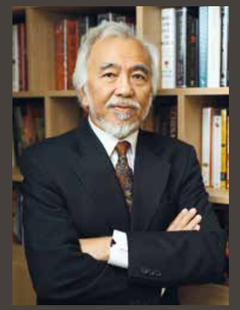

Born in Surabaya, Indonesia, Tjio Kayloe settled down in Singapore after a long career in investment banking in Hong Kong, Singapore and New York. He set up a business providing specialized services to financial institutions, which he ran for more than a decade before finally retiring. A graduate of the University of London and Columbia University, New York, he now researches the history of modern China. This is his first published work and preparations are already underway for his next, on the warlords of republican China.

From rebel on the run to first president of republican China, the life of Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925) epitomizes his country's turbulent struggle for modernity.

The Unfinished Revolution is a superb new biography of Sun Yat-sen, whose life, like the confusion of his time, is not easy to interpret. His political career was marked mostly by setbacks, yet he became a cult figure in China after his death. Today he is the only 20th-century Chinese leader to be widely revered on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. In contrast, many Western historians see little in his ideas or deeds to warrant such high esteem.

This book presents the most balanced account of Sun to date, one that situates him within the historical events and intellectual climate of his time. Born in the shadow of the Opium War, the young Sun saw China repeatedly humiliated in clashes with foreign powers, resulting in the loss of territory and sovereignty. When his efforts to petition the decrepit Manchu court to institute reforms failed, Sun took to revolution.

Sun traversed the globe to canvass support for his cause. A notable feature of the book is its coverage of the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia and their contributions to his uprisings on the mainland, which set the stage for the overthrow of two millennia of imperial rule in 1911.

But Sun's vision of China was not to be. Within a few years the republic was hijacked and plunged into chaos. This fascinating and immensely readable work illuminates the man and his achievements, his strengths and his weaknesses, revealing how he came to spearhead the revolution that would transform his country and yet, at his death in 1925 and still today, remain agonizingly unfinished.

"I've read at least 30 or 40 biographies of Sun Yat-sen in my life, so I was intrigued to find out what Kayloe had to say that's new. I was fascinated. He really tells the story afresh. Through a lively series of chapters that capture different phases of Sun's life and career, Kayloe tries to understand and to convey to us what made this remarkable man tick. A very readable book... I strongly recommend it."

— Professor Wang Gungwu
Founding Chairman, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy,
and University Professor, National University of Singapore

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The
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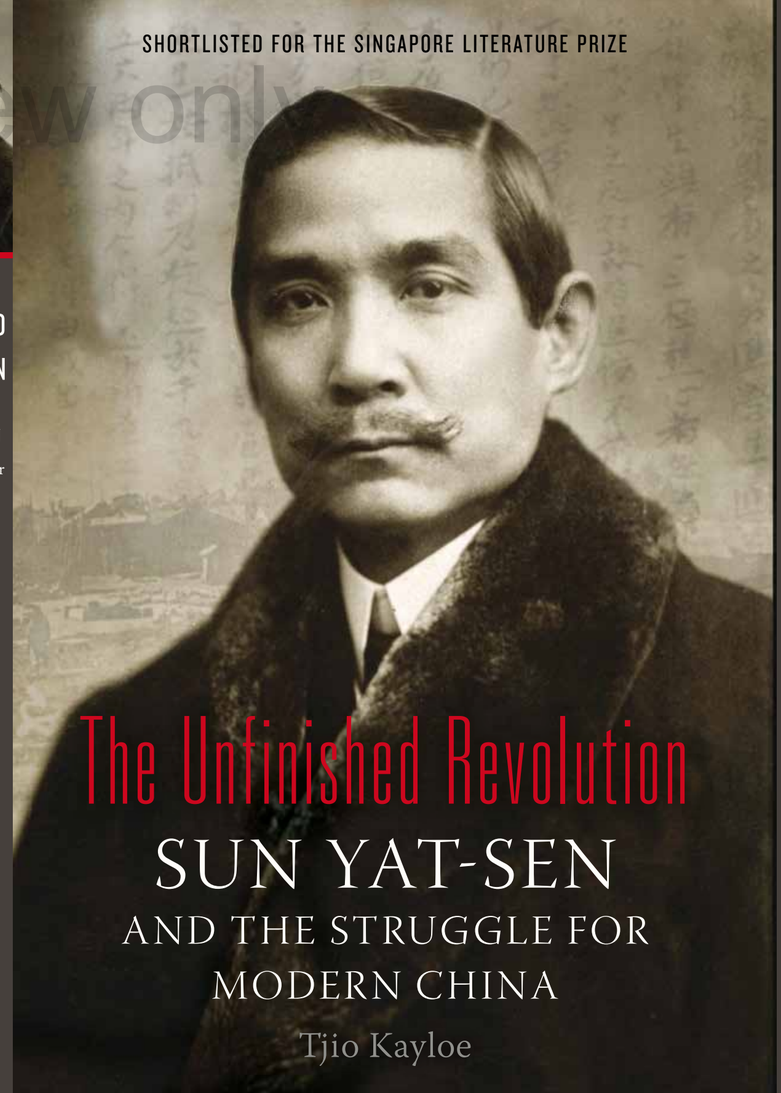

The Unfinished Revolution

SUN YAT-SEN AND THE STRUGGLE FOR MODERN CHINA

Tjio Kayloe

China is a land of superlatives: home to the fastest trains, the biggest standing army, and the most number of millionaires. The world's largest trading power with vast holdings of U.S. sovereign debt, China today is a global powerhouse with significant influence in shaping the world order.

This image is in sharp contrast to her state on the cusp of the 20th century, when she was rent asunder by predatory foreign powers while she struggled to join the modern world. For a time, it appeared that the "Sick Man of Asia" might even go the way of the Sumerians. She was saved from the slippery slope toward national extinction by a few remarkable individuals. Sun Yat-sen was the first.

No one personifies the crisis mood of that epoch better than Sun himself. A reading of his life and times is indispensable for understanding not only how China broke free of imperial rule and foreign encroachment, but also how the history of that period continues to shape the way the Chinese see themselves and the world today.

THE UNFINISHED REVOLUTION

The Unfinished Revolution

SUN YAT-SEN AND THE STRUGGLE FOR MODERN CHINA

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In memory of my father, Tjio Ie Tjhay,

and my father-in-law, Lourenço Lui Hac-Minh,

two of the finest gentlemen from the Old Country,

who did not live long enough to see the modernization of

their fatherland but never wavered in their conviction

that it would happen during my lifetime.

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PREFACE

In October 2013, during his state visit to Indonesia, Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed the creation of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to fund infrastructural projects in Asia. He announced the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road initiative in the same speech, which came a month after unveiling the Silk Road Economic Belt initiative during his visit to Central Asia. These pronouncements were greeted with anxiety by the United States, which saw them as part of a Chinese blueprint to expand her economic and geopolitical footprints in the Eurasian landmass and beyond. The U.S. expressed concern that the AIIB might compete with existing institutions, as well as compromise humanitarian and environmental standards in its pursuit of economic development. Nevertheless, 56 countries have joined the Chinese-led bank as of August 1, 2017, with another 24 in the pipeline. In spite of American pressure on her allies to stay out, Japan is the only major country that has not joined.

The AIIB opened for business on January 16, 2016. During its first year of operations, it made loans totaling US$1.7 billion to nine infrastructure projects in partnership with other international financial institutions, including the World Bank. More significantly, the AIIB adopted the best practices of these organizations and has been assigned the highest possible credit ratings by Fitch, Moody's and S&P. America's fears have not been borne out.

The U.S. has her own reasons for not joining the AIIB, but the implication is quite different when she pressures her allies not to join. Suspicion is a divided highway. Many Chinese see the U.S. reaction as a throwback to the Cold War era, and the attempt to thwart the AIIB as part of a larger conspiracy to contain China and impede her rise. Support for better relations with the United States has been waning among increasing numbers of Chinese and threatens to derail a relationship that for more than 30 years has proved mutually beneficial and contributed to a more secure world.

Relations between China and the U.S. have been marred by mutual suspicion ever since the Communist Party of China assumed power on the Chinese mainland, continuing even after the end of the Cold War and

extending up to the present day. A case in point is the incident that took place in Yugoslavia in 1999. On May 8, a U.S. B-2 stealth bomber shelled the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, killing three Chinese journalists. Most Americans believed it was an accident due to an "old map," as claimed by U.S. officials. Contrastingly, virtually every Chinese believed it was deliberate; they found it inconceivable that technologically advanced America could make such a stupid mistake. Angry students took to the streets across China. In Beijing, crowds gathered and hurled insults, rocks and garbage at the U.S. Embassy. Western media assumed that the protests were orchestrated by the Chinese leadership to incite nationalistic fervor and divert attention away from domestic problems. This view became all the more convincing after it was discovered that the Chinese government had been busing student demonstrators to the U.S. Embassy.

The truth was very different. The Chinese authorities did transport the students to the U.S. Embassy, but the motivation was not to exacerbate the protest but rather to contain it. According to an insider, a member of the Politburo, Chinese leaders did not want masses of students marching across the capital vilifying the Chinese leadership for its weak response to the American outrage, and drawing others to join their cause, as happened in the Tiananmen Square incident ten years earlier almost to the month. The leaders wanted to give a measured response, one that was strong enough to placate the students but not so excessive as to hurt relations with the U.S.[1]

Unlike the Soviet Union, which challenged the U.S. for global hegemony, China shows little interest in challenging the U.S., much less dominating the world. China needs many more decades of peace and stability to bring about a moderately prosperous society. There is no ideological conflict between China and the U.S., and while competition may be inevitable, conflict is not. Why then do so many Americans in the government, military and media harbor negative feelings about China? A big part is undoubtedly the realization that China is the only other country with the potential to be both a continental and maritime power. This, coupled with her rapidly growing economic clout, has Americans convinced that it is only a matter of time before China becomes a superpower, and a threat to the U.S. and the existing world order.

