Kangxi and Qianlong periods. How does one define what is or is not great about one particular reign or another? What are the criteria—the economy, military, population, structure, religion, culture, the arts—or something else altogether? Is it even possible to compare empires effectively? If so, what would you argue is the most important criteria?

4) History indicates that after the reign of the Emperor Qianlong, the Chinese empire began to decline and never recovered. Were there early indicators of decline during Qianlong's life? If so, what were they? Under Qianlong, did China suffer from misrule, corruption or neglect, or did China decline due to factors not under the control of any ruler? If one is to blame Qianlong, were his failings due to any moral or personal shortcoming? Or was the job of ruling the empire effectively too big for any single individual?

Texts

1) Nurhaci's seven grievances against the Ming Dynasty, proclaimed on April 13, 1618 and used as justification for the Manchu invasion. [Found in the public domain.]

1. The Ming killed the father and grandfather of Nurhaci for no reason.
2. The Ming favored Yehe and Hada while suppressing Jianzhou.
3. Violating agreement of territories by both sides, the Ming forced Nurhaci to make up for the lives of the people who crossed the border and were killed by Nurhaci.
4. The Ming sent troops to defend Yehe against Jianzhou.
5. Backed by the Ming, Yehe broke its promise to Nurhaci and married its "elder daughter" to Mongolia instead of Jurchen.
6. The Ming court forced Nurhaci to give up harvesting the reclaimed lands in Chaihe, Sancha and Fuan.
7. The East Liaoning government of the Ming appointed an official Shang Bozhi to perform garrison duty in Jianzhou; however, he abused his power and rode roughshod over the people.

2) The Emperor Qianlong's response to George III of Great Britain asking for the trade and the normalization of diplomatic relations in 1793. [Found in the public domain.]

> You, O King, live beyond the confines of many seas, nevertheless, impelled by your humble desire to partake of the benefits of our civilization, you have dispatched a mission respectfully bearing your memorial. Your Envoy has crossed the seas and paid his respects at my Court on the anniversary of my birthday. To show your devotion, you have also sent offerings of your country's produce.
>
> I have perused your memorial: the earnest terms in which it is couched reveal a respectful humility on your part, which is highly praiseworthy. In consideration of the fact that your Ambassador and his deputy have come a long way with your memorial and tribute, I have shown them high favor and have allowed them to be introduced into my presence. To manifest my indulgence, I have entertained them at a banquet and made them numerous gifts. I have also caused presents to be forwarded to the Naval Commander and six hundred of his officers and men, although they did not come to Peking, so that they too may share in my all-embracing kindness.
>
> As to your entreaty to send one of your nationals to be accredited to my Celestial Court and to be in control of your country's trade with China, this request is contrary to all usage of my dynasty and cannot possibly be entertained. It is true that Europeans, in the service of the dynasty, have been permitted to live at Peking, but they are compelled to adopt Chinese dress, they are strictly confined to their own precincts and are never permitted to return home. You are presumably familiar with our dynastic regulations. Your proposed Envoy to my Court could not be placed in a position similar to that of European officials in Peking who are forbidden to leave China, nor could he, on the other hand, be

allowed liberty of movement and the privilege of corresponding with his own country; so that you would gain nothing by his residence in our midst.

Moreover, our Celestial dynasty possesses vast territories and tribute missions from the dependencies are provided for by the Department for Tributary States, which ministers to their wants and exercises strict control over their movements. It would be quite impossible to leave them to their own devices. Supposing that your Envoy should come to our Court, his language and national dress differ from that of our people, and there would be no place in which to bestow him. It may be suggested that he might imitate the Europeans permanently resident in Peking and adopt the dress and customs of China, but, it has never been our dynasty's wish to force people to do things unseemly and inconvenient. Besides, supposing I sent an Ambassador to reside in your country, how could you possibly make for him the requisite arrangements? Europe consists of many other nations besides your own: if each and all demanded to be represented at our Court, how could we possibly consent? The thing is utterly impracticable. How can our dynasty alter its whole procedure and system of etiquette, established for more than a century, in order to meet your individual views? If it be said that your object is to exercise control over your country's trade, your nationals have had full liberty to trade at Canton for many a year, and have received the greatest consideration at our hands. Missions have been sent by Portugal and Italy, preferring similar requests. The Throne appreciated their sincerity and loaded them with favors, besides authorizing measures to facilitate their trade with China. You are no doubt aware that, when my Canton merchant, Wu Chao-ping, who was in debt to foreign ships. I made the Viceroy advance the monies due, out of the provincial treasury, and ordered him to punish the culprit severely. Why then should foreign nations advance this utterly unreasonable request to be represented at my Court? Peking is nearly two thousand miles from Canton, and at such a distance what possible control could any British representative exercise?

If you assert that your reverence for Our Celestial dynasty fills you with a desire to acquire our civilization, our ceremonies and code of laws differ so completely from your own that, even if your Envoy were able to acquire the rudiments of our civilization, you could not possibly transplant our manners and customs to your alien soil. Therefore, however adept the Envoy might become, nothing would be gained thereby.

Swaying the wide world, I have but one aim in view, namely, to maintain a perfect governance and to fulfil the duties of the State: strange and costly objects do not interest me. If I have commanded that the tribute offerings sent by you, O King, are to be accepted, this was solely in consideration for the spirit which prompted you to dispatch them from afar. Our dynasty's majestic virtue has penetrated unto every country under Heaven, and Kings of all nations have offered their costly tribute by land and sea. As your Ambassador can see for himself, we possess all things. I set no value on objects strange or ingenious, and have no use for your country's manufactures. This then is my answer to your request to appoint a representative at my Court, a request contrary to our dynastic usage, which would only result in inconvenience to yourself. I have expounded

my wishes in detail and have commanded your tribute Envoys to leave in peace on their homeward journey. It behooves you, O King, to respect my sentiments and to display even greater devotion and loyalty in future, so that, by perpetual submission to our Throne, you may secure peace and prosperity for your country hereafter. Besides making gifts (of which I enclose an inventory) to each member of your Mission, I confer upon you, O King, valuable presents in excess of the number usually bestowed on such occasions, including silks and curios-a list of which is likewise enclosed. Do you reverently receive them and take note of my tender goodwill towards you! A special mandate.

3) From the *Celebrated Cases of Judge Dee*, found in Robert Van Gulik's translation, Dover Press, 1976, pg. 5.

In the end, as a general rule, no criminal escapes the laws of the land. But it is up to the judge to decide who is guilty and who is innocent. If, therefore, a judge is honest, then the people in his district will be at peace; and if the people are at peace, their manner and morals will be good. All vagabonds and idlers, all spreaders of false rumors and all trouble makers will disappear, and all of the common people will cheerfully go about their own affairs. And if some wicked people from outside should happen to settle down in such a district, they will better their lives and reform of their own accord; for they see with their own eyes, and hear with their own ears, how strictly the laws are enforced, and how sternly justice is meted out. Therefore, it can be said that the amelioration of the common people depends on the honesty of the magistrate; never yet has a dishonest official improved the people under him.

IV. *19TH CENTURY*

Overview

The reign of the Emperor Qianlong (r. 1735-1796) in China is remembered for its strength, stability and prosperity—and as being one of the most brilliant in all of human history. Even though the ruling household was a conquest dynasty from Manchuria, the Emperor Qianlong arguably controlled more resources and directly ruled a larger number of people than had ever been recorded in human history until that time. Indeed, the population of Qing China reached approximately 300 million under Qianlong! China had reached the pinnacle of its power in the late 18th century. The system which had allowed for the rise of such a brilliant civilization, undergirded as it was by Confucianism, Daoism, a high-functioning bureaucracy, early industrialization, a thriving economy, a well-maintained infrastructure, and successful agriculture, had proven itself successful over many centuries. There was great reluctance to question something that had worked so well for so long, even though China in the 19th century was beginning to encounter challenges heretofore unknown. In addition, reform was generally not highly regarded in the Confucian system—and to the extent it was—it was often reinterpreted theoretically through the lens of one of the branches of neo-Confucianism. In short, China was poorly equipped philosophically and culturally to meet the challenges of a radically changing world. Historians agree that reforms in the 19th century were slow in coming, inadequate in their scope and sometimes haphazard in their execution. And, of course, they could only be initiated at the highest levels and if they posed no threat to the existing political, social, economic or military order. As might be expected, things went badly and humiliation and collapse followed. It is a cautionary tale all civilizations would do well to study.

