Primary Sources


After the McCartney Mission, Emperor Qianlong sent a letter to King George III. The Qing Imperial Court refused the terms suggested by the mission as the “center of civilization”, they treated the British in a very arrogant manner. The letter strongly reflect the Chinese belief in its cultural superiority and the ideology of “dichotomy”. This further portends the inevitable conflicts between the ignorance of Chinese against the economic interests of the Western Europeans that were to be manifested in forms of military struggles.


This article was written during the time period of the Boxer Rebellion. It provides some sense of historical context in which China was “secluded” behind its own wall of cultural superiority. The article also reflect Western point of view towards the military conflicts between Imperialist powers and China; that it was inevitable. It was useful for primary source document.


This was the primary source document of the Treaty of Nanking. What was evident was the “unfairness” of the treaty. In the given historical context, the articles of the treaty was “horrendous” and humiliating to China. Yet, China was forced to concede the treaty due to its defeat in the Opium War. The treaty not only signified the changes that were about to be ushered in by new foreign influences in China, but also indicated the military superiority of European Powers over China.


During the Boxer Rebellion, Reverend Frederick Brown accompanied the British troops’ march from Tientsin to Beijing. Although Brown did see some violence and atrocities on his way, evidently, little damage was done to the Allied forces while they marched to the Capital of the Great Empire, Beijing, clearly revealing the incompatible military superiority of the Allies. There was certain degree of bias as Brown resented the Boxers who killed “innocent” foreigners and Christians.


In this article, Chen Duxiu, the founder of New Youth magazine and the confounder of the Chinese Communist Party urged Chinese youth to be
independent and progressive, breaking away from the old and conservative Chinese tradition and beliefs. Chen’s passionate and fervent attitude was evident in the article. His passion would spread through New Youth.


China had already been defeated by Japan and it was clear that the Western powers were far superior over Chinese. Despite the hopeless situation, the Qing Imperial Court allied with the Boxers, and declared a war against the foreign powers. The declaration emphasizes pride in the empire and creates a sense of unity of Chinese people. Especially the emphasis on the unity of Chinese people is key to understanding the situation of the Qing Empire at the time. Anti-Manchu movement was rapidly growing and the Imperial Court was increasingly losing its legitimacy as the ruling political institution. By aligning with the Boxers, the ruling Manchu sought to solidify the support of Han people.


This is a personal recount of the events during the Boxer Rebellion. The recount shows urgent and desperate situation foreigners and native Chinese Christians were in while fleeing from persecution by the Boxers.


The protocol completely “disarmed” China. After the treaty, the Qing Imperial Court became the “puppet” of the Imperialist powers. Deterioration of the government was evident and the fall of the empire was inevitable. Just like the Treaty of Shimonoseky, the protocol signified the unsuccessful reforms made by the Qing government.


The treaty clearly indicated the one-sided victory of Japan in the Sino-Japanese War. What this “unfair” treaty signified was the inevitable decline of the Qing Empire. The signing of the treaty can even be “symbolic” in a sense that Japan emerged as a strong Imperialist power through Meiji Restoration while Chinese “Self-Strengthening” movement turned out unsuccessful.
After seizing and destroying opium from European merchants, Commissioner Lin sent a letter to Queen Victoria, condemning and at the same time “appealing” to her regarding the expansion of British opium trade in China. In the letter, Commissioner Lin posed a very arrogant manner as did the Emperor Qianlong in his letter to Queen Victoria. This lack of change in Chinese attitude towards the Western European nations would usher in military struggles in which China would suffer utterly humiliating defeats.

The short story written by Lu Xun, one of the most prominent modern Chinese writer, reveals the Chinese intellectuals’ attitude towards Confucianism in the early 20th century. As suggested in the short story as being equal to a tradition of cannibalism, Chinese intellectuals increasingly rejected Chinese Confucianism and advocated western ideas. This attitude was very clear in this short story, “A Madman’s Diary”.

The address was given by Mao Zedong in the first Plenary Session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in 1949, after the Chinese Communist Party unified China. There is sense of pride and passion in the address: that China would rise once again from the humiliation. By reading the address, I was able to glimpse Mao’s motives and future plans. Clearly he would undertake any risk to once again revive the splendor of China. Despite his failures in the future, Mao, nevertheless unified China and the nation would be reconstructed based on new foundation (as nation, not a dynastic empire).

