

Chapter One

The Legacy of the Past

THE ROLE OF HISTORY IN CHINA

Although our concern in this text is with the foreign relations of the People's Republic of China (PRC), we must begin with a consideration of China's earlier history, for that history exercised a significant influence on China's post-1949 foreign relations. Events long past influence subsequent generations through shared recollections of those events and beliefs about their meaning. Frequently such shared memories and beliefs assume mythic proportions: mythic not in the sense that they have no grounding in fact, but in the sense that the shared belief itself is in many ways more important than what actually happened in the past.

Shared memories and beliefs shape the international relations of all countries. In the United States, for example, recollections of more than a century of deliberate non-involvement in the affairs of Europe, of reliance on the two great oceans flanking North America that made such isolationism possible, and memories of a long period of self-absorption focused on the creation of a new civilization still exert powerful influences on U.S. foreign policy in the late twentieth century. Comparable shared recollections play an arguably even greater role in shaping the foreign policy of the PRC.

One of the ways that memories of events are passed from generation to generation is via the writing and interpreting of history. In few countries does history play a greater role than in China. For more than two millennia, successive imperial dynasties and generations of Confucian scholar-officials found in the history of earlier eras

Explanations of the moral waxing and waning of society and its institutions. From this they drew conclusions about how the affairs of their own era ought to be governed. The legitimacy of each dynasty was closely tied to this historical explanation, and each dynasty produced an orthodox history justifying its rise to power. This official history invariably demonstrated that the decline of the previous regime was caused by moral decay and the establishment of the present regime resulted from its superior virtue. History, and the writing of history, thus created the moral basis of the existing state.

Marxism, with its search for historical "laws," coincided with and reinforced China's hoary concern with the past. In Marxism, as in Confucianism, the fundamental workings of society and the relationship between power and morality is revealed through a study of history. Just as Confucianism postulated a direct link between the virtue of the ruler and his claim to power, Marxism found a similar link between the moral quality of a social class and its rule of society. Marx found a moral progression in human history, with each succeeding ruling class and form of social organization reflecting the interests of that class representing a moral advance over the previous ruling class and social organization. The proletariat had the most genuinely moral claim to power, for only it would lead humanity to the abolition of the exploitation of labor. Lenin took this idea one step further by claiming, again like Confucius, that the right to rule lay with the handful of people who understood the true principles of history.

The propensity of both Confucianism and Marxism to explain and justify policy in terms of historical principles probably contributed to the intellectual appeal of various grand theories of international relations to the leaders of the PRC. The PRC's leaders have usually felt a need to frame their foreign policies in terms of broad historical epochs and categories. In 1949 New China was seen as standing with the socialist camp led by the Soviet Union, and struggling to defeat the efforts at domination by the imperialist camp led by the United States throughout a vast intermediate zone of countries between the socialist and imperialist camps. By 1958 Beijing was advocating a united front of all possible forces to defeat U.S. imperialism and usher in the new, post-imperialist era of history. By 1972 Beijing had formulated a new grand scheme, the Three Worlds Theory, in which the United States and the USSR made up the First World, the economically developed capitalist and socialist countries other than the United States and the USSR made up the Second World, and the developing countries constituted the Third World. Historical necessity and progress required, according to this theory, that the Second and Third worlds unite against the First World. This Three Worlds theory was flexible enough, however, to be directed primarily against one or the other of the two superpowers, and during the period from about 1977 to 1982 it took the form of advocacy of a

united front against the Soviet Union. Then in about 1985, as China integrated itself into the world capitalist economy and modified the centralized forms of economic organization that it had previously taken as the sine qua non of socialism, Beijing developed a new scheme of history to frame its current foreign policy—the theory of the “initial stage of socialism.” According to this theory, Chinese socialism was in its initial historic phase, during which accommodations with global capitalist markets and acceptance of “lower,” more capitalist-like forms of economic organization were necessary.

While these various historical schemes were rooted in China’s immediate political situation and needs, they also reflected traditional Chinese notions about the appropriate relationship between power and morality. Power had to serve a moral purpose, which was derived from a study of history. The legitimacy of political power in contemporary China is still rooted squarely in interpretations of history, just as it was in traditional China.

