

## AP World History—China 1750-1914

### The Rise and Fall of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911)

**16<sup>th</sup> Century:** Manchu nomads were building a large state north of the Great Wall. A local leader united the Manchu tribes and built a strong army that gained control of Manchuria and also some non-Manchu peoples. Then the Manchurians continually harassed the Chinese living north of the Great Wall.

It was the **weakness of the declining Ming Dynasty** (not so much the strength of the Manchus) that allowed the Manchus to seize control of China.

- The Ming had already paid the Manchus to help repel a Japanese attempt to invade Korea (a Ming tributary state).
- In 1644 a Ming official in charge of the northern defenses called on the Manchus to help put down a rebellion in the area near the Great Wall (not so unusual...think about the Romans hiring Germanic tribes or the Arabs hiring Turks).

So the Ming government LET the Manchus in and then were too weak (because of political divisions and unrest) to get them out. The Manchus took Beijing within the year but then required two more decades to subdue all of China.

**Manchu Rule:** took the dynastic name Qing (aka Ching)

- Much expansion: conquered the nomadic peoples living west of the Chinese heartland (in modern Xinjiang province, in Tibet, and in inner Mongolia) and established a tributary relationship with Vietnam, Burma, and Nepal in the south as well as with Korea. The Qing went on to rule the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest empire ruled by a Chinese dynasty (second only to the Tang)
- Maintained the political system of the Ming: adopted Chinese rituals, maintained use of scholar-officials and the civil service exam. They even pardoned many of the people who had led the resistance. In the early years of their rule, they often paired Chinese and Manchu officials in appointments to most of the highest posts in the government and allowed local government to be dominated by the Chinese officials. Later the in dynasty even though Manchus ended up controlling many of the highest posts, talented Chinese officials could rise in the bureaucracy with few limits.
- Qing emperors claimed to be “Sons of Heaven” and subscribed to Confucian values
- Early Qing emperors
  - Were generous patrons of Chinese arts
  - One ruler, Kangxi (r. 1661-1722) was a Confucian scholar himself. He was a contemporary of Peter the Great in Russia and shared much in common with him. Both came to their respective thrones at an early age and had to secure power from rivals. Both were intensely interested in learning
  - Kangxi and other early emperors employed 1000s of scholars to compile encyclopedias of Chinese learning
- **Note—how did the Manchus actions after conquering China differ from those of the Mongols after conquering China? And P.S. how long did the Qing Dynasty last v. the Yuan?**

### Early Qing Society and Economy

- Ideas about society were influenced by Zhu Xi (the Neo-Confucianist from Song times)
  - Emphasis on respect for rank; acceptance of hierarchy—based on the five relationships including old over young, male over female, scholar-bureaucrat over commoner
  - Among the elite classes the extended family was still the core unit of social order
  - The state was increasingly suspicious of any social organization (like guilds or secret societies) that rivaled the family
  - The lives of women at all levels were still centered on the household but the household was dominated by the elder men. Male control of the household was strengthened by the practice of choosing brides from families of slightly lower social status. The practice of footbinding among the women of the elite (that dated back to Tang and Song times, discontinued by the Yuan—the Mongols—but brought back by the Ming) continued. Lower class women worked the fields and sold produce in local markets. Men were also in charge outside the home. One way that women could wield power was if they were chosen as a first wife and had sons. These were the women that took charge of running the household. In elite households they even had control over other women and the younger men.
- **The early Qing rulers attempted to alleviate the poverty and unrest that plagued the rural regions—hello dynastic cycle!**
  - They lowered taxes and state labor demands (that had grown quite high in the later days of the Ming)—typical action taken by a new dynasty!
  - They offered tax incentives (like tax breaks) to encourage resettlement of lands abandoned in the tumultuous time of Ming decline (a period marked by peasant rebellions).
  - They repaired existing roads and irrigations systems and even extended irrigation systems (public works)
  - They encouraged planting of new crops and multiple plantings in a year
    - RESULT: The population growth that had begun during the Ming Dynasty (because of the arrival of new crops like corn and potatoes from the Americas) continued as a result of the policies of the Qing.
    - Unfortunately, this population growth put pressure on the amount of cultivable land and eventually there was no more open land to settle. The landlord classes began to accumulate large estates at the expense of the peasantry even though the Qing regime tried to control the landed classes. As the process progressed, exploitation of the peasantry

by the landlords increased and the gap between the rich and poor grew. The wealthy rural gentry were carried around in sedan chairs, dressed in fine silks and furs, and many of the men grew long nails to show that they did not have to engage in physical labor.