The video footage shows the destructive naval battles during the First Sino-Japanese War. Despite his effort at modernization of Beiyang Fleets (as the Chinese naval ships were modern gunboats during the war), Li Hongchang lost all of his fleets to the Japanese navy due to lack of preparation and support. The defeat would ultimately usher in unspeakable humiliation.
Sun Yat-sen was one of the most prominent Chinese revolutionaries during the early 1900s. His book, *San Min Chu I* reflects the growth of new nationalism of Chinese intellectuals. As evident in the book, Sun Yat-sen, along with other revolutionaries, advocated promotion of Western modernization. Heavy influence of the “humiliating” military defeats and spread of Western ideas over Chinese intellectuals is evident in Sun Yat-sen’s philosophy of Three Principles.


Sun Yat-sen was one of the earliest Chinese intellectuals in modern Chinese history. His philosophy, *San Min Chu I* heavily inspired other Chinese intellectuals and was incorporated in the basis of the new nation. The excerpt, although briefly, presents his basic ideas regarding the reconstruction of China. The three principles, nationalism, democracy and livelihood embrace and advocate Western ideas.


This article presents a letter from a British officer who was at the treaty of Nanking. This letter reveals British perspective towards the “opening” China. Europeans were optimistic about the profits to be earned in this new, vast market.


The article presents the significance of opium trade in China. After the two Opium Wars, opium trade expanded in China and further weakened and corrupted the Qing Imperial Court as the main consumers of the drug was Qing government officials.
Secondary Sources


The article provided detailed background of the Boxer Rebellion. By the end of the 19th century, Western influence was spreading at a rapid speed, “threatening” and undermining native Chinese population. Popular xenophobia and economic crises coincided to create the Boxer Rebellion that would ultimately end with bitter defeat of the Chinese.


The AP textbook was crucial for synthesizing my argument and conducting the research. This year I enrolled in Advanced Placement World History Course and throughout the year, I studied the long history of China. This pre-knowledge created very broad historical perspective in a sense that I realized how radical a change the collapse of the Qing Empire had been for the whole Chinese civilization. The Confucianism and Chinese Culturalism had fundamentally dominated Chinese society throughout the numerous dynastic rules and the humiliation the Chinese faced in the late 19th Century was unspeakable and inconceivable in Chinese perspective. The change of ideas was the very turning point of Chinese history.


The documentary provided a good overview of the events leading up to the humiliation of China. I found the interviews in the documentary very valuable as they not only provided new information, but also provided in depth insight into the matters. Overall, the documentary was very useful.


This book provided in-depth analysis of the historical context and the impact of the Western intrusion in China. The content regarding the aftermath of the Boxer Rebellion (fall of Qing) was crucial for my research as the book connected the preceding events and the later events (establishment of early Chinese Republic).


This book provides critical analysis of the historical context and impact of the Western intrusion in China. This book was very useful when evaluating the
The documentary provides historical context and good overview of the Boxer Rebellion and the lasting legacies of the events. However, in a sense, the documentary was focused more on the blockade of the foreign legations in the Qing Imperial Court than the relentless advancement of the international forces. The documentary was, in a sense, useful to my research to certain extent.


Dr. Kirby's lecture about the Opium War not only gave a detailed overview of the events of the Opium War, but also the significance of the war as the opium trade would continue to decimate the nation and the Western Europeans would ruthlessly exploit their colonial interests in the empire.


In this lecture, Dr. Kirby discusses the significance of the fall of the Qing Empire. The decline of the empire had been unlike other previous dynasties was gradual and utterly humiliating. The humiliation would destroy Chinese perception of its superiority and lay the foundation for the reconstruction of China. The Chinese dynastic rule finally came to an end and the last Chinese empire would be substituted by a new republic.


The article discusses the significance of Chinese culturalism and Confucianism. Confucianism and Chinese Culturalism not only functioned as the very basic foundation of the Chinese society and the domestic political foundation, but the philosophies also dominated Chinese foreign policies on the basis of dichotomy; that China was the “center” of civilization and the rest of the world was land of savages.


The scholarly article provided detailed historical context of the Opium War as well as the impact of the end result of the war over China. Especially, the continuity of
opium trade after the war further weakened the Qing Empire and thus contributed to the fall of the empire.


The book provided detailed overview and the analysis of the events leading up to the fall of the Qing Empire and the failure of the early Chinese republic. Dr. Park focused more on the inner politics and Yuan Shikai’s insidious role in the fall of the Qing Empire. The humiliating military defeats, political corruption, and the economic crises had contributed to the fall of the Qing Empire. However the role of Yuan Shikai in the decline of the empire and the failure of the republic too, cannot be ignored. This one individual came to grip the dictatorial power of the empire by all means and modernized and expanded his Beiyang military forces. As a result, Yuan not only catalyzed the fall of the empire, but also significantly slowed down the emergence of a “proper” republic of China.