THE MYTH OF NATIONAL HUMILIATION

The central aspect of recent Chinese history, as interpreted by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), is the Chinese people’s struggle against the “humiliation” of China by foreign imperialism during the 110 years between 1839 and 1949. To the CCP, the era between the first opium war and the establishment of the People’s Republic of China is essentially a chronicle of wars imposed by aggressive and arrogant imperialist powers, and of increasingly harsh terms forced on China in consequence of its defeat in those wars. Heavy indemnities were imposed on China because of its supposed responsibility for provoking various conflicts by being so unreasonable as to refuse to accept imperialist demands in the first place. Those indemnities then seriously constrained the finances of China’s government and limited its ability to strengthen its military defenses or develop its economy. The imperialist powers forced China to fix its tariffs at a nominal level (5 percent), thereby precluding the protection of China’s infant industry from foreign competition and limiting the government’s ability to raise revenues that might be used to strengthen China against the foreign threat. Against great official and popular resistance, China was forced to allow Christian missionaries to proselytize in China’s interior and to legalize the import of opium—events that some Chinese saw as interrelated, both being intended to make Chinese lose self-confidence and self-respect as well as become psychologically dependent on the foreigners. And throughout the century of National Humiliation there were repeated episodes of foreign

barbarism, such as the Anglo-French burning of Beijing's beautiful Summer Palace in 1860.¹

During the decades after the end of first opium war in 1842, imperialist influence rapidly penetrated deep into China. More and more ports were opened by the terms of various treaties forced on China's beleaguered government. By the early twentieth century there were over fifty so-called treaty ports in which foreigners enjoyed special rights. Foreigners were removed from the jurisdiction of Chinese law and courts and placed under the jurisdiction of the consuls of their native country or of specially constituted foreign courts. Large districts of major commercial centers, along with the Chinese and foreigners residing in those districts, were placed under exclusive foreign jurisdiction. These foreign-controlled districts were called *concessions*, and the whole practice of placing parcels of the land and population of China under foreign jurisdiction was referred to as *extraterritoriality*. Other pieces of Chinese territory were leased for long periods of time. Foreign troops were stationed in the foreign concessions and leaseholdings. Foreign warships patrolled the rivers and coasts of China to protect foreign interests. As the superiority of foreign military and economic power became clear, the imperialist powers found many Chinese willing to cooperate with them for one reason or another. As the authority and effectiveness of China's central government waned, the autonomy of foreign-supported local governments often increased. By the end of the nineteenth century the various imperialist powers were on the verge of dividing China among themselves into outright colonies. They were prevented from doing so largely because they realized that such a partition would probably lead to war among the major powers. Yet they did carve out informal spheres of influence, regions guarded by the military might of a particular power and within which the interests of that power were paramount (see Figure 1-1). Britain's sphere of influence was the vast Yangtze valley. Japan's lay in southern Manchuria and Fujian. Taiwan was ceded outright to Japan in 1895. France's sphere of influence was southern Guangdong and Guanzhi. Germany's was in Shandong, and Russia's in northern Manchuria, Outer Mongolia, and Xinjiang. The United States used its influence to prevent the partition of China, favoring instead an Open Door policy in which all areas of China would remain open to the commercial activity of all foreign powers.

Still another component of China's National Humiliation was its loss of extensive territory and the destruction of Chinese influence in broad areas of Asia. Russian imperialism seized vast tracts along the left and right banks of the Amur River, Sakhalin Island, Outer Mongolia, and central Asia. The British took over Hong Kong and large parts of what is today northern Myanmar (Burma) and northeast India, which