Events

Opium. The Emperor Qianlong was succeeded by the Emperor Jiaqing (r. 1796-1820) and then by Emperor Daoguang (r. 1820-1850). Aside from the White Lotus Rebellion (1794-1804), there was no significant domestic upheaval or conflict for the first thirty-nine years of the 19th century. But China was experiencing challenges economically and militarily that called for bold, visionary leadership. Yet, for a period of approximately fifty years, both of Qianlong's successors sought mostly to stamp out corruption and to scale back the excesses of the previous period. The typical Chinese pattern of dynastic decline, of an old dynasty that was slow to apprehend the extent of the danger, was beginning to find expression. This occurred at precisely the wrong time for China. The Europeans had discovered that the application of science to agriculture, industry and the military yielded new technology which could quickly outpace even Chinese technology. Given the cultural blinders worn by the Chinese elites, the country was slow to react. At the same time, China's population, which had been a measure of its wealth under Qianlong, began to become a liability. There was an excess labor force and any downturn in agriculture quickly led to hunger and social disruption. It is not a surprise that many Chinese turned to drugs to escape the difficulties of life.

The Chinese had known of opium's medicinal properties for centuries, if not millennia, before the 19th century. However, it is not believed that significant numbers of Chinese had used opium for recreational purposes before this time. There was simply insufficient supply even if there had been demand. The Emperor Jiaqing made its consumption illegal in 1799, a prohibition he restated in 1813. The Emperor Daoguang issued his own edict in 1830 and started a campaign to address problems associated with chemical dependency. What was different about the early 19th century and opium in China was its relative accessibility and low cost. In particular, the Europeans (who had been allowed to trade with the Chinese through a very carefully controlled arrangement known as the Cohong system) were keen to sell it in China for a large profit. The British East India Company was one of the largest importers of the drug although only relatively small quantities of it were sold in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. For example, in 1790, the British imported 4054 chests. But by the late 1830s, 40,000 chests (approximately 2400 tons) were imported from all western sources. With this much narcotic available, the authorities began to take notice and sought to eradicate its use. Even the bannermen soldiers and eunuchs working for the Emperor Daoguang were known to have smoked it! The British, however, refused to cooperate with the Chinese authorities and hostilities broke out in 1839. The British were, of course, at a distinct disadvantage because they could only bring to the fight a very small military and used technology to their greatest advantage. They fought the Chinese mostly with their navy in and around the coastal areas of China and as far up the major rivers as they dared to travel.

They used blockades and "hit-and-run" tactics to their advantage. The Chinese were frustrated because they could not bring to bear the tremendous weight of their military might. After a series of battles, most of which were rather small, the Chinese decided to parley. The resulting Treaty of Nanjing should have been a wake-up call for the Chinese. The British demanded the creation of the "treaty port" system which would characterize Chinese foreign policy with Europeans and other westerners for decades to come. The Treaty of Nanjing would eventually become a national humiliation. However, when it was signed in 1842, the extent of its influence was unclear to the Chinese. Indeed, the Chinese government seemed to ignore their defeat in the Opium War and continued to act toward westerners in much the same way as they had before. This led to many, many small, but humiliating conflicts with the west over the coming decades.

The Taiping Rebellion. Few events in the long history of China have been as tragic or as consequential as the Taiping Rebellion. This conflict engulfed most of southeastern and south-central China between 1851-1865 and resulted in the deaths of at least 20 million Chinese—and quite possibly millions more. In many areas along the Yangtze River Valley, civilization largely broke down and entire regions of China had to be re-settled after the war because they had been denuded of population!

The Taiping Rebellion began with an apocalyptic Christian cult let by Hong Xiuquan (1814-1864). Hong was a frustrated degree-seeker from southeastern China who had been briefly exposed to Christianity. He had taken and passed the first levels of the Chinese civil service examination, but could not succeed at the highest levels. This led him to become disillusioned with Confucianism and explains a great deal about his motivations. After his last effort with the examination, he reportedly suffered from a bout of "nervous exhaustion." During his recovery, he had a vision in which he was came to interpret himself as the Chinese Son of God and the brother of Jesus. He understood his mission to be the cleansing of China of all non-believers. The authorities took little notice of his preaching until 1850 when his followers began to number in the tens of thousands. When they moved to arrest him in 1851, he rose in revolt and began a series of offensive campaigns against the shocked Manchu troops arrayed against him. By 1853, the Taiping had taken most of southeastern and south-central China and the city of Nanjing. As a result, they proclaimed a new dynasty and a new era. Over the course of the next decade, the Qing sent army after army to destroy the Taiping. None were successful. Finally, the Qing raised several indigenous Han Chinese armies led by Han generals who were able to vanquish the increasingly fragmented and poorly led Taiping. One of the most famous was Zeng Guofan (1811-1872), who also oversaw the first reform movements in the post Taiping era. In 1864, Hong died and the remaining rebels were destroyed.

The Nian Rebellion. If the Taiping Rebellion were not enough, the Qing were simultaneously dealing with what was a major rebellion in its own right in another area of China. This rebellion took place between the years 1855-1868 mostly in Shandong Province. Though not as bloody as the Taiping Rebellion, it proved very costly. More than 100,000 people were killed and people living in more of the most fertile and wealthy land in China were not paying tax to the imperial treasury. In effect, these two rebellions, along with the continuous Muslim revolts in western China, bankrupted the Qing. More than that, however, it was made clear to many Han Chinese that the Manchu could not exercise effective authority over the population.

<u>Government</u>

Lassitude. The system the Qing used to govern China required the collaboration of large segments of the ethnic Chinese. Most Han Chinese had embraced the Qing initially because of their hatred of the Ming. But by the middle of the 19th century, hatred of the Ming had been replaced with growing bitterness toward the Manchu. The events of the early and middle 19th century had exposed the Qing as being incapable of repelling foreign invasion, of lacking administrative acumen and of being incapable of maintaining the peace domestically. In short, it was only the accumulated inertia of two centuries of rule that allowed the Qing to retain power after the Taiping Rebellion because they exercised neither effective military power nor maintained meaningful political authority.

The Bureaucracy. One of the hallmarks of late Imperial China was the Confucian bureaucracy. The system of staffing government positions which had worked so well since the Tang Period (618-907CE) was based on the civil service examination. Degree seekers prepared for years for an examination which would reveal the best and brightest in the land who would then provide staffing for every level of government. These examinations

constituted the first true large-scale meritocracy in the world. However, by the 19th century, there were two major problems with government employees. First, there were not enough of them. The population of China had quadrupled to approximately 400 million by the 1880s (since 1644), but the number of bureaucrats had hardly risen in 200 years. Second, the tax base had not kept pace with the population increase. This led to the treasury being first stressed and then always empty. Sufficient funding for essential government functions could not be secured. When government bureaucrats anywhere are not compensated appropriately but must still fulfill their function, they turn to corruption—both in the selection/hiring process and in the taking of bribes and kickbacks once in office. In short, government corruption became endemic and, in time, government ceased to function at the highest levels. Only the willingness of local officials to continue to do their jobs stood between the people of China and administrative collapse. By the 1890s, even local authority was beginning to become unreliable. Though not in a complete state of chaos, China mostly had a titular government by the last decade of the 19th century.

The Military. The bannermen armies which had swept the Manchu into power in the middle of the 17th century had long since ceased to function as an effective military force by the late 19th century. The Taiping and Nian Rebellions had demonstrated that the Qing had little in the way of a military to force its will on an unwilling population. There were several attempts to reform the bannermen armies in the wake of the two rebellions. New weapons, new tactics, new training, new technology and new forms of transportation were all employed to upgrade the Qing military. The even had a new name, the "New Army." By the late 19th century, it appeared as though they might have been successful. But events such as the Boxer Uprising (1900) made clear that the Chinese military was extremely weak and could neither keep the peace domestically nor repel foreign aggression.