Conducting an interview with Insoo Park, the author of “The Age of Wars and Revolutions” turned out to be very helpful for me. By asking him questions, I was able to find out. Most importantly, Dr. Park confirmed my ideas about the modernization of China; that the destruction of the traditional Chinese ideas and perception was the very starting point of the revolution of China. Dr. Park also provided a broad historical perspective, relating the subsequent events and contemporary China to the events that I discussed in the National History Project. I would like to specially thank Dr. Park for his cooperation and willingness to attend my interview.


In this lecture, Mr. Wakeman analyzed the relations between the Manchus and Han Chinese. Despite the acculturation, the relationship between the ruling class and the subject has not always been very comfortable. Nevertheless, the Manchus, compared to the Mongols retained their empire for a long period of time. The relationship, however, became tense when the Qing Empire started to decline. Anti-Manchu sentiment grew throughout the nation and the movement was further catalyzed by the humiliating defeats in the military struggles.

The photo shows British forces marching to Beijing, the capital of China with minor resistance.

Chen Duxiu was a prominent Chinese intellectual who founded journal, “Youth” and later, Communist Party with Li Dazhao. He spread new nationalistic ideas.

The poster glorifies the image of Mao Zedong, the leader of newly founded republic of China. Despite Mao’s bitter failures in the future, the Chinese Communist Party would remain in power through series of reforms.

This is the photo of Chinese “Boxers”, the members of a secret organization that massacred foreigners and native Christians, causing the Boxer Rebellion.

This American political cartoon satirizes the late 19th century situation of China. Every object in the “China shop” is owned by Imperialist power. Each object represents the “treaty port” under the jurisdiction of an Imperialist power.

The painting depicts the destruction of the Chinese war junks during the Opium War. During the war, Chinese forces could not withstand far superior and advanced British weaponry and suffered atrocious losses.

The digital image shows the flag of the Chinese Communist Party. Despite the dominant position of Kuo Mintang, Mao’s Communist Party finally defeated them and unified China in 1949.

**Image bibliography**


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This is a digital image of the flag of contemporary China. The flag conveys the idea of communism and at the same time, a sense of pride can be found as 4 little stars surround one larger star, signifying the central position of China.


The photo shows the Japanese military forces assembling in preparation for the suppression of the Boxers in Tientsin.


The poster depicts the international forces’ bombardment of Beijing during the Boxer Rebellion. Again, China suffered devastating losses and confronted bitter humiliation.


This Japanese cartoon pokes fun at the weak and disorganized Chinese military forces during the Sino-Japanese War.


The destruction of the Summer Palace by the Anglo French forces is clearly depicted in the painting. The destruction of the Imperial Court ushered in great humiliation.


This is the picture of McCartney embassy. As evident in the picture, Qing Imperial Court resumed its superior position over “barbarians” and diplomatic measures taken by the embassy turned out unsuccessful.


The photo shows Lu Xun who was one of the most prominent modern Chinese writers. As early Chinese intellectual, he increasingly rejected Confucianism and traditional Chinese ideas.

This map of the Qing Empire indicates the vast size and territorial expansion of the Qing Empire. The empire was at its greatest height under the reign of Qianlong and Gangxi emperors.


This French cartoon illustrates the imperialism in China. China is represented by the cake that is about to be carved by the European Imperial powers.


The digital photo shows the cover of the New Youth magazine. The magazine spread revolutionary ideas among young Chinese intellectuals and inspired them to take action.


The map shows the regions of Imperialism around the world by the early 19th Century. The Imperial powers exploited their interests and thus, conflicts with the Qing Empire was inevitable.


The digital image shows the flag of the Chinese Nationalist Party. The party was founded by Sun Yat-sen in hopes of founding a new unified nation. The government, however, was highly corrupted and lost public support. By 1949, Chian Kaisheck and his followers fled to Taiwan.


This is a photo of Pu Yi, the last Emperor and his father. Pu Yi as the last emperor of China, forcibly abdicated in 1911.


The photo shows remains of ruined temple after the battle between Japanese and Chines forces during the Sin-Japanese War.


Group of Chinese people are smoking opium in the photo. Extreme addiction to the drug contributed to the deterioration and corruption of the Qing government.

Sun Yat-sen was one of the most prominent Chinese revolutionary who founded the early Chinese Republic and later, Nationalist Party. He is among the “new class of intellectuals”.


The picture depicts a scene during the Opium War between Britain and China. Chinese suffered atrocious losses against advanced and modernized weaponry of the British forces.


Yuan Shikai as a military general, extended his power by all means and imposed dictatorial rule after the fall of the Qing Empire. After his death, his Beiyang military forces would divide and the period of warlords would emerge.