- **The economy experienced much commercial and urban expansion during the peace and stability of the first 150 years of Qing rule.**
  - There was regional diversification of crops
  - Overland trade routes from Samarkand to Korea were revived. Though trade never reached what it had been under the Mongols, there was a new encouragement of foreign trade.
  - New ways of financing agriculture and artisan production were introduced. Until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century merchants profited greatly from all the silver pouring into China (to pay for Chinese exports of tea, porcelain and silk). Europeans and other foreign traders flocked to Canton (the one port still open to European trade), and Chinese traders (who were freed from travel restrictions that had been imposed on them during the late Ming) found markets overseas (mostly Southeast Asia). As a result, a new class of wealthy new merchants who specialized in the import-export trade on China's south coast arose (known as compradors). The compradors of the 19<sup>th</sup> century became a link between China and the outside world.

#### **Decline of the Qing: Rot from Within...Bureaucratic Breakdown and Social Disintegration**

- By the late 18<sup>th</sup> century the signs were everywhere
  - Problems with the bureaucratic administration.  
The exam system became riddled with cheating and favoritism. Wealthy families paid scholars to take exams for their sons and bribed examiners to ignore cheating. Sons of high officials were assured a place in the bureaucracy. All this meant that the bureaucracy was NOT assured of able, honest men in its ranks. The government became increasingly corrupt and inefficient since bureaucrats were not really schooled in the Confucian idea of responsibility and obligation to take care of the people. Instead they wanted wealth for themselves and their families, and they cared less and less about the conditions of the peasants and urban laborers.
  - Money that went to enrich elite families should have been used to maintain the army and navy in order to defend the huge Qing empire (those costs were pretty staggering—the Qing would be affected by the same problem that virtually all other large empires experience!) and should have funded public works projects (such as dikes to control the flooding of the Huang He—because of all the loess silt it carried it needed regular attention in order to avoid devastating floods...the later Qing emperors failed to provide this attention and there were devastating floods)
  - Other signs of decline included mass migrations INSIDE China as a result of food shortages and landlord demands. Beggars crowded the city streets; banditry plagued the countryside; and the government was unable to deal with problems
- China seemed to be following the age-old pattern of the dynastic cycle, but this time there were critical changes that had occurred that would change the pattern:
  - The population explosion had created a need for technological and organizational innovations in China. They needed to increase productivity in order to support the fast growing population. However, the corrupt, inefficient and conservative Qing regime became an obstacle to the needed changes.
  - The presence of the Europeans also changed things. Qing rulers/administrators treated them like the nomads and other whom they saw as “barbarians.” They didn't see that the Europeans represented a different sort of challenge since Europe had experienced the scientific and industrial revolutions so now European nations such as Britain were advanced, sophisticated and better organized than 19<sup>th</sup> century China (given the problems of the Qing) with superior technology. All this would be critical to the events that began about the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

**\*\*\*Note what you need clarification on from the material above. Hopefully we can address that QUICKLY and get to the events below.**

THIS IS WHAT I HOPE TO SPEND THE BULK OF OUR TIME ON IN CLASS:

**How was China affected by Western imperialism??? How did the Chinese government respond to British pressure to open up its contact with the West in the 19<sup>th</sup> century???**

- **Opium War—cause, result**
- **spheres of influence—we'll discuss this concept. The text is less clear on this, but take some time to study the cartoon on p. 610!!! We will also relate the idea of spheres of influence to the concept of economic imperialism**
  - **Chinese Responses to increasing Western Influence:**
    - **Taiping Rebellion (mid-19<sup>th</sup> c.)—directed at the QING GOV...corruption and inefficient government & blamed the gov. for increasing Western influence**
    - **Self-Strengthening Movement—goal? Success?**
    - **Cixi and the traditionalists—they won, NOT the modernizers! How does this contrast with Japan in the 19<sup>th</sup> century?**

- **Boxer Rebellion (end of the 19<sup>th</sup> c.)—this time the anger of the people was directed at the Western powers**
- **REVOLUTION 1911-12 (note the date)...**end of the Qing. This is only the beginning of the revolution in China. Events will continue well into the 20<sup>th</sup> c. This will be a major topic in East Asia in period 6