The Empress Dowager. A symptom of the fragmentation associated with imperial rule can be found with the Empress Dowager. The Empress Dowager, Ci'xi, is one of the most reviled women in all of Chinese history. She was a concubine of the Emperor Xianfeng (r. 1850-1861) who outmaneuvered all her rivals to have her son, later known as the Emperor Tongzhi (r. 1861-1875) named crown prince. In due course, she became the regent to her son. When her son died while still a young man, she became the regent to her very young nephew, the Emperor Guangxu (r. 1875-1908). She would remain the single most powerful person in China until her own death in 1908. She is remembered for her unparalleled political acumen and for her general unwillingness to initiate or allow for reforms the country so desperately needed. In her defense, there was likely very little that any leader—visionary or not—could have done to save the imperial system from collapse. However, given that she was the captain of a sinking ship, she is blamed, fairly or unfairly, for overseeing the demise of one of the greatest, long-lasting political systems in human history.

Culture

Religion. Chinese civilization was very mature (some may view it as ancient) by the 19th century. No new religions or governing philosophies emerged to challenge the orthodoxy of Confucianism and Daoism. The only exception was the Taiping movement, which was so violent and heretical in its belief system that many Chinese Christians were unable to support even its spiritual elements. As might be expected, there was a backlash among the governing elites against Christianity in the post-Taiping era. Indeed, in the decade or so after the Taiping Rebellion, there was a strong reactive movement to return China to its true Confucian path. There were several "self-strengthening" reforms instituted, most of which had as a stated goal the return of the people to more moral and upright behavior among all segments of society. When the final of the "self-strengthening" reforms (the 100 Days of Reform) was instituted in 1898, it had as one of its core elements the re-interpretation of Confucianism which, if taken to its logical end, could have questioned the political position of the Empress Dowager. For his trouble, the Emperor Guangxu—who had supported and promoted this effort—was effectively placed under house arrest where he was assassinated in 1908 by arsenic poisoning. It appeared that traditional Confucianism, as interpreted by the ruling elites, was sacrosanct from both the spiritual and political perspective.

The Literary Arts. The late Qing period is not known for bold or innovative steps taken in the writing of fiction or other literary arts. Many authors and poets spent their entire careers writing about how to navigate the violence and turmoil of the turbulent 19th century. In the reform movements of the post-Taiping era, a number of Chinese traveled abroad and were exposed to vibrant and expansive cultural expressions seen in the literary and philosophical world—particularly in Japan. Some returned to China to become leading philosophers and authors.

One such author is Huang Zunxian (1845-1905), who worked for the Chinese delegation in Tokyo, London and San Francisco. Huang respected tradition and was not a radical (as evidenced by his profession), but his poetry pressed the boundaries of literary convention. He is remembered for popularizing the word "civilization" 文明 (*wénming*—roughly interpreted "enlightenment through letters"). Others, such as Kang Youwei (1858-1927), an influential Chinese thinker who went into exile in Japan in 1898, continued to have influence well into the 20th century. Among Kang's most influential works are the *Datong Shu* (Book on the Great Community) and *Kongzi Gaizhi Kao* (The Study of the Reforms of Confucius). The latter formed part of the basis of the aborted 100 Days of Reform.

Society

Fragmentation. As the 19th century progressed, Chinese society first saw little in the way of change, then there were the years of catastrophe during the Taiping Rebellion and then finally, the slow devolution of the existing order. The system, in which there were monarchs, aristocrats, bureaucrats, artisans, clergy, peasants, laborers, etc., had worked very sell since the transition from the Ming Period (1368-1644). Most Chinese understood their role in a stable and prosperous society. The Mandarins, the administrative class, continued to do their jobs at all levels of government. But it is, in part, because of China's stable and prosperous system that the population continued to grow in the early 19th century. In 1800, there were perhaps 300 million Chinese. By 1900, that number had reached at least 400 million. Agriculture was the key to maintaining social and political order. It is not clear who or what is to blame for China's social problems in the 19th century. But it is clear, as evidenced by the widespread use of opium, the rise of banditry and the breakdown of authority, that they got worse as the century progressed. Any disruption in agriculture due to drought, flood, pests, excessive heat or cold required the use of emergency government-run granaries to feed the people until the next harvest. It appeared that many of China's peasants (which represented most of the population) often teetered on the brink of hardship or worse. And the government was increasingly unresponsive, even though the peasants continued to pay their taxes. In addition, government corruption was endemic. Infrastructure such as dikes, roads and irrigation ditches, which had allowed for the dramatic advances in agriculture, but which was expensive to maintain, began to breakdown. When the Grand Canal ceased to function after the 1855 Yellow River floods (during which the Yellow River changed course dramatically), some of the Confucian elites began to imply that the Qing had lost the "Mandate of Heaven." Failure to maintain essential infrastructure often presaged dynastic decline.

Secret Societies. Given the absolute power enjoyed by most of China's emperors, it was not possible to assemble without government approval, which was rarely forthcoming. In this environment, secret societies provided an outlet for civil discussion. Not all of these societies were triads or criminal enterprises, but many were. In the late 19th century, others emerged with the express intent of overthrowing the government. Among these groups were the Xingzonghui (Revive China Society)—led by Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925) and the Furen Literary Society. The former was established in Hawaii and the latter in Hong Kong. Both had among their primary goals the overthrow of the Qing. Though influential in their own right, these two societies would largely have been forgotten except that they merged in the 20th century to become the Revolutionary Alliance. This group was instrumental in the events which led to the Republican Revolution in China in 1912. Both the current Guomindang Party (now governing in Taiwan) and the Chinese Communist Party (currently ruling the mainland) consider themselves to be the spiritual inheritors of the Revolutionary Alliance.

Economy

Agriculture. In the early decades of the 19th century, agriculture continued to advance. The Chinese economy was showing signs of early industrialization. Rapid advances in technology applied to the agricultural sector resulted in reliable sources of excess calories for many years. Rice, wheat and other grains allowed the population to increase rapidly. Much of the land, however, was under stress from over-farming and there simply wasn't enough additional land not under cultivation which could be made productive. In other words, Chinese agriculture reached a high point in the first decades of the 19th century. The horrors of the Taiping Rebellion changed the agricultural dynamic dramatically. First, much of the most productive agricultural land in China (in the Yangtze River Valley) was the sight of some of the fiercest fighting. Second, other areas that were under the actual control of the Taiping could not contribute excess food stuffs. Third, several catastrophic floods, primarily along the Yellow River, created an environment in which there was a deficit in calories. Indeed, there was widespread hunger in the immediate post-

Taiping years. In the last decades of the 19th century, agriculture suffered from the myriad of miseries that accompanied the slow devolution of government: banditry, excessive and arbitrary taxation, breakdown of irrigation and transportation infrastructure and the general lack of government support. Nonetheless, the peasantry continued to do fairly well on a micro-level unless that was a localized drought or flood. Somehow, the population continued to grow.

Economic Trouble. The Chinese commercial economy in the 19th century suffered one setback after another. There was a problem with the outflow of silver associated with the opium trade. Given that more and more Chinese were willing to pay westerners in silver to support their drug habit and because silver was the specie with which one paid the tax, scarcity and inflation in the Chinese economy became the norm in the years leading up to the Opium War. (Western economies also suffered from time to time from silver shocks in the 19th century.) Indeed, one of the reasons that the Emperor Daoguang (r. 1820-1850) gave for his campaign to suppress opium was the damage it did to the economy of south-east China. This disruption was hard on the imperial treasury and put a damper on macro-economic trade as well. The other great disruption in the commercial economy in 19th century China was the Taiping Rebellion. Roughly 1/3 of China was under the control of other political entities (Taiping or Nian) for more than a decade. The most expensive activity a government can engage in is war. When it is a civil war, the costs multiple exponentially because areas being destroyed are a part of the economy and are also at the same time not paying tax to the government. In the case of the Taiping Rebellion, the economic damage was so widespread that entire areas of the Yangtze River Valley did not recover for more than a generation. Given the extent of economic development and industrialization taking place in most of the western economies (and Japan) in the late 19th century, China experienced political instability and economic collapse at precisely the wrong time. China didn't just slowly fall behind other expanding, industrial economies, its fortunes were dramatically reversed in both real and comparative terms. By the turn of the 20th century, China was no longer the world's greatest power. Instead, it can best be described as a failed state, incapable of controlling or caring for its people. But it was on the cusp of even greater humiliations still. Dismemberment and a loss of sovereignty became a real possibility in the 20th century.