These concerns have been reinforced by China's construction of islets in the South China Sea and the installation of military bases on them. Many Americans see this as evidence of China's intent to challenge America's preeminence in the region and reinforce China's claims to the substantial oil and gas reserves that are believed to lie under the seabed. Territorial disputes in the region began soon after the end of World War II and involved half a dozen claimant countries. But the disputes did not escalate to the present level until the Obama administration announced in 2011 its "rebalance to Asia" (also known as the "pivot to Asia") policy to shift the U.S. global security focus and divert more of her diplomatic and military resources to Asia-Pacific. Obama followed this up with other provocative moves. During his April 2014 visit to Japan, he publicly declared that the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands are covered by the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty. The U.S. also restarted rotational deployment in five military bases in the Philippines and lifted the ban on arms sales to Vietnam.[2]

The South China Sea is a fulcrum of world trade. By some estimates, half the world's maritime trade and natural gas, and a third of her crude oil, goes through the Strait of Malacca. A blockade in this narrow and strategic body of water would grind the economy of some countries to a screeching halt. China's vulnerability in this respect has been recognized by the Chinese government as one of the country's greatest strategic weaknesses. It is small wonder that Obama's rebalancing policy stoked Chinese suspicion over U.S. intentions. This has instigated the Chinese leadership to substantially increase China's military budget to upgrade her military hardware, reform her armed forces and construct the islets in the South China Sea to enhance her maritime power. China's aggressive response has in turn heightened America's suspicions about China's intentions and sharpened America's resolve to take a harder line against China. The construction of military installations on the islets only began in 2014 but already it is shaping up to be one of the hottest spots in the world, with the potential to spark a major conflict between China and the U.S., one that would have a most devastating impact on the rest of the world.

China today is a land of superlatives – home to the biggest hydroelectric facility, the longest bridge, the fastest supercomputer, the speediest trains, the longest network of expressways and navigable waterways, space-age

airports, the biggest population, the largest standing army, and the most number of skyscrapers, millionaires, and Internet and mobile cellular users. She is also the world's largest trading power, with vast holdings of U.S. Treasury bonds, and a global power with significant influence in shaping the world political order.

This image of China is in sharp contrast to her state on the cusp of the 20th century. For a time, it appeared that the once proud and mighty Celestial Empire might go the way of the Sumerians. Beginning with the Opium War in 1839 and for over 100 years thereafter, China was rent asunder by predatory foreign powers in a mad scramble for privileges and concessions while she struggled to preserve her sovereignty and dignity, escape her backwardness and join the modern world. This was China's century of humiliation, a period during which she was bullied, and sullied as the Sick Man of Asia. China's salvation from the precipice of a slippery slope to emerge as one of the world's most dynamic economies was the work of a few outstanding individuals. Sun Yat-sen was the first of these remarkable men. Through the ideas he spawned and the deeds he performed, Sun laid the groundwork that half a century later led to China's resurgence.

Born in maritime China and educated in missionary schools abroad, Sun Yat-sen was a product of East and West, a rarity in his time. During his formative years, China was ruled by a decrepit conquest dynasty, preyed upon by foreign powers and on the brink of collapse. Sun's foreign education and his encounters with the modern world instilled in him a strong desire to see China playing a role in that world. Sun wanted to contribute to the process as an insider, as a member of the bureaucracy. Rejected, he turned to revolution to bring about a regime change. He began by organizing peasant uprisings with the aid of secret societies but eventually got himself accepted by intellectuals and became the leader of a nationalist revolutionary party, the Tongmenghui, or the Revolutionary Alliance. After the 1911 Revolution that overthrew the Manchu Qing dynasty, he was briefly president of a republic, which after his resignation quickly degenerated into a dictatorship and then fragmented into warlordism. Inspired by an unshakeable faith in China's potential for greatness and in his own mission, Sun formed three successive military governments in Guangzhou to mobilize progressive forces and seize power from the militarists in Beijing.

The hostility of foreign powers forced him to forge an alliance with Soviet Russia, with whose help he reorganized his political party, the Zhongguo Guomindang, or Chinese Nationalist Party. He refined his political doctrine, The Three Principles of the People, as a blueprint for China's modernization drive but died before his dream of a strong, united and modern China could be realized.

No one personifies the crisis mood of that period better than Sun himself. A reading of his biography will not transform the reader into an instant expert on modern China, nor will it give more than a partial view of China's difficult transformation to modernity. But it is a good starting point toward understanding how China's leaders, officials and intellectuals think. As Ord Arne Westad reminds us: "The past is inscribed in China's mental terrain in a calligraphy so powerful that it determines most of its approaches to the present. History therefore influences Chinese ways of seeing the world in a more direct sense than in any other culture."[3] The century of humiliation and the history of that period, of which Sun was one of the most important actors, still shape the way the Chinese see themselves and the world. An appreciation of how China's leaders think will hopefully help to mitigate the suspicions and counter the distortions about China's intentions as a superpower in waiting.

Drawing on several landmark works – by Marie-Claire Bergere, Harold Z. Schiffrin, C. Martin Wilbur and Yen Ching-hwang – I have tried to present a balanced and comprehensive account of Dr. Sun's life that reveals his strengths and weaknesses, his triumphs as well as his disappointments, and above all his bold vision and struggle for a modern China. Context is essential to the drama and my narrative tries to elaborate on the turbulent history and intellectual climate of his time, which a reader needs to make sense of Dr. Sun's life. I have also given considerably more real estate to his relations with the Chinese in Southeast Asia than in his other biographies available in English. Virtually all the citations in this book are to readily available secondary sources in English from which more serious readers may obtain additional information.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THIS BOOK BEGAN as a manuscript on Dr. Sun's relations with the Chinese in Southeast Asia. The catalyst was a pair of essays that University Professor Wang Gungwu, National University of Singapore, wrote in 1953 as theses for his baccalaureate. The first was about Dr. Sun's eight visits to Singapore, and the second on the activities of Chinese reformists and revolutionaries in the Straits Settlements. Before reading these essays, I was quite unaware that Dr. Sun's relations with the Chinese overseas ran so deep and so extensively. Thus began a journey of discovery as I read the works of other historians who expanded on Professor Wang's pioneering essays and extended his inquiry to other parts of Southeast Asia. I have relied on a number of these works in this book.

Professor Wang's imprint is not just in this book's germination. In the past several years, I have had the pleasure of meeting Professor Wang on many occasions and hearing his views on a host of subjects, some of which have helped to shape this book. A number of them have since been recorded for posterity in Ooi Kee Beng's *The Eurasian Core and its Edges*[4], but to listen to Professor Wang expound his views over lunch and to ask him questions, is a unique privilege for which I am most grateful.

The stimulus to rewrite my manuscript as a whole-life biography originated with Dr. Lee Seng Tee, Chairman of the Lee Foundation, Singapore. An amateur military historian, one of Dr. Lee's interests is to promote understanding between East and West. Among his many personal endowments to scholarship and education around the world is a professorship chair in U.S.-Asia Relations at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. In addition, the Lee Foundation has endowed a U.S.-China Relations chair at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, Singapore. Over the past two decades, I have had the privilege of lunching regularly with Dr. Lee. It was at one of these lunches a few years ago that he encouraged me to expand the scope of my manuscript. This of course made perfect sense as Dr. Sun's most recent biography available in English was written more than 20 years ago, and much new findings have emerged since. In support of my endeavor, the Lee Foundation is donating copies of this book to many educational and other public institutions in Singapore. Dr. Lee and the Lee Foundation's interest and support of my work mean a lot to me, and for that I am very thankful.

I have piled up a number of obligations in the course of writing this book, and would like to express my thanks and gratitude to the following people for their help, support and encouragement: Dr. Tan Teng Phee, immediate past General Manager of the Sun Yat-sen Nanyang Memorial Hall, Singapore, for his valuable input and for making the resources of his organization available to me; Professor Leo Suryadinata, former Director, Chinese Heritage Centre, Singapore, for his advice and guidance; Choo Wai Hong, author of *The Kingdom of Women*, and Aileen Boon, founder and editor of Suntree Publishing, for reading parts of my manuscript and offering valuable comments and suggestions; Ang Taie Ping and Henry C.Y. Wong, for their help with translations; James Tan, for permission to use the library of the East Asian Institute, Singapore; Yap Soo Ei, Curator, National Heritage Board, for her help while this book was in its conceptual stage; Serafina Basciano, graduate student in Linguistics at King's College London for test-reading my manuscript; and others who have helped in one way or another: Chew Loy Cheow, Annemarie Clarke, Harjana, Chester Ho, Clifton Kwek, Joyce Kwek, Tessa Kwek, June Leong, Lu Caixia, Elaine Tan, Mintoro Tedjopranoto, Hans Tjio and Wong Hiu Man.

Most of all, I would like to express my thanks to my editor Justin Lau for the enthusiasm, expertise and dedication that he brought to the task. His sharp critique has helped to make this a much tighter, clearer and more readable book.

Last but not least, I want to thank my daughters Leona Hoyin and Arianne Sunyin for their advice and loving encouragement every step of the way.

NOTES TO READERS

ROMANIZATION OF NAMES

This book uses the *pinyin* system of romanization for Chinese proper names except for those better known in other forms, for example Sun Yat-sen instead of Sun Yixian, Chiang Kai-shek instead of Jiang Jieshi and Hong Kong instead of Xianggang, or where an official transliteration already existed, for example in British Malaya and Hong Kong – thus Tan Chor Nam instead of Chen Chunan and Lim Nee Soon instead of Lin Yishun.

Chinese, Japanese and Korean personal names are written with the family name first followed by the given name, except where a Western given name is used, as in Wellington Koo and Eugene Chen.

THE NAMES OF SUN YAT-SEN

Like many Chinese of his day, Sun Yat-sen used different given names at different periods of his life. His name in the genealogical records of his family is Sun Deming (孙德明). Traditionally, Chinese families would wait a few years before officially naming their children. In the meantime, they used a "small" name, which in the case of Sun was Dixiang (帝象). His "big" name, the one that he used when he started schooling, was Wen (文). Sun Wen was the name he used to sign official documents later on in life. He adopted the baptismal name Rixin (日新) in 1883 but his Chinese tutor Qu Fengzhi later changed it to Yixian (逸仙). When he took refuge in Japan in 1895 after the failure of the Guangzhou Uprising, Sun assumed a Japanese pseudonym, Nakayama Sho (中山樵), as a cover. Nakayama in Japanese means "central mountain," which in Chinese is Zhongshan (中山), the name that he used later in his life. Sun also had a Hawaiian pseudonym, Dr. Alaha, which he used when visiting Japan after his banishment from the country.