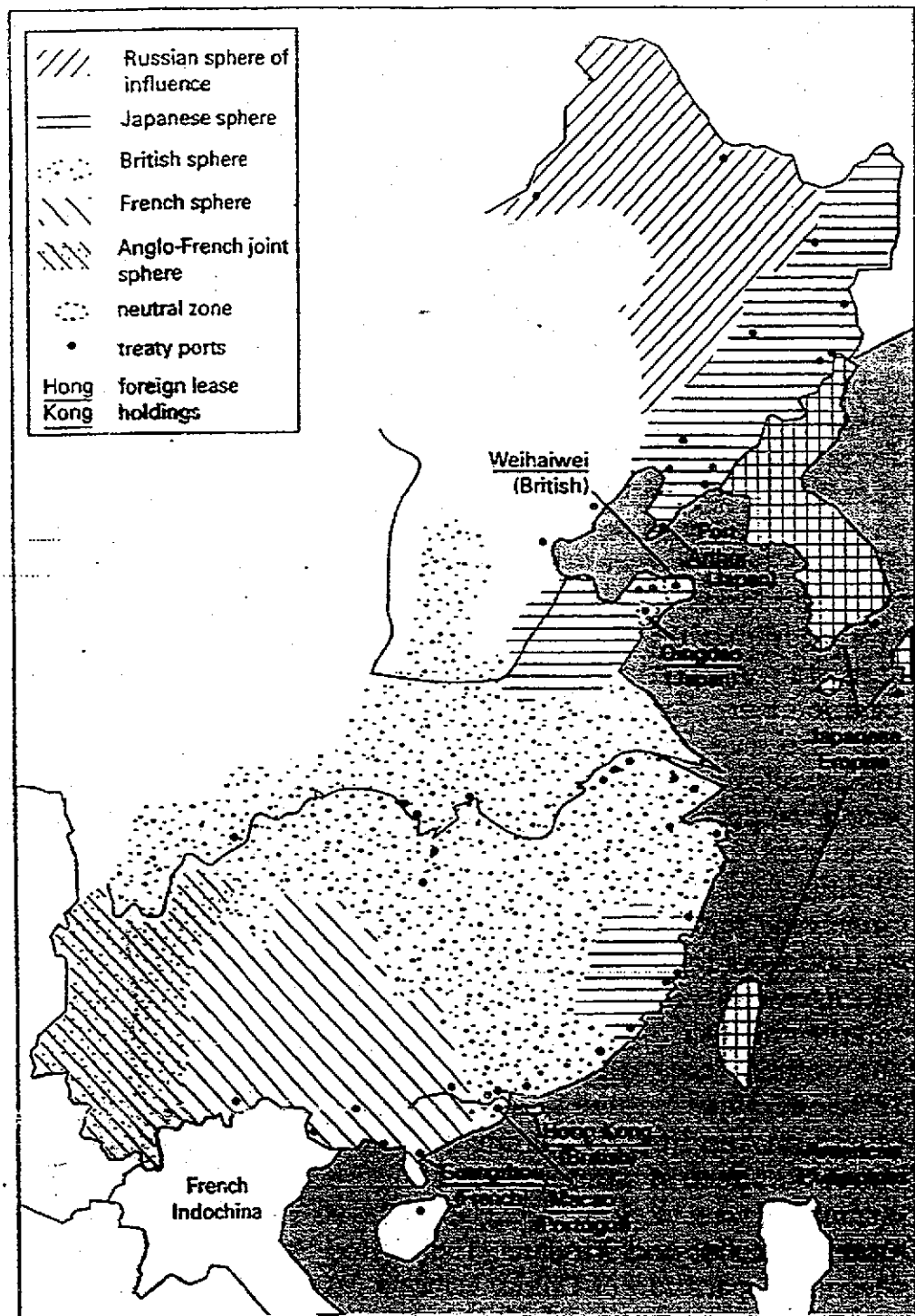


Figure 1-1 Foreign Encroachment on China circa 1920

China's government felt was Chinese territory. Japan seized Taiwan and later Manchuria. In other non-Chinese areas of Asia, China had traditionally enjoyed a degree of status and influence—in Korea, the Ryukyu Islands, in most of continental Southeast Asia, and in the small kingdoms in the Himalayan Mountains. These areas too were seized by foreign imperialism and Chinese influence extirpated.² Figure 1-2



A PRC Interpretation of China's Territorial Losses (Central Intelligence Agency, *Atlas of China*, 1971)

presents one authoritative Chinese interpretation of the territorial losses inflicted on China during the century of National Humiliation.

The century of National Humiliation can be termed a myth, but not because the episodes pointed to by Chinese scholars did not occur. Indeed, most of them did, though not always with the utterly sinister nature and motivation imputed to them. It is mythic, rather, in the sense that the fact of belief is more important than what actually occurred. The story of National Humiliation is constantly told and retold in Chinese

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schools, in the mass media, and in countless mandatory study sessions attended by Chinese citizens. Contrary interpretations or evidence are not allowed. Belief in the century of National Humiliation is virtually universal in China; even most dissidents share it. For our purposes, what is of primary importance is that Chinese believe in the century of National Humiliation.