Readings

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Thomas H. Reilly, *The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom: Rebellion and the Blasphemy of Empire,* (University of Washington Press, 2014).

Luke S. Kwong, *A Mosaic of the Hundred Days: Personalities, Politics and Ideas of 1898,* (Harvard East Asian Monographs, 1984).

June Chang, *The Empress Dowager Cixi,* (Anchor Books, 2014).

Questions for Discussion

1) China's encounter with the west in the early 19th century is often depicted as a clash of world-views, as a struggle between eastern and western civilizations. Is this a fair characterization? Were the Europeans able to interact with the Chinese in the way that they did because of Chinese weakness or European strength? If so, what about China was weak? If so, what about the Europeans was strong?

2) What was the primary reason that China declined in the 19th century? Was the problem political? Was it cultural? Was it a problem with philosophy? Was it a problem with the economy or education—or something else altogether? Or did China decline only in relation to the newly industrialized west? Could China's decline have been arrested at any moment by strong leadership?

3) Why was there a Taiping Rebellion? Did it have to happen when and where it did? Did the Taiping rise because of weakening central authority? Or did the Taiping simply expose existing weaknesses? Finally, did the Taiping create weaknesses among the central authorities? How did the Qing government manage to survive the period of rebellion? What about the Chinese system of government made it so resilient?

4) Were the reforms of the late 19th century in China too little, too late? Who can be fairly blamed for the government not reacting in an appropriate manner? Was this solely the problem of the Empress Dowager or was there some sort of systemic weakness? What, among the myriad of attempted reforms, seemed the most promising for the Chinese? If you had to construct and implement a series of reforms, which ones would you have decided upon? Why do you think they would have worked when all the others didn't?

Texts

1) The TaipingTen Commandants according to Hong Xiuquan, originally recorded in 1847. Found in the public domain.

1) Honor God and worship him
2) You shall not worship evil spirits
3) You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain
4) Every seventh day you shall praise God and extol his virtues
5) Honor your father and mother
6) You shall not commit murder or hurt anyone
7) You shall not commit adultery or act badly in any other way
8) You shall not steal, rob or plunder
9) You shall not speak any untruth
10) You shall not covet

2) Letter from Commissioner Lin (the official sent by the Emperor Daoguang to Guangdong Province to suppress the opium trade in 1839) to Queen Victoria of Great Britain. Found on Modern History Sourcebook website (**http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1839lin2.asp**).

> It is only our high and mighty emperor, who alike supports and cherishes those of the Inner Land, and those from beyond the seas-who looks upon all mankind with equal benevolence---who, if a source of profit exists anywhere, diffuses it over the whole world—who, if the tree of evil takes root anywhere, plucks it up for the benefit of all nations; --who, in a word, hath implanted in his breast that heart (by which beneficent nature herself) governs the heavens and the earth! You, the queen of your honorable nation, sit upon a throne occupied through successive generations by predecessors, all of whom have been styled respectful and obedient. Looking over the public documents accompanying the tribute sent (by your predecessors) on various occasions, we find the following: "All the people of my country, arriving at the Central Land for purposes of trade, have to feel grateful to the great emperor for the most perfect justice, for the kindest treatment," and other words to that effect. Delighted did we feel that the kings of your honorable nation so clearly understood the great principles of propriety, and were so deeply grateful for the heavenly goodness (of our emperor): --therefore, it was that we of the heavenly dynasty nourished and cherished your people from afar, and bestowed upon them redoubled proofs of our urbanity and kindness. It is merely from these circumstances, that your country—deriving immense advantage from its commercial intercourse with us, which has endured now two hundred years—has become the rich and flourishing kingdom that it is said to be!
>
> But, during the commercial intercourse which has existed so long, among the numerous foreign merchants resorting hither, are wheat and tares, good and bad; and of these latter are some, who, by means of introducing opium by stealth, have seduced our Chinese people, and caused every province of the land to overflow with that poison. These then know merely to advantage themselves, they care not about injuring others! This is a principle which heaven's Providence repugnates; and which mankind conjointly look upon with abhorrence! Moreover, the great emperor hearing of it, actually quivered with indignation, and especially dispatched me, the commissioner, to Canton, that in conjunction with the viceroy and lieut.-governor of the province, means might be taken for its suppression!
>
> Every native of the Inner Land who sells opium, as also all who smoke it, are alike adjudged to death. Were we then to go back and take up the crimes of the foreigners, who, by selling it for many years have induced dreadful calamity and robbed us of enormous wealth, and punish them with equal severity, our laws could not but award to them absolute annihilation! But, considering that these said foreigners did yet repent of their crime, and with a sincere heart beg for mercy; that they took 20,283 chests of opium piled up in their store-ships, and through Elliot, the superintendent of the trade of your said country, petitioned that they might be delivered up to us,

when the same were all utterly destroyed, of which we, the imperial commissioner and colleagues, made a duly prepared memorial to his majesty; --considering these circumstances, we have happily received a fresh proof of the extraordinary goodness of the great emperor, inasmuch as he who voluntarily comes forward, may yet be deemed a fit subject for mercy, and his crimes be graciously remitted him. But as for him who again knowingly violates the laws, difficult indeed will it be thus to go on repeatedly pardoning! He or they shall alike be doomed to the penalties of the new statute. We presume that you, the sovereign of your honorable nation, on pouring out your heart before the altar of eternal justice, cannot but command all foreigners with the deepest respect to reverence our laws! If we only lay clearly before your eyes, what is profitable and what is destructive, you will then know that the statutes of the heavenly dynasty cannot but be obeyed with fear and trembling!

We find that your country is distant from us about sixty or seventy thousand miles, that your foreign ships come hither striving the one with the other for our trade, and for the simple reason of their strong desire to reap a profit. Now, out of the wealth of our Inner Land, if we take a part to bestow upon foreigners from afar, it follows, that the immense wealth which the said foreigners amass, ought properly speaking to be portion of our own native Chinese people. By what principle of reason then, should these foreigners send in return a poisonous drug, which involves in destruction those very natives of China? Without meaning to say that the foreigners harbor such destructive intentions in their hearts, we yet positively assert that from their inordinate thirst after gain, they are perfectly careless about the injuries they inflict upon us! And such being the case, we should like to ask what has become of that conscience which heaven has implanted in the breasts of all men?

We have heard that in your own country opium is prohibited with the utmost strictness and severity: --this is a strong proof that you know full well how hurtful it is to mankind. Since then you do not permit it to injure your own country, you ought not to have the injurious drug transferred to another country, and above all others, how much less to the Inner Land! Of the products which China exports to your foreign countries, there is not one which is not beneficial to mankind in some shape or other. There are those which serve for food, those which are useful, and those which are calculated for re-sale; but all are beneficial. Has China (we should like to ask) ever yet sent forth a noxious article from its soil? Not to speak of our tea and rhubarb, things which your foreign countries could not exist a single day without, if we of the Central Land were to grudge you what is beneficial, and not to compassionate your wants, then wherewithal could you foreigners manage to exist? And further, as regards your woolens, camlets, and longells, were it not that you get supplied with our native raw silk, you could not get these manufactured! If China were to grudge you those things which yield a profit, how could you foreigners scheme after any profit at all? Our other articles of food, such as sugar, ginger, cinnamon, etc., and our other articles for use, such as silk piece-goods, chinaware, etc., are all so many necessaries of life to you; how can we reckon up their number! On the other hand, the things that come from your foreign countries are only calculated to make presents of, or serve for mere amusement. It is quite the same to us if we have them, or if we have them not. If then these are of no material consequence to us of the Inner Land, what difficulty would there be in prohibiting and shutting our market against them? It is only that our heavenly dynasty most freely permits you to take off her tea, silk, and other commodities, and convey them for consumption everywhere, without the slightest stint or grudge, for no other reason, but that where a profit exists, we wish that it be diffused abroad for the benefit of all the earth!