Of his various names, two or three have persisted. The West knows him as Sun Yat-sen, the Cantonese pronunciation of Yixian. This was the name that he used in his contacts with Westerners. In China, usage is more varied. Apart from Sun Yixian, the most common variations are Sun Wen and Sun Zhongshan.

MONETARY UNITS

The currency denoted by the C$ sign is the Chinese yuan. The U.S. dollar is denoted as US$, the Straits Settlements dollar as S$ and the Hong Kong dollar as HK$. The Chinese yuan, the Japanese yen, the Straits dollar and the Hong Kong dollar were all valued at roughly half an American dollar circa 1900.

Prologue

MANDATE UNDER SIEGE

The Manchus who ruled China as the Qing dynasty from 1644 to 1912 were neither Chinese by pedigree nor Chinese in the eyes of the Han Chinese who, then as now, constituted over 90 percent of the population. The Manchus were the descendants of Jurchen tribes who originated in the region beyond the Great Wall known as Manchuria.[1] The Jurchens had a long history of interaction with China. In 1122, they conquered northern China and ruled over the area together with their own territory as the Jin dynasty. The Mongols drove them back to their ancestral homeland in 1234, but by the late Ming dynasty (1368–1644), they were once again pressing on China's northern border. In response Ming China incorporated the Jurchens' territory into her domain, granting Jurchen chiefs honorific titles and trading privileges.

Nurhaci, chief of the Jurchen Aisin Gioro clan, was granted a title by the Ming emperor, but in around 1610 he severed his relations with the Ming court. Six years later, he declared himself Khan of the Later Jin dynasty and began making incursions into territories that the Ming considered as essentially China's. Nurhaci revealed his intention of attacking China Proper[2] as early as 1622 but died four years later before he could realize his dream. His son and successor, Huang Taiji, inherited his ambition and resumed the Jurchen advance on China. Realizing that he could not hope to subjugate the Chinese by military force alone, Huang began adopting features of Chinese government alongside Jurchen institutions beginning in 1631, as well as making increasing use of Han Chinese both in the government and in the armed forces. In 1636, Huang severed his state's link with its tribal past by adopting a new name for his people, Manchu, and declaring a new dynasty, Qing, literally "pure" or "clear." He made a number of spectacular raids across the Great Wall, with one within striking distance of the Ming capital of Beijing. His untimely death in 1643, however, and his succession by an infant son dimmed the Manchus' prospects for further advances.

In the spring of 1644, a rebel force seized Beijing. To spare himself the degradation, the Chongzhen Emperor hanged himself. His commander in charge of the region northeast of Beijing now made the same mistake that had been played out so many times in Chinese history: he enlisted the barbarians to help him recapture the capital and put down the rebellion. The Manchus obliged. On June 5, Manchu forces captured Beijing and put the rebels in flight. Once they occupied the Forbidden City and declared Heaven's Mandate forfeit, it was clear that they meant to stay.

With the Manchus having been "invited" into the capital, the conquest of northern China proceeded relatively smoothly. Central and southern China was a very different story. Here Ming pretenders and loyalists and other disgruntled people continued to resist the new conquest dynasty. It would be another 40 years before the Qing had firm control of China Proper. The conquest of the central and southern provinces was accompanied by massacres, notably the 10-day sack of the commercial city of Yangzhou in May 1645. These brutalities would long be remembered by the Chinese and were invoked in the rallying cries of the revolutionaries who fought the Manchus in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Dorgon, the regent for the infant Shunzhi Emperor, was well aware of the problems that could arise between a Manchu aristocracy accustomed to the use of military power and a Chinese bureaucracy split between those who accepted the Manchus and those who opposed them. To reassure the Chinese, Dorgon retained the Ming civil service examination system and invited Ming officials to remain in their posts and perform their duties alongside Manchu appointees. The Confucian philosophy emphasizing the obedience of subject to emperor was enforced as the state creed, and the Confucian court practices and temple rituals over which Chinese emperors had traditionally presided were continued. To retain the confidence of the Manchu nobles, Dorgon adopted policies that asserted Manchu dominance. In spite of the Chinese-Manchu diarchy, Chinese were barred from the highest metropolitan posts, though they predominated over Manchu officeholders outside the capital in non-military positions.

To prevent the absorption of the Manchus into the dominant Han Chinese population, the latter were prohibited from migrating to the Manchu homeland and from taking Manchu brides. Chinese men were required

to adopt the Manchu hairstyle by shaving the front of their forehead and braiding the rest of their hair into a *towchang*, or pigtail. Such discriminatory policies amplified their racial distinctiveness and caused considerable resentment among the Chinese. But so long as the economy was steaming along nicely and the vast empire was prosperous and at peace, anti-Manchu sentiments remained latent.

Happily, the Qing dynasty ruled commendably over the vast Chinese empire for the first 150 years. A succession of three remarkable emperors[3] extended China's borders to her greatest extent ever and brought a long period of stability and prosperity that harkened China back to the ancient glories of the Tang dynasty (618–907). By 1775, China was easily the most extensive, populous, powerful and prosperous nation in the world. But the reign of Qianlong, the last of the three great emperors, proved to be a watershed in the Qing dynastic cycle. The success of the Qing in maintaining the traditional order, and the long period of peace and prosperity discouraged change in the attitude of the ruling elite. The cultural superiority of Chinese civilization and the position of the Chinese empire at the center of the known world were accepted as axiomatic. To question this self-evident truth, to propose innovation or to promote foreign ideas were punishable as apostasies. At the same time, China's population grew phenomenally in the 18th century. Lacking the technology to improve production efficiency, per capita production fell. This paved the way for overpopulation and all the ills associated with it. With age, Qianlong's judgment faltered; court intrigues and corruption became rampant. Military campaigns to distant lands exhausted the treasury while graft and profiteering undermined the morale of the army. The serious financial situation was aggravated by court extravagances that became the template for conspicuous consumption among officials and the upper class. Revolts erupted in various parts of the empire in the early 19th century. Secret societies combining anti-Manchu subversion with banditry emerged to capitalize on the growing discontent of the masses.

Qianlong's successors inherited a crumbling empire. They were not the equal of their distinguished forebears and proved even more unequal to the task of arresting the empire's decline. The emphasis of their Confucian upbringing on scholarship and virtuous behavior left them ill equipped to

deal with situations that called for radical solutions. The empire's treasury was empty and there were widespread rebellions, which the Qing military, saddled with corruption, found difficult to suppress. The majority of Manchu families, other than those in the military and civil service, had done little except to draw pensions from the state over a period of five generations. Their decadence as a ruling and privileged class coincided ominously with the new threat from the West.

The Portuguese merchants who landed at the southern city of Guangzhou (Canton) in 1514 were the first Europeans to have extensive contacts with China. They established a foothold at Macau, from where they monopolized China's foreign trade. They were soon followed by the British and the French, the former eventually becoming the dominant Western traders in China. Such trade was conducted under the guise of tribute and these Western traders were obliged to follow the same elaborate, centuries-old rituals imposed on envoys from China's many tributary states. There was no conception in the imperial court that the white barbarians deserved to be treated as cultural or political equals. The one exception was Russia, China's powerful neighbor with which she shared a long border. Sensitive to the need for security along this frontier, the Qing court was prepared to be realistic in its relations with Russia. The Treaty of Nerchinsk in 1689 with Russia to end a series of border disputes was China's first treaty that accepted the principle of diplomatic equality with another state. Western attempts to expand trade on the same basis were rebuffed since China had no need for foreign products, which were assumed to be inferior. Despite this attitude, trade flourished. Maritime trade was initially allowed at several southern ports but from 1760 it was confined to Guangzhou and only with the group of Chinese merchants known to Westerners as the Cohong. Foreign merchants were subject to strict regulations and were only permitted to remain in Guangzhou during the trading season.

Trade was not the only basis of contact between China and the West. Catholic missionaries had been attempting to establish their church in China since the 13th century. The Jesuits, especially, contributed greatly to Chinese knowledge in architecture, art, astronomy, canon casting, cartography, geography, mathematics and music. Their willingness to compromise on the Chinese practice of ancestor worship was condemned by a

papal decision in 1704 which proscribed the tolerance. This weakened the Christian movement so that by 1800 only a few hundred thousand Chinese souls had been saved from eternal damnation.

In the early 18th century, Britain's trade with China was conducted exclusively through the British East India Company (EIC) and comprised the exchange of Chinese tea, silk and porcelain for British goods. By mid-century, the British public had developed such a voracious appetite for the beverage that the value of Britain's imports from China far exceeded her exports to China. The result was a massive outflow of silver to the Celestial Empire. To help bridge the trade deficit, raw cotton was exported from the EIC's fields in India to China on board ships owned by private British merchants known as "country traders." Alongside this was a small but lucrative trade in opium grown on the EIC's plantations in India.[4]

Relations between British merchants and the Cohong merchants were generally cordial at first. But after the Napoleonic Wars, which confirmed Britain as the leading naval power in the world, the British became more assertive, and tensions with China increased. In 1816 a British trade mission to the Qing court to request an improvement in the arrangements for trade returned empty-handed. Thereafter opium smuggling began to escalate. By 1820, the volume of opium being smuggled into China was so large that silver began flowing in the reverse direction, from China to Britain. This was in spite of the fact that the import of opium was prohibited by imperial decree, but made possible through the connivance of treacherous merchants and a corrupt bureaucracy.

The British government assumed responsibility of the China trade when the EIC's monopoly came to an end in 1834. Lord Napier was appointed commissioner of trade in China and instructed to negotiate improvements in the arrangements for trade with the Qing court. Without first obtaining permission as required by Chinese regulations, Napier proceeded directly to Guangzhou. For his disregard of protocol, he was refused a meeting and was only allowed to leave under humiliating circumstances. In London, the debacle only served to harden the resolve of those in favor of unrestrained commerce. While these free traders were demanding that China be forced to open additional ports, a debate was raging in Beijing among officials on how to stop opium smuggling. Convinced that there was no

way to stop it, one group recommended that the government legalize and tax the import of opium, and allow opium poppy to be grown in China. This proposal aroused the ire of another group of officials, who argued that opium was a moral and financial issue on which there could be no compromise. They demanded that the law be strictly enforced to suppress the opium trade.

