

Summary: Establishing Modern China

China's Last Dynasty

The Manchus began the Qing dynasty in 1644. China's population grew as it expanded into Taiwan and Tibet. Wars, famine, and other shortages soon ended the dynasty.

One problem the Qing rulers faced was opium. The British tried to use the drug instead of money to buy Chinese goods, which hurt China's economy. China began the first Opium War by seizing British opium. The Treaty of Nanking ended the war in 1842. It forced China to pay money to Great Britain, turn over Hong Kong to British rule, and let British traders into more Chinese ports.

Angry peasants rebelled. The peasants demanded equality for women, an end to private property, and a share of surplus harvest. More than 20 million died in the Taiping Rebellion. In the Boxer Rebellion, a group tried to force foreigners out of China. Foreign troops defeated the Boxers, leaving the government in turmoil.

Sun Yat-sen hoped to create a democracy to replace the government. In 1911, his Chinese National Party brought down the Qing dynasty. The Chinese National Party joined the Chinese Communist Party under Chiang Kai-shek's leadership. Transportation, education, and industry improved. Peasants' and workers' lives did not.

Revolution and Reform

Mao Zedong rose as a leader in the Communist Party. China's two parties fought Japan in World War II. After the war, China became a Communist state called the People's Republic of China. The Communists gave land to the peasants. Peasants combined their land into collective farms and grew food together. To speed up economic development, Mao started The Great Leap Forward program. Collective farms became communes of 25,000 people. The communes grew crops, ran industries, and provided education and health care for their members. However, poor production, droughts, and floods caused food shortages and disease. Millions died. Mao launched the Cultural Revolution in 1966. Mao's Red Guard punished anyone who spoke against Mao or the Communist Party.



Before You Read

Find and underline the vocabulary word.

Cultural Revolution *noun*, a movement launched by Mao in 1966 to remove opposition to the Communist Party



After You Read

REVIEW Why would the Treaty of Nanking have angered the Chinese?

Underline the sentences that tell about the changes brought about by the Treaty of Nanking.

REVIEW How do you think Mao expected communes to help economic development?

Highlight the sentence that tells what communes did, which will help you answer the question.