Your honorable nation takes away the products of our central land, and not only do you thereby obtain food and support for yourselves, but moreover, by re-selling these products to other countries you reap a threefold profit. Now if you would only not sell opium, this threefold profit would be secured to you: how can you possibly consent to forgo it for a drug that is hurtful to men, and an unbridled craving after gain that seems to know no bounds! Let us suppose that foreigners came from another country, and brought opium into England, and seduced the people of your country to smoke it, would not you, the sovereign of the said country, look upon such a procedure with anger, and in your just indignation endeavor to get rid of it? Now we have always heard that your highness possesses a most kind and benevolent heart, surely then you are

incapable of doing or causing to be done unto another, that which you should not wish another to do unto you! We have at the same time heard that your ships which come to Canton do each and every of them carry a document granted by your highness' self, on which are written these words "you shall not be permitted to carry contraband goods;" this shows that the laws of your highness are in their origin both distinct and severe, and we can only suppose that because the ships coming here have been very numerous, due attention has not been given to search and examine; and for this reason it is that we now address you this public document, that you may clearly know how stern and severe are the laws of the central dynasty, and most certainly you will cause that they be not again rashly violated!

Moreover, we have heard that in London the metropolis where you dwell, as also in Scotland, Ireland, and other such places, no opium whatever is produced. It is only in sundry parts of your colonial kingdom of Hindostan, such as Bengal, Madras, Bombay, Patna, Malwa, Benares, Malacca, and other places where the very hills are covered with the opium plant, where tanks are made for the preparing of the drug; month by month, and year by year, the volume of the poison increases, its unclean stench ascends upwards, until heaven itself grows angry, and the very gods thereat get indignant! You, the queen of the said honorable nation, ought immediately to have the plant in those parts plucked up by the very root! Cause the land there to be hoed up afresh, sow in its stead the five grains, and if any man dare again to plant in these grounds a single poppy, visit his crime with the most severe punishment. By a truly benevolent system of government such as this, will you indeed reap advantage, and do away with a source of evil. Heaven must support you, and the gods will crown you with felicity! This will get for yourself the blessing of long life, and from this will proceed the security and stability of your descendants!

In reference to the foreign merchants who come to this our central land, the food that they eat, and the dwellings that they abide in, proceed entirely from the goodness of our heavenly dynasty: the profits which they reap, and the fortunes which they amass, have their origin only in that portion of benefit which our heavenly dynasty kindly allots them: and as these pass but little of their time in your country, and the greater part of their time in our's, it is a generally received maxim of old and of modern times, that we should conjointly admonish, and clearly make known the punishment that awaits them.

Suppose the subject of another country were to come to England to trade, he would certainly be required to comply with the laws of England, then how much more does this apply to us of the celestial empire! Now it is a fixed statute of this empire, that any native Chinese who sells opium is punishable with death, and even he who merely smokes it, must not less die. Pause and reflect for a moment: if you foreigners did not bring the opium hither, where should our Chinese people get it to re-sell? It is you foreigners who involve our simple natives in the pit of death, and are they alone to be permitted to escape alive? If so much as one of those deprive one of our people of his life, he must forfeit his life in requital for that which he has taken: how much more does this apply to him who by means of opium destroys his fellow-men? Does the havoc which he commits stop with a single life? Therefore it is that those foreigners who now import opium into the Central Land are condemned to be beheaded and strangled by the new statute, and this explains what we said at the beginning about plucking up the tree of evil, wherever it takes root, for the benefit of all nations.

We further find that during the second month of this present year, the superintendent of your honorable country, Elliot, viewing the law in relation to the prohibiting of opium as excessively severe, duly petitioned us, begging for "an extension of the term already limited, say five months for Hindostan and the different parts of India, and ten for England, after which they would obey and act in conformity with the new statute," and other words to the same effect. Now we, the high commissioner and colleagues, upon making a duly prepared memorial to the great emperor, have to feel grateful for his extraordinary goodness, for his redoubled compassion. Anyone who within the next year and a half may by mistake bring opium to this country, if he will but voluntarily come forward, and deliver up the entire quantity, he shall be absolved from all punishment for his crime. If, however, the appointed term shall have expired, and there are still persons who continue to bring it, then such shall be accounted as knowingly violating the laws,

and shall most assuredly be put to death! On no account shall we show mercy or clemency! This then may be called truly the extreme of benevolence, and the very perfection of justice!

Our celestial empire rules over ten thousand kingdoms! Most surely do we possess a measure of godlike majesty which ye cannot fathom! Still we cannot bear to slay or exterminate without previous warning, and it is for this reason that we now clearly make known to you the fixed laws of our land. If the foreign merchants of your said honorable nation desire to continue their commercial intercourse, they then must tremblingly obey our recorded statutes, they must cut off forever the source from which the opium flows, and on no account make an experiment of our laws in their own persons! Let then your highness punish those of your subjects who may be criminal, do not endeavor to screen or conceal them, and thus you will secure peace and quietness to your possessions, thus will you more than ever display a proper sense of respect and obedience, and thus may we unitedly enjoy the common blessings of peace and happiness. What greater joy! What more complete felicity than this!

Let your highness immediately, upon the receipt of this communication, inform us promptly of the state of matters, and of the measure you are pursuing utterly to put a stop to the opium evil. Please let your reply be speedy. Do not on any account make excuses or procrastinate. A most important communication.

P. S. We annex an abstract of the new law, now about to be put in force.

"Any foreigner or foreigners bringing opium to the Central Land, with design to sell the same, the principals shall most assuredly be decapitated, and the accessories strangled; and all property (found on board the same ship) shall be confiscated. The space of a year and a half is granted, within the which, if any one bringing opium by mistake, shall voluntarily step forward and deliver it up, he shall be absolved from all consequences of his crime."

This said imperial edict was received on the 9th day of the 6th month of the 19th year of Taoukwang, at which the period of grace begins, and runs on to the 9th day of the 12th month of the 20th year of Taoukwang, when it is completed.

3) Excerpts from "On the Adoption of Western Learning" by Feng Guifen. Feng was a Qing official and one of the leaders of the many reform movements in the middle of the 19th century. Found in *Education about Asia.* (**http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/china/feng_guifen_western_learning.pdf**)

Today the world is 90,000 li around. There is no place boats and vehicles do not travel or human power does not reach. … According to Westerners' maps, there are at least one hundred countries in the world. Of the books of the hundred countries, only those from Italy from the time of the end of the Ming and from present-day English, numbering in all several tens, have been translated. …

Books on mathematics, mechanics, optics, light, chemistry, and others all contain the principles of understanding things. Most of this information is unavailable to people in China.

I have heard that with their new methods the Westerners have found that the movements of the earth conform closely to those of the heavens. This can be of assistance in fixing the calendar. … I have heard that Westerners' method of clearing sand from harbors is very effective. … This can be of assistance to keep the water flowing. Also, for agriculture and sericultural tools, and things required for the various crafts, they mostly use mechanical wheels, which require little energy but accomplish much. These can assist the people to earn their living. Other things beneficial to the national economy and the livelihood of the people should also be used. …

There are many intelligent people in China. Surely there are some who, having learned from the barbarians, can surpass them. …

The principles of government are derived from learning. In discussing good government, [the famous historian] Sima Qian said, "Take the later kings as models," because they were closer to his own time, and customs, having changed, were more alike, so that their ideas were easy to implement because they were plain and simple. In my humble opinion, at the present time, it is also appropriate to say "Learn from the various nations," for they are similar to us and hence their ways are easy to implement. What could be better than to take Chinese ethical principles of

human relations and Confucian teachings as the foundation, and supplement them with the techniques of wealth and power of the various nations.

v. 20TH CENTURY

PART I **: Early 20th Century** (from 1900 to 1949)

Overview

In the early 20th century, traditional China was in the final stages of collapse. The decline of China as a world power had shocked the governing elites in the 19th century. Many simply could not fathom that the philosophy which had undergirded their way of life and their civilization for more than 2500 years was insufficient to meet the needs of an industrialized world. The Confucian system had always worked before. What had caused it to fail in this instance? But by the turn of the 20th century, it was no longer possible to argue that small, incremental change would yield the desired results. Many leaders and thinkers began to call for bold, wholesale change to society, for the appropriation of western philosophy and its implementation in China. But which of the dominant western philosophies would be best for China to adopt? There were so many: capitalism, liberalism, utilitarianism, nationalism, Christianity, socialism and communism, to name a few. It was also quite clear to most of the governing elites that the imperial household would have to evolve as well, or it too would not survive. The struggle in the early 20th century was therefore recast not in terms of how to repair or reform the old system, but rather which of the new governing philosophies would become ascendant. While these issues were being worked out, practical questions arose about what to do with more than 400 million Chinese. Someone had to govern them, keep the peace and deal with the foreigners.