The Daoguang Emperor was persuaded. In 1839, he dispatched Lin Zexu to Guangzhou as imperial commissioner to suppress the opium trade. Lin acted with ruthless efficiency on his arrival, arresting drug addicts and seizing illegal stocks of opium owned by Chinese dealers. Next he wrote a letter to Queen Victoria appealing to her sense of moral decency and seeking her cooperation to bring an end to the opium trade.[5] He then called on the foreign merchants to hand over their opium stock and to sign pledges that they would cease trading in the narcotic. To convince them that he meant business, Lin suspended all trade and blockaded them in the trading area outside Guangzhou known as the Thirteen Factories. There they were to remain until they complied.

Meanwhile, Lin's arrests of addicts had collapsed the demand for opium, leaving the Western merchants sitting on a mountain of unsold stock. This was a serious problem for the British. Profits from the illegal opium trade had been financing the legal trade in tea and silk, as well as the administration of India. The earnings remitted back to London enabled merchants to finance the purchase of American cotton for the mills of Lancashire, whose products were sold to Indian consumers.[6] A disruption in the flow of funds from the illicit drug trade could conceivably stop the music on this intricately structured trade network. Thus when Charles Elliot, the Chief Superintendent of British Trade in China, assured the British merchants that the Crown would compensate them for their stock of opium that he was about to turn in to Commissioner Lin, they were elated. Over 20,000 chests of opium were delivered to Lin, who lifted the cordon on the Thirteen Factories as promised and allowed the foreigners to go on their way.

Commissioner Lin had won the battle against the foreign merchants but no one could have foreseen that his actions would lead to war with Britain. In London, drug lords and textile barons lobbied Parliament to take retaliatory action. Many in England, including the opium merchants,

recognized the immoral nature of the trade but neither they nor the British government could accept the idea that British subjects should be subjected to Qing law when on Chinese territory. More importantly, no other product could match the obscene profits from the narcotic trade. At the end of the day, British national pride and commercial avarice took precedence over moral arguments. An expeditionary force was dispatched forthwith to the China coast to demand satisfaction.

Fighting began in earnest in 1840. Better equipped and better trained, the British used their awesome naval and gunnery power to inflict a quick and decisive victory. Lin Zexu was exiled to faraway Chinese Turkestan to atone for his "sin" while the Daoguang Emperor authorized negotiations to end hostilities. The Treaty of Nanjing, signed on August 29, 1842, a "date that would forever live in infamy," marked the start of a hundred years of humiliation for the Chinese and the inauspicious start to the struggle for modern China.

The Treaty of Nanjing required China to open five treaty ports[7] to British trade, cede Hong Kong in perpetuity to the British Crown, abolish certain trade restrictions and agree to a uniform tariff. To top it all, China was forced to pay a huge indemnity of 21 million silver dollars. This was the first of a series of unequal treaties forced upon a hapless China by foreign powers. A supplementary agreement later granted British citizens immunity from Chinese laws, and conferred upon Britain most-favored-nation status, whereby she would be accorded whatever concessions China might thereafter grant to other powers. The British had drawn first blood and these treaties became the template for other foreign powers as they picked up the blood trail and joined in the "slicing of the Chinese melon." The once mighty empire was now a de facto "colony of many nations but the responsibility of none."

The Opium War occurred on the downward phase of the Qing dynastic cycle. It hastened China's descent from its lofty height as the Celestial Empire to its terrestrial nadir as the Sick Man of Asia. Those who thought that Heaven was about to withdraw its Mandate found plenty of evidence to reinforce their belief. China's principal waterways, the Yangtze and the Yellow River, overflowed and flooded the surrounding areas. Drought scourged the northern provinces and hit the grain crop, which also

suffered extensive damage from natural calamities. The Qing court's inability to deal with these natural disasters and provide relief to a population already impoverished by oppressive taxes fueled anti-dynastic sentiments. Resentment eventually erupted in rebellions that came close to rupturing the dynasty's tenuous hold on Heaven's Mandate.

An ineffectual emperor ascended the throne at the very moment when the empire needed a fiery dragon at the fore rather than the lame duck that the Xianfeng Emperor turned out to be. During his entire 11-year reign commencing in 1850, China was tortured by insurrections, the most destructive of which was the Taiping Rebellion.[8] It was unlike any previous popular revolt in China and had its roots in the extraordinary experience of a single individual, Hong Xiuquan. The failed scholar son of a Hakka farmer in Guangdong, Hong experienced delusions after reading a Christian tract, *Good Words to Admonish the Age*. These visions convinced him that he was the younger brother of Jesus, the second son of Jehovah charged with the mission to return the Chinese to the "Heavenly Way" and kill the devil-demons (meaning the Manchus and their Chinese collaborators) who were leading them astray. His victory would usher in a period of *taiping* (Heavenly peace).

In 1843 Hong began roaming the dangerous countryside of Guangdong and Guangxi making converts to his "God-Worshipping" religion. Some converts experienced spirit possession, others had visions of Hong's coming greatness. As their numbers grew, local governments and local elites began to view them as a cult. In 1850, a government attempt to suppress the movement pushed them into open rebellion. Pursued by Qing soldiers, their men, women and children swept through the countryside, sometimes taking and holding towns for weeks and winning new converts and supporters.

In March 1853, the Taiping captured the city of Nanjing. Here Hong Xiuquan and his flock, now a million strong, established the capital of the Kingdom of Heavenly Peace. While on the march, Hong and other top Taiping leaders continued to refine their religious teachings – an eclectic mix of the Christian Bible, the Confucian classics and Chinese folk culture. The Manchu rulers, Daoism and Buddhism were to be destroyed and replaced by the worship of Jehovah. Hong would rule over an egalitarian

utopia where every man, woman and child would enjoy complete equality. The sexes were strictly segregated except for conjugal visits for the purpose of reproduction. They worked the fields together and stood side by side on the battlefield. Land was taken from landlords, and such confiscated wealth went into a communal "Heavenly Treasury." But Taiping society was anything but egalitarian. Goods were distributed according to rank, while Hong and his top lieutenants helped themselves to the Heavenly Treasury. They lived in luxurious palaces stocked in abundance with food and drinks, and women serving as playmates. The leaders fought among themselves, which sparked a series of bloody purges in which 20,000, including some Taiping leaders, were killed or driven away, leaving Hong in complete control. Despite the deaths, the Taipings were at the height of their power in 1856.

While the Taiping was establishing itself in Nanjing, the Small Sword Society launched a tax revolt at Shanghai in September 1853, disrupting essential services and driving the Qing customs superintendent out of business. In response, the Americans, British and French created the Shanghai Municipal Council to serve their needs. In 1862, the French dropped out of the arrangement to form their own French Concession; the following year, the Americans and the British jointly created the Shanghai International Settlement. As an emergency measure, the British, French and American consuls also established a system of consular administration of foreign trade. This system of consular control came to an end in May 1855 and customs administration was brought under the Qing government's jurisdiction. From this date until 1949, the Imperial Maritime Customs Service (renamed Chinese Maritime Customs Service after 1911) calculated the duties on foreign trade in the treaty ports. Largely staffed by expatriates at the senior levels, the customs service began to be fashioned into a powerful and efficient bureaucracy with wide-ranging responsibilities. Under its second inspector-general, Robert Hart, who served from 1863 to 1911, its responsibilities grew to include domestic customs administration, postal administration, harbor and waterway management, and anti-smuggling operations. Hart's diplomatic approach and sense of proportion endeared him to the court, which took him into confidence as a trusted servant and an adviser on foreign affairs. On his part, he declined

the position of British minister in China in the 1880s in order to remain with the customs service.[9]

While the Qing regime was dealing with the Taiping crisis, tensions with Britain over the opium question were rising to crisis levels. This time the British had grander ideas than just opium; they wanted no less than the extension of their commercial interests across China. Such a concession if granted would have put Britain one step closer to direct imperial control of China. Since the Treaty of Nanjing, other Western powers had also wrested concessions similar to those granted to Britain. Now the French and the Americans were determined to prevent British merchants from developing monopolies in China. Realizing that they now had competition, Britain demanded a revision of the Nanjing treaty to extract more concessions. The Qing government rejected the new demands and the stage was set for another confrontation.

The spark for renewed hostilities was a minor incident off the coast of Guangzhou. On October 8, 1856, Chinese soldiers boarded the *Arrow*, a Chinese-owned schooner with a British registry in Hong Kong. This was a loophole for Chinese ship owners to take advantage of British extraterritoriality to put their vessels beyond the jurisdiction of the Qing government. In this case Chinese coast guards had been tipped off that the *Arrow* was involved in piracy. Probably unaware of the schooner's registry, the coast guards took the crew into custody. Some witnesses alleged that Qing guards had hauled down the *Arrow*'s Union Jack and flung it on deck. Others claimed that the *Arrow* was not flying any flag at all.

The truth mattered little to the British, nor the fact that the *Arrow*'s British registry had lapsed before the incident. The Qing government's refusal to apologize was sufficient cause for war. France promptly joined the fray with her own pretext after a French missionary was killed by a Chinese mob. The Sepoy Mutiny in India prevented the British from attacking China in 1857, but the following year, an Anglo-French expeditionary force reached Tianjin. The Chinese decided to negotiate. Under the Treaty of Tianjin concluded in 1858, China agreed to open more treaty ports, allow foreigners to travel in the interior, legalize the opium trade, accept a resident British minister in Beijing and institute changes to external tariffs and internal transit duties. China signed similar treaties with France,

the United States and Russia. When the representatives of the powers returned a year later to ratify the treaties, they were attacked and retreated with heavy casualties. A much larger Anglo-French expeditionary force returned in 1860, marched on Beijing and sacked the Yuanmingyuan, the Old Summer Palace located just 5 miles (8 km) northwest of the Imperial City.[10] Over several days of rampage and plunder, British and French troops with the connivance of their officers destroyed the huge complex of palaces and other exquisite structures that took several emperors over two centuries to build. They looted the vast trove of cultural treasures within, which soon found their way into royal, military and private art collections in Britain. Adding insult to injury, China was forced to pay indemnity of 8 million taels each to Britain and France, and open up Tianjin as a treaty port. In addition, Britain acquired the Kowloon peninsula opposite Hong Kong while France secured the right for its missionaries to own properties in the interior of China. A month later, Russia acquired new territories in China which they promptly named Vladivostok.[11]

The Xianfeng Emperor and his court fled to the Qing summer palace in Jehol (present-day Chengde) beyond the Great Wall when the Anglo-French expeditionary force was advancing towards Beijing in 1860. There he remained until his death in 1861 at the age of 30 from a life of debauchery. His most lasting legacy was to have successfully planted his seed in a concubine – the future Empress Dowager Cixi. Her rise at court began when she gave birth to a son, who became the Tongzhi Emperor.