Events

The Collapse of the Dynasty. The moribund Qing Dynasty went out with a whimper in the span of several months in late 1911 and early 1912. The Empress Dowager, Ci'xi, died in 1908. But she had been so successful at eliminating her rivals (or simply outliving them), that there was a power vacuum in the upper levels of government when she died. On her deathbed, she had named China's last emperor to the throne, Pu-yi (1906-1967), who was two years old at the time. He reigned as the Emperor Xuantong (through a regent) until his abdication in 1912 during the Republican Revolution. Thus ended 2300 years of imperial rule in China.

The Republican Revolution. There were dozens of groups and thousands of Chinese who were dedicated to the violent overthrow of the Qing Dynasty. The most prominent was the Revolutionary Alliance, led in part by Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925). Members of the Revolutionary Alliance had infiltrated virtually all levels of society and government before 1911. There were members in the various legislative bodies (created after the Boxer Uprising). There were members in the bureaucracy, in the constabulary and in the military. The Revolutionary Alliance was interested in creating the conditions in China which would allow for the rise of democracy. Although Sun Yat-sen's vision of democracy for China did not closely resemble western-style democracy, it was their goal to ultimately create a democratic nation.

Hostilities began in the tri-cities area of Wuchang in the autumn of 1911, when several members of the New Army, who were also members of the Revolutionary Alliance, rose in revolt. When the Qing issued orders to several generals to put down the rebellion, they refused. The Qing then began to negotiate for a limited constitutional monarchy. However, even that was unpalatable to the Revolutionary Alliance and the Qing abdicated with few conditions in the spring of 1912. Soon thereafter, Yuan Shikai (1859-1916) was named premier of China, a position he would hold until his death.

The Republican Revolution and Yuan Shikai's policies were a failure. Within a few months of gaining power, it was clear that Yuan did not support democracy and wanted to reinstitute a monarchy. There was little left of the democratic experiment when his administration collapsed in 1916. Indeed, he left the country much worse off than it had been when he first became premier. China was a failed state and entered what we call the warlord era. There would be no effective central government for more than a decade.

The Guomindang. Through all the turmoil of the Republican and warlord eras, one opposition political party, the Guomindang (Nationalist), had managed to survive, although it was often outlawed. As China moved into the 1920s, it was one of the few highly organized, viable political organizations with a nationwide following. In 1926, the Guomindang started a military campaign to unify China. First, Guomindang troops swept through southeastern China. They then subdued Nanjing and made it the capital of the new China. By 1928, China was under the nominal control of the Guomindang, although they controlled much of the territory through alliances with various warlords. It was a very tenuous situation. In the military campaigns of the late 1920s, one general emerged who transcended the military and political elements of the Guomindang: Chiang Kai-Shek (1887-1975). Soon thereafter, Chiang became known as Generalissimo, or commanding general of Guomindang forces. By the 1930s, was Premier of the Republic of China.

The Chinese Civil War and the War With Japan. In the late 1920s, the Chinese Communist Party had become a thorn in the side of the Guomindang. The CCP were dedicated to creating a communist state and would not allow anyone or anything to stand it its way. They engaged in the building of soviets in the rural areas of China and maintained a low-intensity civil war. Chiang Kai-Shek decided to hunt them down and eradicate them, and he was almost successful. The Long March (1934-1935) nearly resulted in their demise. However, the Japanese, who had been seizing territory in Manchuria decided to cross the northern border into China proper at roughly the same time. Though the Guomindang was willing to tolerate Japanese aggression in Manchuria, when Japan sent armies into North China proper, the Chinese surprised the Japanese and stood and fought in 1938. It was clear that Japan had underestimated Chinese national sentiment. For the ruling Guomindang leadership, the total eradication of the CCP would have to wait until the end of the Japanese conflict.

The war with Japan was long and bloody, a war of attrition. More than 20 million Chinese died in this conflict alone. China didn't surrender when the Japanese seized Nanjing in 1937 and laid waste to the capital city over a period of several weeks (Nanjing Massacre). Japanese troops then had no recourse other than to occupy as much of China as they could. However, it was not possible for Japan to ever control China if the Chinese didn't collaborate. And the Chinese fought back bravely. By 1940, Japan knew it was in a war with China which was not going well. Although Japan's allies in Europe, Germany in particular, had found success at virtually every turn, Japan recognized that they would have to have more resources to continue the war with China. Southeast Asia provided much of what was needed—tin, aluminum, steel, oil, rubber and the like were available. But the Japanese leadership determined that the United States and Great Britain would have to be dealt with first. The war then expanded to become World War II.

The Communist Revolution. When the war against Japan was over in 1945, Chinese Guomindang troops immediately moved back into formerly Japanese-occupied China. But the Chinese people were in no mood to put up with the corruption, malfeasance and incompetence which had characterized Guomindang rule before the war with Japan. And this time there was a choice. The CCP, which had barely survived the Long March and Guomindang efforts at total destruction in 1937, had grown immensely in strength and size by 1945. Led by Mao Zedong (1893-1976) and having enjoyed some success fighting a guerilla war against the Japanese, the CCP turned their attention to fighting the Guomindang. By 1948, the CCP began to defeat Guomindang armies one after the other and the Guomindang collapsed. Within a few months, Chiang Kai-Shek and the remnant of the Guomindang retreated to the island of Taiwan, where they were not very welcome. Though it was thought to be a temporary redoubt only, the CCP has managed to keep them there ever since.

<u>Government</u>

The Nationalists. The Guomindang Party was known in English as the Nationalist Party. They succeeded in bringing unification to large parts of China in the late 1920s. They then ruled for approximately a decade before the war with Japan began. The Guomindang leadership was an ideologically disparate group. Some were dedicated to the radical forms of socialism, others supported more capitalist ideals. Some believed China was ready for democracy, others such as Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925), believed it might take many years of practice before the Chinese people could be trusted with the franchise. For a while, the Guomindang was supported by the Comintern (Communist International) and many of their leaders went to Moscow for training and support, including Chiang Kai-Shek. Others were supported by the governments (or individuals) in western Europe or the United States. It

was simply unclear exactly where many of the Guomindang leaders stood ideologically in the early 1920s. It was, in fact, their intention to garner as much support from whatever source they could. It didn't matter much where it came from. Vladimir Lenin, and later Joseph Stalin of the USSR, however, didn't believe that the Guomindang was sufficiently Communist and decided to support a more pure political party in China. This would later become known as the Chinese Communist Party. For a while, the Soviets supported both parties.

Given the lack of a clear ideology, it is no surprise that the decade of Nationalist rule in China is not remembered fondly. Other than trying to unify the country, there didn't appear to be a larger goal. In their defense, the Guomindang had inherited a fragmented country, much of which was still not under their control. The economy was largely agrarian and suffered from half a century of neglect. Large sections of China had been brought under the control of one or more of the western nations or Japan. In short, China's future as a unified country was very much in doubt. Nonetheless, the Guomindang are remembered for being corrupt, nepotistic and incompetent. But China under Guomindang rule was better than China under the rule of capricious and arbitrary warlords.