The Taiping Rebellion lasted as long as it did partly due to the incompetence of the Qing's traditional armed forces. The antecedent of the Qing military was the Eight Banner system created by Nurhaci in 1601. Another military force, the Green Standard, was formed after the Manchu conquest of China and comprised mostly Han Chinese from disadvantaged backgrounds. By the mid-19th century, both had outlived their usefulness. The hereditary nature of the Eight Banners gave rise to complacency while the comforts of a civilian life in the barracks sapped their martial spirit. For the Green Standards, corruption was a major problem. A soldier could obtain a position by purchase and it was not unusual for officers to report non-existent men in their units and pocket the salaries of these phantoms. Both the Banners and the Green Standards lacked modern weapons and

competent officers. They were spread throughout the empire, which made them less responsive to rapid mobilization and more difficult to put under centralized supervision.[12]

The main role in the defeat of the mid-century rebellions fell to a new military formation known as the regional armies. When the Taiping swept across Hunan in mid-1852, the court ordered Zeng Guofan, a native of Hunan, out of mourning to organize a militia in defense of his home province. Zeng, then the chief commissioner of the provincial examinations in Jiangxi, realized that a militia would be no match against a crusading force backed by an ideology. To counter them, he would need to raise a well-trained army and indoctrinate it with a sense of mission in defense of Chinese cultural heritage. He began by drawing on his network of family, friends and former disciples to recruit officers, who in turn drew on their own networks to enlist the rank and file. As a result, Zeng's army was closely identified with Hunan province and was known as the Hunan army (or Xiang army, after Hunan's principal river). To pay for his army, Zeng arranged with provincial governors for direct transfers of tax revenues to his coffers. The Qing court gave him leave to sell ranks and titles, and to introduce the *lijin* tax, an internal tax on goods in transit. In 1856, Zeng equipped his army with modern weapons and put them into action against the rebels.

The Hunan army was the first of the regional armies. When a Taiping army threatened Shanghai in 1862, Zeng used his influence to get his protégé Li Hongzhang appointed acting governor of Jiangsu, which made it possible for Li to form his own Anhui army (or Huai army, after the major river of Anhui). Zuo Zongtang, another Zeng protégé, modernized the traditional Qing forces that he commanded as governor-general of Fujian and Zhejiang. All three men used modern weapons and Western training methods against the rebels. By January 1864, Qing forces had isolated the Taiping armies in the field and surrounded Nanjing, the Heavenly Capital. The Hunan army captured Nanjing in July, slaughtering over 100,000 rebels. Hong Xiuquan met his inglorious end during the assault. The remaining Taiping armies, including some leaders, were defeated, captured and executed over the next few years. With the defeat of the Taiping, the Hunan and Huai armies went on to assist in the suppression of the Nian rebellion in northern China and the Muslim revolts in the northwest.

In June 1853, three months after Taiping rebels seized Nanjing, Karl Marx had written that the Qing dynasty's "dissolution must follow as surely as that of any mummy carefully preserved in a hermetically sealed coffin, whenever it is brought into contact with the open air."[13] Indeed, in 1860 when the Taipings were on the verge of capturing Shanghai and the Anglo-French expeditionary force was sacking Yuanmingyuan, the collapse of the dynasty appeared imminent. What is surprising is that the dynasty did not just survive; it reversed the dynastic decline and hung on to Heaven's Mandate for another half-century.

Qing officials attributed their regime's revitalization to a "restoration." The Tongzhi Emperor, whose name is given to this restoration, was only five when he ascended the dragon throne. Tensions soon arose between his regents and his mother, Empress Dowager Cixi. With the connivance of her fellow empress dowager Ci'an and her brother-in-law Prince Gong, they deposed the regents in a palace coup and took over the regency. Weak and uninterested in matters of state, Tongzhi spent more time in the pleasure courtyards of Beijing than the imperial court in the Forbidden City. He lived his entire life under the shadow of his mother, who ruled the empire from behind the silk screen.

The task of the Tongzhi Restoration encompassed the suppression of the mid-century rebellions, the revival of the economy, the reinstatement of the traditional order, the pursuit of peace with foreign powers, and the initiation of the Self-Strengthening Movement. The last of the major rebellions, the Muslim Revolt in Chinese Turkestan led by Ya'qub Beg, was finally defeated in 1877. The recovery of territory was a more difficult task and it took several years of negotiation to get Russia to withdraw from the Ili valley in Chinese Turkestan under the Treaty of St. Petersburg in 1881. In 1884, the region was incorporated into the empire as Xinjiang province.[14]

To resuscitate the agrarian economy, abandoned areas were repopulated by sponsored migrants, who were supplied with tools and seeds. Agricultural taxes were reduced or remitted in areas that had suffered badly, and irrigation systems were repaired. Steps were taken to attract men of talent for public service, and gentry leaders were encouraged to open or reopen schools and to refurbish libraries. The examination system, which had been disrupted in areas occupied by rebels, was reinstated. Quotas for degrees

were increased in the affected provinces to recognize military and financial contribution. In the capital, the government pursued cordial relations with the powers so as to give the country a chance to engage in reconstruction.[15]

However, nothing could reverse some of the changes that had taken place. The Taiping failed to destroy the traditional order, but it forced the dynasty to adopt policies that disturbed the old balance of power, and brought about changes that were to have the most profound impact on the fate of the dynasty. Politically, it caused the transfer of government power from the Manchus to the Chinese. After the defeat of the Taiping, officers of the regional armies were rewarded with important assignments; key governor-generalships and governorships previously held by Manchus now passed to the Chinese. Li Hongzhang, in particular, as governor-general of Zhili and commissioner of trade for the northern ports, was China's de facto prime minister. More and more Chinese were appointed to the Grand Council until they eventually outnumbered the Manchus. The post-Taiping period also saw the growing influence of provincial officials in national affairs. Whereas the Qing government had been highly centralized and decided policies for the provinces, the court was so weakened by the Taiping that it often had to consult high provincial officials on national issues and defer to their opinions, or solicit the views of local authorities in order to win their support. At times, powerful governors-general and governors would act independently of the central government. The most blatant instance of provincial independence would take place in 1911 when provincial authorities declared their support for the Wuchang Uprising and in so doing precipitated the downfall of the Qing dynasty.[16] Militarily, the tradition of the regional armies was inherited by the Beiyang Army. Yuan Shikai as supremo had the total allegiance of the generals under his command, a power which made it possible for him to dictate the fate of the dynasty. Finally, Taiping remnants who went underground joined the Tiandihui, the Heaven and Earth Society, and kept alive the idea of racial and nationalistic revolution against the Manchus. This became a source of inspiration for Sun Yat-sen and other revolutionaries.

The Tongzhi Restoration bought the dynasty some breathing space, "an Indian summer in which the historically inevitable process of decline is arrested for a time."[17] But like similar restorations that had occurred during

the Han (206 BCE – 220 CE) and Tang dynasties, the Tongzhi Restoration was no more than a stay of execution, not a commutation of the death sentence on the Manchu regime.

When the Xianfeng Emperor and the imperial family fled to Jehol in 1860, his younger brother Prince Gong had remained in Beijing to negotiate with the foreigners. The peace process transformed him from a xenophobe into an admirer of the awesome power of the West. He began to adopt a new policy of diplomatic accommodation to gain peace and allow China to build up her military strength. The West, too, recognized that the enjoyment of her treaty rights and increased opportunities for trade were dependent on the survival of the Qing regime. Policy reorientation on both sides resulted in a decade of relative peace and harmonious cooperation, a conducive climate for China to embark on her diplomatic and military modernization.[18]

Diplomatic reforms began with the establishment of the Zongli Yamen (Office of General Management) in March 1861 to direct China's foreign relations. This was not the Foreign Office that the powers might have hoped for but it was an improvement over the practice of treating all foreign nations as tributary states.[19] Where it failed as an effective foreign office, it succeeded reasonably well as a promoter of modernization. It was China's first major institutional innovation in response to the Western impact. The Zongli Yamen engaged not only in foreign affairs but also functioned as a promoter of projects carried out under the rubric of what came to be called the Self-Strengthening Movement. These included the establishment of modern schools, the adoption of Western science, industry, and communications, and the investigation of Western laws.[20]

The idea of learning from the West originated more than two decades earlier when opium commissioner Lin Zexu championed it. He had foreign newspapers and Western works on law, history, politics and geography translated. In 1842 Wei Yuan, an adviser to Lin, voicing concern about the military superiority of the West, outlined a plan for maritime defense. Noting the traditional strategy of "using barbarians to control barbarians," he recommended the study of the superior techniques of the West.[21] In 1860, Feng Guifen, another Lin associate, called for the adoption of Western knowledge and the manufacture of Western-style weapons.

Later Zhang Zhidong encapsulated the same sentiment in the phrase "Chinese learning as the base, Western study for use." This became the mantra of the Self-Strengthening Movement.

Beginning in the early 1860s and for the next three and a half decades, Self-Strengtheners invested heavily in education, military modernization and supporting industries. In the initial phase of the movement, from roughly 1861 to 1872, the emphasis was on education and training, the adoption of Western weaponry and the acquisition of scientific knowledge. One of the earliest Self-Strengthening projects was the Tongwen Guan, or Foreign Language College, established at Beijing in 1862 under the auspices of the Zongli Yamen to train specialists in foreign languages for service in China's diplomatic corps. So long as social success required mastery of the Confucian classics, Western-oriented schools had minimum appeal to scholarly and gentry families. It was only among the children of commoners who attended Christian missionary schools that Western learning made any inroads.[22] By the 1870s, the Zongli Yamen had all but abandoned the Tongwen Guan. In 1889, it was absorbed into the Imperial University of Beijing, the forerunner of today's Peking University, or Beida.[23]

An innovative Self-Strengthening enterprise was the Chinese Educational Mission proposed by Yung Wing, the first Chinese to receive an American university degree. In 1872, he led a batch of Chinese boys to Hartford, Connecticut, where they lived with American families and studied at various schools in the area. By 1875 there were 120 in all. Immersed in the social and school environments of this American city, it was hard for the boys to maintain the traditional cultural values insisted upon by Qing officials. The surge in anti-Chinese sentiment in the U.S. soon raised questions and concerns about the wisdom of continuing the program. The final straw was the U.S. government's refusal to allow the Mission's students to attend West Point and Annapolis in spite of the most-favored-nation clause granted to China. The Mission was terminated in 1881 and all the students were recalled home.[24]

Paralleling Prince Gong's diplomatic modernization were efforts to create a modern Chinese military through the adoption of Western technology. In 1865, the Jiangnan Arsenal was established in Shanghai with machinery purchased from the U.S. by Yung Wing. It produced not only

guns and cannons but also constructed five ships, the last in 1872. In 1866, a dockyard was constructed near Fuzhou. Although these government undertakings adopted modern production techniques, they retained the old management style and a blind faith in the ability of foreigners.

As the Self-Strengthening Movement progressed, there was greater emphasis on the development of profit-oriented enterprises in the second phase from 1872 to 1885. Foremost among these were the China Merchants' Steam Navigation Company, the Kaiping Coal Mines, the Shanghai Cotton Cloth Mill, and the Imperial Telegraph Administration. Capital for these enterprises came primarily from private sources. The bottom line was the responsibility of the merchants but they were barred from the management, which was mostly in the hands of government-appointed officials. These companies suffered the usual bureaucratic inefficiency, corruption and nepotism. They tended to monopolize business through government favors, monopolies or intervention and thus discouraged private competition. In the third and final phase from 1885 to 1895, while the emphasis on military and naval buildup continued, the idea of enriching the nation through light industry gained favor. Industries such as textile and cotton-weaving gathered momentum.

Li Hongzhang emerged as the leading light of the Self-Strengthening Movement, responsible for over 90 percent of the modernization projects. Though a provincial official as governor-general of Zhili, he performed a number of central government functions due to his proximity to the capital and Cixi's trust in him. Among his fellow Self-Strengtheners, Zeng Guofan died in 1872 and Zuo Zongtang was preoccupied with the suppression of the Muslim rebellions in the northwest. Prince Gong had lost much of his clout in court after two brushes with Cixi and China's defeat in the Sino-French War of 1884–1885.

Most assessments of Self-Strengthening present it as an inadequate policy that sowed the seeds of a modern military and military-industrial complex but failed to make China strong enough to resist foreign imperialism. Various arguments have been advanced to explain the movement's failure. The vitality of China's cultural and intellectual traditions and their incompatibility with the needs of a modern state have often been cited. Many efforts were frustrated by a scholar class whose fortunes were tied

to Chinese learning. Distribution of translations of Western works was limited and few Chinese scholars felt the inclination to read them. At the same time, there were no attempts to assimilate institutions and cultures as part of the crusade for modernization. Self-Strengthening thus became the plaything of a few high officials who recognized the need but received no firm or consistent backing from Cixi, who allowed the ideological conservatives at court to stalemate the innovators so she could hold the balance of power.[25]

Another line of argument puts the blame on Western imperialism, which entered a more aggressive phase in the 1870s after a decade of relative peace. Western businessmen, unhappy that they had failed to develop markets in China commensurate with their expectations, became more demanding. As they became increasingly vocal, Chinese public opinion also began to harden against the Western presence. The Treaty of Tianjin had opened the interior to Christian missionaries whose appearance in rural society provoked much resentment. The staunchest opposition was from the gentry, who saw missionaries as a threat to their privileged position in rural society. That missionaries often helped the cause of their converts in litigations did not make matters easier.

Anti-missionary protests became more frequent. One of the most important was the incident at Tianjin in the summer of 1870. Rumors had been circulating that Catholic priests and nuns were kidnapping and sexually abusing children as part of their strange rituals. Civic leaders demanded an investigation and judicial officials were dispatched to inspect the cathedral. The French consul regarded this as a national insult. He rushed to the *yamen* of the city prefect and ended up killing a policeman. The crowd went berserk with rage and within moments had torn the consul to pieces. Rioting then spread across the city. The French consulate and cathedral were razed, resulting in the death of about 20 French subjects. When reports of the incident reached Beijing, court officials expected the worst and made preparations for war with France.[26]

France did not go to war with China because she was already engaged in one with Prussia but this did not stop her from demanding an indemnity and the execution of the officials involved. The incident put an end to the era of cooperation with the West. As imperialism intensified, Li

Hongzhang's readiness to assume responsibility for China's foreign relations made him the most powerful man in the empire after the emperor, or rather the Empress Dowager Cixi.

Cixi continued to rule from behind the silk screen even after Tongzhi reached his majority in 1873. His death two years later provoked a succession crisis. She appointed her infant nephew as heir and thus extended her regency for another 15 years. His enthronement as the Guangxu Emperor scandalized the court for it contravened the Qing succession rule which required that an imperial successor had to be from a later generation so he could properly perform the filial ancestral ceremonies in memory of the deceased emperor. Cixi deflected the opposition by promising that Guangxu's future son would be adopted as the son of the late Tongzhi Emperor. Especially after the death of her co-regent Ci'an and the dismissal of Prince Gong, Cixi reigned supreme over the vast Chinese empire. Insulated from the world beyond the imperial abode by a retinue of obsequious mandarins and sycophantic eunuchs, she never appreciated the dire state of the empire. She raided the imperial treasury at will to satisfy her insatiable appetite for luxuries and penchant for opulent festivities. Her reputation for ruthlessness and violent rages deterred criticisms and unwelcome news. Under her stewardship, the empire's downward spiral continued unabated.

Chapter 1

HOPE OF THE NATION

One of the most disturbed regions in mid-19th-century China was the southern province of Guangdong. Isolated from the power center by mountain ranges to the north, the Pearl River Delta region around the provincial capital of Guangzhou was a fertile breeding ground for rebels and rebellions. The flourishing opium trade after 1820 helped to finance a corresponding increase in illegal activities and the involvement of secret societies and other criminal elements. Pressured by overpopulation and rural poverty, the area around Guangzhou became a hub of these clandestine groups and their nefarious exploits. A secret society proclamation declared:

> The ancient books tell us that once in five centuries some man of talent beyond his fellows will appear, on whom the hope of the nation will depend. That period has elapsed since the rise of the Ming dynasty, and it is full time that a hero should come forward and save the nation.[1]

Indeed, it was on November 12, 1866, two years short of 500 since the rise of the Ming dynasty in 1368, that Sun Yat-sen was born in the Pearl River Delta. The Taiping Rebellion had met its end just two years earlier. Though it would be several more before the Nian and the Muslim rebellions were brought under control, the little farming village where Sun was born had more or less returned to normal. His birthplace Cuiheng was a small hamlet in the countryside of Xiangshan district (renamed Zhongshan in 1925 to honor her most famous son), one of many that dotted the rich delta. Within a day's journey to the north was Guangzhou; the bustling British colony of Hong Kong lay to the East; and across an expanse of water to the south was the Portuguese colony of Macau.

The delta was the oldest link between China and the maritime nations of Europe. Guangzhou was the major port of trade with the West after the

arrival of the Portuguese in 1517. In the century before the Opium War, it was the only legal point of entry on the China coast. Xiangshan was particularly noted for its compradors, agents of European firms whose bicultural competence facilitated trade with local businesses. A number of these men had gone on to become successful entrepreneurs and reformers, such as the great comprador Zheng Guanying. The district also produced large numbers of emigrants who achieved prominence in the cosmopolitan centers of China and in overseas communities. Yung Wing, the first Chinese to graduate from an American university, and Tang Shaoyi, who would become the first prime minister of republican China, were both Xiangshan natives.

Thus, far from being a rural village where time had stood still, Cuiheng sat on the fringe of a wider world that had been exposed to modernity for a while. The hundred or so families in Cuiheng were engaged in agriculture and fishing; life was extremely hard for these people and most lived in abject poverty. The Sun family was no exception, and the prospect of a decent education or social advancement was extremely remote for people of Sun's generation trapped in little hamlets such as Cuiheng. Like millions of others in rural China, they had to work very hard merely to survive. Land scarcity, always a problem in densely populated Guangdong, was particularly acute in Cuiheng, which was sandwiched by high mountains to the north and the sea in its backyard. Farming in this rocky and sandy terrain was limited and many of the hundred or so families in the village had to supplement their meager income from other occupations, often in nearby towns.

Sun's father, Dacheng, owned a plot of land but it was too small to support the family; he had to take on occasional work as a tailor in nearby Macau. Sun's mother, 15 years younger than her husband, was illiterate. Like most Han Chinese women of her day, she had her feet bound, a millennium-old practice that was the standard of feminine beauty and a mark of good breeding. The hardworking couple had three other surviving children: Sun Mei, their elder son, who was 12 years older than Sun Yat-sen, and two daughters. The household also included the widows of Dacheng's two younger brothers, who had left the village and set out for California during one of the gold rushes in the 19th century. One died at sea off the

coast of Shanghai, while the other met an early end in California. This was a common tragedy in southern China, but social and economic distress at home forced many from the coastal communities of southern China to seek employment in plantations, mines and railroad construction in the Americas and Nanyang[2]. It was the only alternative to an otherwise impoverished and grim existence at home.

Remarkably little is known about the first 12 years of Sun's life in Cuiheng. Presumably he would have attended the local elementary school and studied the *San Zi Jing*, or Three Character Classic, the classical text that Chinese school children in those days were required to memorize even before they could read. Like the other children in the village, he would also have helped his father in the field. One of Sun's teachers had fought with the Taipings. He escaped capture at a battle in eastern Guangdong and returned to Cuiheng to teach at the village school, regaling his students with tales of the Taiping's campaigns. This was the beginning of Sun's admiration for the Taiping's iconoclastic leader Hong Xiuquan, whose birthplace Fuyuanshui in Hua county was just 75 miles (120 km) from Cuiheng.