The Chinese Communist Party. The CCP was established in 1921 in the aftermath of the May 4th Movement which had swept the nation beginning in 1919. The May 4th Movement had awakened the masses to politics and had created a sense of nationalism which the CCP would later exploit. The CCP was established when two comintern agents, Yang Mingzhai (1882-1930) and Grigori Voitinsky (1893-1953), made contact with one of the leaders of the May 4th Movement, Chen Duxiu (1879-1942) and Li Dazhao (1888-1927). This core group announced the first National Congress in 1921 to be held in the French Concession in Shanghai. The first years of the CCP were very bleak. The party was small, quarrelsome, and precarious. As might be expected, it did not grow quickly. To many interested Chinese, it simply appeared to be the left-wing of the Guomindang Party and was therefore not discernable as a separate political entity. Nonetheless, the right-wing of the Guomindang, exemplified by Chiang Kai-Shek, understood very clearly the risks posed by the extreme left. When the CCP engaged in an unauthorized labor action in Shanghai and other actions in Nanchang in the late 1920s, they became the sworn enemy of the Guomindang. This is a "blood-feud" that has still not exhausted itself. Of course, the CCP eventually won the civil war and still rules mainland China today.

Culture

The May 4th Movement of 1919. The Chinese had participated in WWI by sending more than 100,000 laborers to work behind the lines in Europe for the British and French. Although only a few thousand died, many came back to their village with a fresh perspective. They were world travelers, had seen the carnage of the trenches, or their aftermath, and were unwilling to allow westerners or Japanese to maintain the fiction of their moral superiority. Among those who traveled to Europe in this program were Zhou Enlai (1898-1976), future Premier of the People's Republic of China (second in command to Mao Zedong) and Deng Xiaoping (1904-1997), leader of the PRC from 1978-1992). The titular Chinese government had also cut diplomatic ties with Germany and eventually declared war in 1917. Although they didn't provide solders or much in the way material aid, they did expect that they the German territories in Shandong province would be returned to Chinese control after the war. The problem was that Japan had seized these territories by force during the war and did not wish to relinquish what they had conquered. At the Versailles Treaty talks, the Japanese delegation was able to make its case directly as one of the victorious powers. Nonetheless, when the terms of the Treaty of Versailles were made known in May of 1919, the Chinese erupted in protest because portions of Shandong were to be leased to the Japanese according to the terms of a previous secret agreement between the two nations. The Chinese people felt betrayed by both their government and by President Woodrow Wilson, because of his insistence on the implementation of "National Self-Determination" in all other elements of the treaty. The protest movement was sustained for many months and was felt in virtually all of China's major cities. In the aftermath, it was clear that this was an expression of a strong sense of nationalism in a country in which it had never been seen before. It is unfortunate, for the Japanese in particular, to have missed this dramatic shift in Chinese sentiment.

The Literary Arts. The early 20th century saw a flowering of new forms of expression in China. New authors using new forms of the language, commenting on things they had never been allowed to write about provided a fresh environment for the literary arts. The most well-known of all Chinese authors in the early 20th century was Lu Xun (1881-1936). Lu wrote novels, essays and poems. Many of his books are works of political satire. One of his most

famous is the satirical novella *The True Story of Ah Q*, which first appeared in serial form in 1921. Lu wrote in the modern form of the Chinese vernacular, a development which would eventually characterize all modern Chinese forms of literature. He is thus remembered for his biting political wit and for being a pioneer in the creation of modern Chinese literature. Lu wrote prolifically until his death from tuberculous in 1936. He is known as one of the leaders in the "New Culture Movement" which sprang up in China after the May 4th period.

New Youth. Among the many elements of the "New Culture Movement" was the appearance of a journal known as the *New Youth*, founded by Chen Duxiu (who was also a founding member of the CCP). The first volumes were published in 1915 and pre-date the May 4th Movement, but the leadership of the journal happily tapped into the new nationalism of the May 4th era. The *New Youth* was also written in the vernacular (as opposed to classical Chinese) and was designed to appeal to the largest audience possible. The articles pointed out weaknesses in Chinese national character and called for the introduction of new ideas and new philosophies into China: communism, capitalism, pragmatism, democracy, nationalism, and the like which, if embraced by large segments of Chinese society could make China stronger. The *New Youth* even published Lu Xun's short story "A Madman's Diary" in 1918 (reportedly inspired by Nikolai Gogol's *Diary of a Madman*). Also included were reprinted articles from abroad. This provides evidence of just how sophisticated and international the "New Culture Movement" was in China.

Society

Continuity and Change. It would be easy to say that Chinese society in the early 20th century had devolved into something that neither resembled nor functioned as it had in previous epochs. But that would not be true. It had a well-established, mature society that provided the glue which held China together in the absence of effective government. There were many elements of society that functioned as they always had. In particular, China's peasants, who constituted at least 90% of society, continued to farm the land and live their lives much as they always had. Village headmen, applying basic Confucian ideology, still acted as intermediaries between individual producers and the authorities. What had changed was who they paid taxes to and who enforced the laws by which they ordered their lives. It is also true that taxes were sometimes very high (more than 50%) and paid in advance or sometimes multiple times per year if a warlord or government changed. One of the primary weaknesses in society in the early 20th century was the lack of a strong bureaucracy. The old Confucian elites, the Mandarins, had been dissolved as an official class of society. And, given the lack of a central government, most of those magistrates were not replaced with effective leadership. Neither the leaders of the Republican Revolution nor the Guomindang had succeeded in re-ordering society, but that had not that been among their goals in the first place. While it is true that both wanted to bring China into modernity, a radical restructuring of society was not the highest of their priorities.

One group did emerge who sought the radical restructuring of society: the Chinese Communist Party. As was true of other countries ruled by communists, the CCP wanted to flatten society. All of China would be radically equal. All great landowners would be stripped of their land (and capital) and it would be redistributed to those who actually worked it. They wanted to apply the old socialist adage popularized by Karl Marx (1818-1883) in the 19th century: "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need" to all elements of the economy. No one would become wealthy, but no one would be desperately poor either. In the political realm, the politburo would govern until the people of China were educated sufficiently to understand that communism was in their best interests. They would then voluntarily vote themselves into a communist system (the dictatorship of the proletariat). In short, this was the plan that the CCP used when it set up soviets in their 1920s and 30s. However, before it could be instituted, the war with Japan (1937-1945) disrupted society in a way not seen since the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864).

Social Disruption in the War With Japan (1937-1945). Though Japan could not control all of China, it occupied territory in which hundreds of millions of Chinese lived. In these territories, Japanese occupation officials recognized the extent of their limitations. They were governing a people group who had not submitted to their rule and whose government would not surrender. The Japanese therefore ruled with a very, very strong hand and would not allow any dissent. The Japanese traumatized the Chinese people in many ways. First, the Japanese did not perceive of the Chinese as being equally human. They enjoyed no rights not given by the Japanese. Second, the best of all that China produced went to the Japanese: food, housing, clothing, manufactured goods, etc. Third, when the Chinese had the temerity to oppose the Japanese or question any decisions made by the Japanese, the Chinese were killed. Fourth, when the Chinese actively engaged in guerilla war, the Japanese responded with large-scale

slaughter. Individuals, villages, and whole cities survived (or didn't) based on whim and chance. Society, as might be expected, was terrorized and moved into a protective, survival mode. From 1937 until the defeat of the Japanese in 1945, China's losses reached approximately 20 million. It should come as no surprise that many elements of Chinese society still express hatred for the Japanese.

Economy

Agriculture. The Chinese system of agriculture had suffered from decades of neglect by the turn of the 20th century. Essential infrastructure had not been maintained. Irrigation systems and flood control, in particular, were in serious disrepair. Many Chinese peasants were just getting by season to season. Any small disruption in the annual cycle yielded hardship and hunger. The threat of famine was persistent for the peasantry. China could often not feed itself. During the warlord era (the late teens and much of the 20s), there was no law and order and taxes were extracted at a high rate and at arbitrary times. During the decade of Guomindang rule, conditions moderated in some areas and some advances in agriculture were possible. But in other areas there was famine. During the war with Japan, death and destruction seemed ever present in the occupied territories. Nonetheless, it would be accurate to say that there were real advances in agriculture in China in some areas. In particular, a number of schools opened with the express purpose of teaching new techniques and of applying new technology. Some, such as China Agricultural University (founded in 1905), Nanjing Agricultural University (founded in 1914) and Anhui Agricultural University (founded in 1928), became quite influential and promoted advances in wet-rice agriculture, animal husbandry and dry-land farming. Indeed, these institutions survived the ravages of civil war, foreign invasion and the Cultural Revolution—and still exist today. Nonetheless, China didn't become reliably self-sufficient in agriculture until after the Cultural Revolution.