Having lost both his brothers, Sun Dacheng would have been aware of the peril for young emigrants, but poverty did not offer him the luxury of choice. So it was that in 1871 Sun Mei left for Hawaii with an uncle who had a business there. He first hired himself out as an agricultural laborer to other Xiangshan emigrants. Working hard and with the help of his uncle, he saved enough money to buy a store and then entered into the business of recruiting Chinese laborers to Hawaii. Having done well, Sun Mei returned triumphantly to his native village in 1878 to visit his parents and marry the girl they had chosen for him. This brought Sun Yat-sen's rustic childhood to an abrupt end. His parents decided that he should join his elder brother in Hawaii. Enthralled by his elder brother's tales of Hawaii and the Islands' riches, it was an opportunity that Sun must have looked forward to with excitement. Accompanied by his mother, Sun set sail for Honolulu the following year.

Hawaii had been touched by Western commercial and religious influences for well over half a century. At the time of Sun's arrival, she was being drawn closer to the American orbit. The Treaty of Reciprocity

signed four years earlier with the United States was essentially a free trade agreement that guaranteed a duty-free market for Hawaiian sugar. But it was also a prelude to American political and economic dominance.[3] The modern buildings and ships busily discharging and loading cargoes that Sun would have seen when his ship docked in Honolulu was a world in the process of modernization under the influence of the West. Sun could have settled down and participated in her prosperity without stepping outside the Chinese community, as many before him had done. But Sun Mei was determined that his younger brother should first complete his studies. The problem was that there was no Chinese school in the Islands. The only alternative was one of the foreign schools but even those had few Chinese students. After a short stint in his brother's business, where he learned to use the abacus and other skills, Sun enrolled as a boarding student at the Iolani School. This was an Anglican missionary institution that catered primarily to Hawaiian and half-Hawaiian children.

In spite of the strong American influence in Hawaii, Iolani was a bastion of anti-Americanism. Bishop Alfred Willis, the headmaster of the school, was British, as were all but one of the teachers. The textbooks were published in England, and English history was taught instead of American history as was the norm in most of the other schools. Consequently, Sun's education and introduction to Western history and institutions had a decidedly British flavor, and gave no hint of his later embrace of revolution and republicanism. Indeed, Bishop Willis felt constrained to deny any connection. In 1896, the year after Sun gained global notoriety for leading a failed revolt against the Qing dynasty, the bishop declared in the *Diocesan Magazine* that his former student's "school days gave no indication of his future career. He has left no tradition of hatching plots against magisterial authority. Nor will any one suppose that he was indoctrinated at Iolani with the love of a republican form of government, much less with the desire of revolutionizing the Celestial Kingdom after the model of the Hawaiian Republic, which was then unborn."[4] On the other hand, Bishop Willis' championing of Hawaii's independence against the plots of pro-American annexationists might perhaps explain Sun's anti-imperialism and sensitivity to Western aggression against China in his later revolutionary career.[5]

Nevertheless, Sun's education at Iolani during his impressionable years would have exposed him to English and American ideals of constitutional government, the histories of the English people's struggles against absolute monarchy, and America's struggle for independence from Britain. He would have been impressed with the administration of justice and a judicial system that made possible his brother's rapid economic success and the protection of his property from arbitrary confiscation. These ideas were to have the most profound influence on Sun.

Church attendance in St. Andrew's Cathedral on Sundays was an integral part of student life at Iolani. Eager that the seven Chinese boarders in his school convert to Christianity, the bishop hired a young Chinese evangelist to instruct them in biblical studies every afternoon. This gradually drew Sun to Christianity, which might have exerted a powerful influence in shaping his later political career. Sun had entered Iolani without knowing a word of English but his mastery of the language had improved to such an extent that by the time of his graduation three years later, he was presented the second prize in English grammar by King David Kalakaua. Sun had acquired an elementary education in Cuiheng but this had been interrupted by the family's poverty so it was really at Iolani that Sun began his systematic education.

Not long after Sun's matriculation, Sun Mei had moved his family to the island of Maui, where he established himself as a sugar planter, cattle rancher and dealer of farm equipment. He became quite wealthy and the islanders addressed him affectionately as "the king of Maui" in recognition of his leadership and generosity. After graduating from Iolani, Sun spent the next few months on Maui helping Sun Mei, who was now making even more money. Finding business boring, Sun persuaded his brother in the fall of 1882 to allow him to further his studies. There was no college or university, which limited his choice to the prestigious Oahu School, then the highest center of learning in the Islands. It offered instruction at the college level but never acquired the status of one. Founded in 1841 by American Congregationalists, it was the school most influenced by American Protestant missionaries. Almost a century later, Barack Obama would attend the school, though by then it had been renamed the Punahou School.

Earliest known photograph of Sun Yat-sen, aged 17, in 1883

The Oahu School was a popular choice for many of the children of the missionaries from the Hawaiian Evangelical Association. In this environment, Sun's feeling for the Christian faith grew even stronger. He developed interests in both government and medicine and even toyed with the idea of going to America to further his studies. At the same time, he did not neglect his Chinese studies, and would regularly consult Too Nam, a Chinese from Malaya who was teaching Chinese to American officers based in Honolulu. Too Nam would later re-emerge in Sun's life as one of his most ardent supporters in British Malaya.[6]

Sun Mei was pleased with his younger brother's progress in school and even registered a piece of property in his name. But Sun's growing interest in Christianity brought him into open conflict with his elder brother. Sun Mei was concerned that his young charge might convert to Christianity. This would be a betrayal of their ancestors and their Chinese heritage. Barely a semester later, when Sun's conversion appeared imminent, his infuriated brother shipped him back to Cuiheng on a one-way ticket so their father could "take this Jesus nonsense out of him."[7]

It was too little too late. The young man had already been grafted with the spirit of rebellion. Having been exposed to modernity and Christianity,

Sun felt only indignation for everything in his home village. With the connivance of a village friend, Lu Haodong, who had studied in Shanghai, they shocked their families and the entire village by breaking into the local temple and desecrating the wooden idols of the local deity. This provoked an uproar in the village, for the memory of the Taipings and their attacks on Chinese religious traditions was still very much alive. Alarmed by the scandal that Sun had caused and to protect him from the wrath of the villagers, his parents sent him to Hong Kong to continue his studies.

Hong Kong, Britain's trophy for her victory in the Opium War, was "a barren island with barely a house upon it" at the time of her cession to Britain in 1841, but gradually developed into a modern and prosperous metropolis. In spite of the circumstances in which it was acquired, the Qing regime soon resigned itself to the fact that the island was an integral part of the British presence on Chinese soil. The British colonial administration on its part pursued a deliberate policy of harmonious relations. With the peaceful coexistence, there was almost an open frontier between China and Hong Kong. People from southern China came to Hong Kong to trade and to seek work. Parents who were more liberal and financially able sent their sons to Hong Kong for further studies, as did mercantile families who did not expect their sons to become scholars or bureaucrats.[8] Or, as in the case of Sun, to get their son away from trouble at home.

In Hong Kong, Sun was accepted into another Anglican institution, the Diocesan School. At the same time, he began to study the Chinese classics with Qu Fengzhi, a Chinese Christian pastor. Although Sun had received tutoring in Chinese during his years in Hawaii, it is quite probable that he did not undertake classical studies until this later period.[9] In April 1884, he transferred to the Central Government School[10], the first public secondary school in Hong Kong that offered instruction up to the sixth form, the equivalent of the American twelfth grade. The curriculum and medium of instruction was English, with Chinese taught as a second language. It was around this time that Sun met Dr. Charles Hager, an American Congregationalist missionary who had recently arrived in Hong Kong. A friendship developed between them and Sun decided to formally embrace Christianity. His baptism in early 1884[11] along with that of Lu Haodong's was performed by Dr. Hager. Sun adopted the baptismal name Rixin but Qu

Fengzhi later changed it to Yixian[12], which in Cantonese is pronounced Yat-sen, the name by which the West would come to know him.

Sun made frequent trips back to his home village. It was on one of these visits that he dutifully married on May 7, 1884, the girl whom his parents had chosen for him. Nuptials in traditional China were rarely based on romantic love but upon a sense of duty to propagate the family line. Sun's wife, Lu Muzhen, was the daughter of a merchant. She was to bear him a son and two daughters, but Sun hardly shared their lives over the next three decades. Not long after the wedding, Sun left to continue his studies while his wife stayed in the home of his parents to raise their children.

Barely three months after his wedding, hostilities broke out in August 1884 between China and France.[13] The conflict was over the sovereignty of Vietnam, one of China's major tributaries and a strategic buffer state bordering the southwestern Chinese province of Yunnan. In 1859, Napoleon III in his ambition to build an Indochinese empire had sent troops to Saigon on the pretext of protecting missionaries, a standard ploy during this period of Western imperialism. In 1862, the French imposed a treaty on Vietnam which among other terms ceded to France three provinces in southern Vietnam known as Cochinchina.

France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871 rendered her militarily impotent. Unable to afford another war, she turned her attention to trade with southern China. The discovery that the Red River in Tonking (northern Vietnam) was a better route than the Mekong to China's Yunnan province aroused French ambitions to seize Tonking. In 1874, a new treaty was imposed on Vietnam which effectively reduced her to a protectorate. Preoccupied with other crises in the empire, China took no action to stop the French advance beyond refusing to acknowledge the treaty. The French continued to intensify their activities in Vietnam and by 1882 had stationed troops in Hanoi and Haiphong, dangerously close to the Chinese border. To counter the French advance, the Vietnamese government strengthened its ties with China and sought the aid of the irregular Chinese Black Flag army. This Taiping remnant began engaging French troops. In 1883, the Qing court dispatched regular troops into Tonking, where they engaged in skirmishes with the French.

Chapter 10

THE SPARK THAT STARTED THE FIRE

By the summer of 1911, Sun had spearheaded ten abortive uprisings, six in eastern Guangdong and four from across the Indochinese border into western Guangdong, Guangxi and Yunnan. Already in his mid-forties, he was no closer to realizing his dream of overthrowing the Manchu dynasty and setting China on the road to republicanism than when he first embarked on his career as a professional revolutionary 16 years earlier. The spark that finally started the fire which incinerated the 268-year-old Qing dynasty and extinguished China's two-millennia-old imperial institution began in a single city. Sympathetic risings spread throughout the realm, just as Sun had always envisioned it. In a cruel twist of fate that robbed him of his moment with history, it began by accident while he was on the other side of the world.