Commerce: If a nation is to have a fully functioning, integrated economy, certain conditions must exist. There must be a strong, effective government capable of creating and environment of predictability. The government must have a monopoly on violence and the extraction of revenue. There must be a common currency, access to capital and relative peace and calm in the realm. Finally, the population must be willing to accept these conditions. These things were not in evidence for most of the first half of the 20th century in China. In the warlord era, China was divided into areas controlled by local or regional strongmen. Trade between the various areas, although possible, was problematic. Nonetheless, the macro-economic zones which had characterized the Qing Era (1644-1912) and which had emerged organically during the long period of peace began to fragment in the early 20th century. It became difficult to transport goods between regional areas because of problems with the transportation infrastructure and because the space between warlord-held territories often teemed bandits and rebels. And since there was no national currency, an economy based on a barter system emerged. This placed serious restrictions on the flow of capital. In short, it was possible to buy and sell goods within small, micro-economic zones—in the big cities and the like. But a national economy did not exist until the Guomindang sought to create one in the late 1920s and early 1930s. And, of course, even this ceased to exist during the war with Japan. It is also safe to say that there was extremely limited large-scale industrial development outside of the major population centers and very little domestic capital one could draw upon if one wanted to open a factory or to develop a manufacturing concern. Cottage industries were widespread, and of course, foreigners operated industrial concerns in the concession areas. When the civil war between the CCP and Guomindang ended in 1949, the CCP surveyed an economic landscape scarred by decades of war, destruction and neglect. The economic road ahead would be long, difficult and bumpy. Tens of millions of Chinese would die of starvation, malnutrition and other privations before the economy would begin to supply the goods and services needed by the population.

Readings

Harold Tanner, *China: A History, Volume 2. From the Great Qing Empire through the People's Republic of China (1644-2009),* (Hackett Publishing, 2010), pp. 111-192.

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Vera Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May 4th Movement of 1919*, (Center for Chinese Studies, UC Berkeley, 1990).

Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-Shek and the Struggle for Modern China*, (Belknap Press, 2011).

Arif Dirlik, *The Origins of Chinese Communism*, (Oxford University Press, 1989).

Questions for Discussion

1) What were the elements that brought about the final collapse of the Qing Dynasty? Was the collapse inevitable? Could there have been a constitutional monarchy in China? What would have to have happened in order for there to have been a constitutional monarchy? Do you think a constitutional monarchy would have made a difference for the Chinese people in the chaotic years and decades that followed 1912?

2) Both the Guomindang and the Chinese Communist Party consider themselves to be the spiritual inheritors of the May 4th Movement. Which group do you think has a more valid claim on its legacy? Why does it matter that the May 4th Movement is considered so important by both groups? What did the May 4th Movement accomplish that changed China?

3) In 1948 and 1949, the CCP won the civil war. The speed and severity of the Guomindang collapse is instructive. What was the central weakness or problem with the Guomindang that caused the people of China to abandon them and embrace the CCP? Can the problem best be understood in the context of what was wrong with the Guomindang or what was right with the CCP? Was it a combination of both? Or was the CCP just in the right place at the right time?

4) What dominant ideology won out in the first half of the 20th century? (aside from communism) There was another, even stronger, more durable ideology/philosophy that allowed for the rise of the Guomindang, motivated the Chinese to stand and fight the Japanese and ultimately acted as a support mechanism for the CCP? Finally, what is more important—actions or ideals? Are they equally important—or do they simply fulfill different functions? How did they interact with each other in the struggle to rebuild Chinese polity in the early 20th century?

Texts

1) Quote from Lu Xun, from *Selected Stories*, in the public domain.

> I felt that if a man's proposals met with approval, it should encourage him; if they met with opposition, it should make him fight back; but the real tragedy for him was to lift up his voice among the living and meet with no response neither approval nor opposition just as if he were left helpless in a boundless desert.

2) Quote by Mao Zedong on Lu Xun, from William A. Lyell, trans., *Diary of a Madman*, (University of Hawaii Press, 1990), pg. xxx.

> Lu Xun was a man of unyielding integrity free from all sycophancy or obsequiousness; this quality is invaluable among colonial and semi-colonial peoples. Representing the great majority of the nation, Lu Xun breached and stormed the enemy citadel; on the cultural front, he was the bravest and most correct, the finest, the most loyal and most ardent national hero, a hero without parallel in our history.

3) Excerpt from a speech entitled "Essentials of the New Life Movement delivered by Chiang Kai-shek in 1934. Found in *Education about Asia*, **http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/cup/chiang_kaishek_new_life.pdf**

> The New Life Movement aims at the promotion of a regular life guided by the four virtues, namely *li* [ritual/decorum], *yi* [rightness or duty], *lian* [integrity or honesty], and *chi* [sense of shame]. Those virtues must be applied to ordinary life in the matter of food, clothing, shelter, and action. The four virtues are the essential principles for the promotion of morality. They form the rules for dealing with men and human affairs, for cultivating oneself, and for adjustment to one's surroundings. Whoever violates these rules is bound to fail, and a nation that neglects them will not survive. … By the observance of these virtues, it is hope that the rudeness and vulgarity will be got rid of and that the life of our people will conform to the standard of art. … By the observance of these virtues, it is hoped that beggary and robbery will be eliminated and that the life of our people will be productive. The poverty of China is primarily caused by the fact that there are too many consumers and too few producers. Those who consume without producing usually live as parasites or as robbers. They behave thus because they are ignorant of the four virtues. … By observance of these virtues, it is hoped that social disorder and individual weakness will be remedied and that people will become more military-minded. If a country cannot defend itself, it has every chance of losing its existence. … Therefore out people must have military training. As a preliminary, we must acquire the habits of orderliness, cleanliness, simplicity, frugality, promptness, and exactness. We must preserve order, emphasize organization , responsibility and discipline, and be ready to die for the country at any moment.

4) Excerpt from a speech delivered by Chiang Kai-shek in January 1939. Found *Education about Asia*, http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/china/chiang_kaishek_natl_identity.pdf

> …We are now fighting the war [against the Japanese] for our own national existence and for freedom to follow the course of national revolution laid down for us in the Three Principles of the People. …
>
> …You [high-level Guomindang officials] should instruct our people to take lessons from the annals of the Song and Ming dynasties. The fall of these two dynasties [to the Mongols and the Manchus] was not cause by outside enemies with a superior force, but by a dispirited and cowardly minority within the governing class and society of the time. Today the morale of our people is excellent. …
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> …Our resistance is a united effort of government and people. … Concord between government and people is the first essential to victory. …

…The hearts of our people are absolutely united. …

5) From the *Selected Readings of Mao Zedong*, Foreign Press Club, 1971. Report on the Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan, March 1927. Found in *Education About Asia,* http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/china/mao_peasant.pdf

> During my recent visit to Hunan I made a first-hand investigation of conditions in the five counties of Hsiantan, Hsianghsiang, Henshan, Liling and Changsha. In the thirty-two days from January 4 to February 5, I called together fact-finding conferences in villages and county towns, which were attended by experienced peasants and by comrades working in the peasant movement, and I listened attentively to their reports and collected a great deal of material. Many of the hows and whys of the peasant movement were the exact opposite of what the gentry in Hankow and Changsha are saying. I saw and heard of many strange things of which I had hitherto been unaware. I believe the same is true of any other places, too. All talk directed against the peasant movement must be speedily set right. All the wrong measures taken by the revolutionary authorities concerning the peasant movement must be speedily changed. Only thus can the future of the revolution be benefited. For the present upsurge of the peasant movement is a colossal event. In a very short time, in China's central, southern and northern provinces, several hundred million peasants will rise like a mighty storm, like a hurricane, a force so swift and violent than no power, however, great will be able to hold it back. They will smash all the trammels that bind them and rush forward along the road to liberation. They will sweep all the imperialists, warlords, corrupt officials, local tyrants and evil gentry into their graves. Every revolutionary party and every revolutionary comrade will be put to the test, to the accepted or rejected as they decide. There are three alternatives. To march at their head and lead them. To trail behind them, gesticulating and criticizing. Or to stand in their way and oppose them. Every Chinese is free to choose, but events will force you to make the choice quickly.