The second half of the 19th century was a period of rapid railroad construction worldwide, but not in China. Here railways were considered a disruptive force to the harmony between man and nature, and it was deemed disrespectful and inauspicious to relocate or build over the ancestral graves scattered throughout the countryside. Qing officials, too, were against extending China's railway network out of concerns that this would help to accelerate foreign penetration into the Chinese heartland. Thus despite the willingness of many foreign banks to lend to the Qing government for railroad construction there was little interest, so that at the end of 1896 China had only 370 miles (600 km) of track. By comparison, the United States had 182,000 miles (300,000 km) and Britain 21,000 miles (34,000 km). Even tiny Japan with a land area less than five percent of China's, had 2,300 miles (3,700 km) of track.[1] After the Sino-Japanese War and the "scramble for concessions," the Western powers began building and operating railroads in their respective spheres of influence. Some also

acquired extraterritorial rights and concessions to exploit natural resources on certain segments of their railroad.

The Qing court's attitude toward railways changed after the Boxer Uprising. During the conflict, they discovered that imperial troops could use the railroads to move about rapidly and then destroy the tracks to prevent foreign troops from advancing. After the dust of battle had settled, the Chinese themselves entered the railroad business and turned to the international capital markets for financing. On top of high interest rates secured by mortgages on the railroads and liens on their future earnings, the foreign loan syndicates managed the construction, purchasing and operations of the railroads. The one railroad built entirely by Chinese engineers with indigenous capital cost about a third less per mile than those of comparable quality built under the auspices of Western banks. It was thus a hugely profitable business for the foreign syndicates. With Europe flush with surplus capital, foreign bankers tripped over one another to lend to the Chinese, often using their countries' diplomats to exert pressure on Beijing.[2]

This was happening at a time of rising nationalism in China, as evidenced by the anti-foreign boycotts, the anti-missionary protests and the proliferation of anti-Manchu tracts. One consequence of this upsurge in nationalism was the emergence of a "rights-recovery movement," and the buy-back of foreign railroad concessions was an important part of it. In a few isolated instances, the furor over foreign control of the railroads enabled provincial railroad companies to raise the funds domestically towards redemption, but there was just not enough indigenous long-term capital to redeem more than a token few.

The longest and most ambitious railroad project was the link between Beijing and Wuhan, the sprawling tri-city metropolis comprising Wuchang, the provincial capital of Hubei, the industrial city of Hanyang and the great river port of Hankou. The megalopolis was central China's industrial heartland and transportation hub, much as Chicago is in the United States. Before the completion of the Beijing-Wuhan line in 1905, negotiations were already under way to extend it from Wuhan to Guangzhou in the south and westward from Wuhan to Chengdu, the Sichuan provincial capital. The merchants and gentry prodded the Qing government into

buying back the American concession to build the Wuhan-Guangzhou line, which it did with money borrowed from the Hong Kong colonial government. The provincial railway companies then undertook to build the two extensions from Wuhan. After several years, the sale of shares produced only a trickle of the required capital, and construction was held up. In 1908, Zhang Zhidong, the last of the four great Confucian statesmen, was put in charge of railroad matters. Seeing no alternative to foreign funding, he recommended the nationalization of the lines and bringing them under central government control.

The gentry and merchants who had hoped to profit from the railroad development were outraged. They charged that the move was a conspiracy to sell out China to the foreign powers. These entrepreneurs were the most influential people in the provinces and along with returned students dominated the newly created provincial assemblies. The government's hesitation to proceed in the face of the protests did not prevent massive demonstrations from sprouting up all over the country. Zhang Zhidong's sterling reputation might have been sufficient to defuse the agitation. On his death in 1909, the court made the fateful decision of appointing Sheng Xuanhuai, another of Li Hongzhang's protégés, to head the Ministry of Communications; railway matters came under his purview. In spite of his distinguished career in the bureaucracy, Sheng had a reputation as the empire's most notorious wheeler-dealer. Those opposing the loan immediately focused their attacks on him and raised charges of corruption.

In spite of the unrest, there was no immediate threat to the Qing dynasty. The Tongmenghui was in disarray and the revolutionary movement was going through a crisis of relevance. The dynasty had also managed to defuse the threat of revolution through reforms and concessions to public opinion. Too frightened to share real political power, yet too weak to resist demands for political reforms, the regent Zaifeng, father of the boy emperor Xuantong (Puyi), had created elected provincial assemblies in 1909. These were to serve as consultative bodies but he hoped that they would also serve as checks on provincial administration. The outcome was dramatically different. In the absence of a National Assembly, the provincial leaders became all the more active at the provincial level. Far from being content with their consultative function, they governed

their provinces in virtual autonomy. They put so much pressure on the court that Zaifeng was forced to convene a National Assembly in June 1910, with half its members elected, and the other half appointed by the imperial court. Shortly after its formation, the National Assembly also exceeded its consultative role and demanded a shorter timetable for a parliamentary government.

In response to the demand, the Qing court agreed on November 4 to advance the date from 1916 to 1913. While most reformists were satisfied with the court's partial concession to their demands, others were reportedly so unhappy that they returned to their respective provinces to organize a revolution. Then in December, the court issued its decision on the sensitive question of the detested *towchang*, which opponents of the custom saw not only as a reminder of the dynasty's alien origin but also as a symbol of China's backwardness in the modern world. In anticipation of a favorable ruling from the court, many Chinese, especially students, began cutting off their queues in the latter half of 1910. The court's negative decision was taken by some reformists as another indication of the court's unresponsiveness to public opinion.

Liang Qichao's followers, who had abandoned the revolutionary route after the post-Boxer reforms, informed him in March that they were returning to the revolutionary path. Liang himself published an article in the same month renouncing his previous warning of the threat of partition by the foreign powers in the event of a revolution. He now declared that it was possible for China to go through a revolution without necessarily inviting foreign intervention. Ignoring these danger signals, the Qing court sounded its own death knell with three fatal decisions within a span of two weeks in May 1911.[3]

It had made compliant noises in response to the National Assembly's demand for a cabinet to replace the Manchu-dominated Grand Council. On May 8, the court unveiled a cabinet with eight Manchu members, one Mongolian and just four Han Chinese. This was a jab at Chinese ethnic pride and a blow to the dynasty's fast-diminishing legitimacy. The reformists were upset by the court's disregard of their desire for a greater sharing of power with their Manchu overlords. When they failed to secure the immediate summoning of a parliament, they had accepted in good

faith the Qing court's promise to name a cabinet soon. By unveiling a cabinet dominated by incompetent Manchus, the court only succeeded in alienating its gentry constituency throughout the country. On May 10, the court announced that it would proceed with the nationalization of the Wuhan-Guangzhou and Wuhan-Chengdu rail lines. Ten days later, on May 20, Sheng Xuanhuai signed a loan agreement with the Four-Power banking consortium to float a £10 million loan for the project. As usual, the rail lines were to be put up as collateral and there were also the usual provisions for the syndicate's control over construction, purchasing and operation.

The Qing regime had by now totally exhausted its credibility and political capital. In the prevailing atmosphere of mutual suspicion and distrust, the deal with the foreign banks seemed to fulfill the long-standing belief that the Manchus were conspiring with the Western powers against China's interests. Emotional mass rallies and demonstrations organized by the Railway Protection Movement followed. Instead of appeasing the railway investors, the foreign powers instigated the Qing government into taking a tough stance. The popular anger was particularly strident in Sichuan, where the railroad investors were to be compensated entirely in government bonds. Leaders of the Sichuan provincial assembly and prominent railroad investors in the province vowed not to pay further taxes and to continue fighting for their demands. The government moved to suppress the volatile situation, resulting in 32 deaths in the provincial capital. Conditions in Sichuan quickly deteriorated and the government was compelled to transport New Army troops from nearby Wuhan to suppress the unrest.

This was a god-sent opportunity for the Tongmenghui to deliver its coup de grâce but China's premier anti-Manchu organization was not ready to capitalize on the developing mayhem. Song Jiaoren had been planning to set up the Tongmenghui's Central China Headquarters to rally the various revolutionary groups in the Yangtze Valley, which so far had only paid lip service to the Alliance. This did not happen until July 1911 and Song estimated that it would take at least two years to complete the preparations. The storm clouds broke much too soon and Song decided to sit out. But if the Tongmenghui was not ready to act, other anti-dynastic groups were not ready to wait. For more than a decade, the small revolutionary groups

of Hubei province had been continuously active. Pursued by the authorities, they had dissolved time and again, only to reincarnate under different guises.

In 1911, they were gathered together in two principal societies. The Gongjinhui, or Progressive Society, an offshoot of the Tongmenghui, had been recruiting members from the local secret societies. The second group hid behind the innocuous name Wenxueshe, or Literary Institute. It had in its membership register several thousand soldiers of New Army units stationed in Wuchang. Like the Tongmenghui, students led these groups, but unlike the Alliance, they were self-sufficient and did not have to rely on foreign allies or funding. More importantly, their fighting forces were stationed in China, ready for action. These revolutionary groups had a vague commitment to republicanism but the force that bound them together was the common objective to overthrow the Qing dynasty. They also maintained a loose liaison with the non-Cantonese leaders of the Tongmenghui, in particular Huang Xing and Song Jiaoren. In September, the two Hubei revolutionary groups worked out an agreement to schedule their respective uprisings in October.[4]

The New Army, which was destined to play a key role in the collapse of the Manchu dynasty, was a relatively new element in the Qing military organization. After China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War in 1895, the Qing government resolved to rebuild China's military strength by creating new armies from scratch. The first of these armies were sponsored by Zhang Zhidong in Hubei and Yuan Shikai in the North. In 1901, in the aftermath of the Boxer Uprising, Empress Dowager Cixi launched the New Policy reforms, a thorough overhaul of Qing policy in government, education and the military. Yuan Shikai's army was expanded to form the Beiyang Army, which later emerged as the strongest military force in China. In 1904, the government formulated a long-term plan to reorganize the newly created armies into 36 divisions reporting directly to the capital. This was the New Army. Initially expected to be completed by 1922, the deadline was later brought forward to 1912. By 1906, there were ten divisions: five were part of Yuan's Beiyang Army in the North, the sixth was made up of Zhang Zhidong's troops in Hubei, and the remaining divisions and some independent brigades were spread elsewhere throughout the country.[5]