The myth of National Humiliation stands at the center of the political culture of the People's Republic of China. It has greatly influenced China's approach to the world by giving rise to an ardent determination to end all aspects of China's "humiliation," to blot out all remnants of China's past weakness and degradation, and to prevent its recurrence. Mao Zedong expressed those sentiments in September 1949, just before the establishment of the People's Republic, when he said:

The Chinese have always been a great, courageous, and industrious nation; it is only in modern times that they have fallen behind. And that was due entirely to oppression and exploitation by foreign imperialism and domestic reactionary governments....Ours will no longer be a nation subject to insult and humiliation. We have stood up.³

Scholars differ regarding the actual impact of the foreign influence on China in the century between 1839 and 1949. Some argue that the real foreign impact was marginal and that the essential dynamics of Chinese development during that century had more to do with such endogenous variables as population growth, exhaustion of available arable land, and the emergence of new social elites and classes. Others, more representative of mainstream scholarly opinion, maintain that foreign influence had a great effect on China, interacting with and shaping the evolution of endogenous factors. CCP historiography belongs to the latter camp. In the CCP's view, during the century of National Humiliation, foreign, imperialist influence was decisive. China was reduced to a "semi-colony," with its independence and sovereignty becoming an empty formality. Imperialism became, according to the CCP, one of the two "mountains" oppressing the Chinese people. "Feudalism" was the other.

The experience of National Humiliation was a major factor impelling many young Chinese to embrace the doctrine of Marxism-Leninism in the early twentieth century. Lenin's theory about the evolution of industrial capitalism into imperialism and his observations about the rapacious nature of imperialism seemed to fit with the facts as seen by many young Chinese. Lenin's theory of imperialism not only provided a systematic and seemingly cogent explanation of Western and Japanese pressure against China, but also provided a damning moral condemnation of that pressure as well as a programmatic response. Stated simply, the anti-imperialism of post-1949 China was a function of China's experience of National Humiliation.

TRADITIONAL CHINESE WORLD ORDER

Perhaps the most bitter aspect for Chinese of growing contact with the West was not military defeat, intrusive foreign presence, or territorial losses, but an awareness that China was, in fact, inferior to the foreign powers in the very areas that Confucianism had long held to be the proof of China's superiority over others.⁴ Confucianism had held that skill in the art of governance and superior material well-being were proof of China's higher level of civilization. Yet China's experience during the years from 1839 to 1949 made it steadily clearer that it was precisely in those areas that the Western countries were superior to China. The inability of Chinese governments to cope with Western demands became increasingly obvious. Moreover, the orderly, well-administered extraterritorial concessions in the treaty ports increasingly stood in contrast to the disorder, corruption, and incompetence of Chinese governments ruling adjacent areas. And the more Chinese learned about the Western countries, the clearer it became that China was abjectly poor.

To understand the full psychological depth and intensity of Chinese bitterness over this realization of its humiliation and inferiority, one must go back a bit further and probe another important memory shared by most Chinese: the memory of China's ancient and medieval grandeur.

China was, of course, one of several dozen vast, powerful, and wealthy empires built during pre-modern history. In terms of longevity, size, and brilliance of its achievements, it was arguably one of the greatest. Along with the Nile, Mesopotamian, and Indus river valleys, the middle valley of the Yellow River was one of the earliest cradles of human civilization. In each of these regions, humans settled into agricultural communities several thousand years before Christ. The social revolution that came with settled agriculture brought urban centers, architecture and engineering, complex forms of government and warfare, writing, and many other accoutrements of civilization. What is remarkable in the case of China is that the civilization created several millennia ago continued into the early twentieth century, while the other great civilizations experienced radical discontinuities. It is as if Egyptians at the beginning of the twentieth century still wrote in hieroglyphics, studied in their schools a variant of the ancient cults of Isis and Ra, and were still ruled by a dynasty modeled after that of the Pharaohs. Chinese civilization is not the oldest; those of Egypt and Mesopotamia developed somewhat earlier. But China holds an unchallenged record for longevity and continuity. This unsurpassed continuity is the first basis of Chinese pride in their history.

Size and power are the second basis for Chinese pride. In those terms, other great empires—e.g., those of Hellenistic and Byzantine

Greece, Rome, Mughal India, Persia, the Ottoman Turks, the Arabs, and the Mongols, to name only a few—equaled the Chinese. But again China was exceptional in its longevity. The other great empires waxed, waned, and then disappeared. Various Chinese dynasties collapsed as well, sometimes to be followed by long periods of political disunity, but a new dynasty always arose to reunite the vast cultural area of China. The reasons for this exceptional political cohesion are extremely complex. Suffice it to say that by the time of the Tang dynasty (618–907 A.D.), educated Chinese generally accepted the idea that lands populated by Chinese and making up the Chinese cultural area ought to be united under a single ruler. This idea was handed down from generation to generation, and still has a significant influence on the behavior of China's leaders.⁵

The brilliant achievements of Chinese civilization are a third basis of Chinese pride. Marco Polo, the Genoese merchant explorer who travelled to the court of the great Mongol emperor Kublai Khan in the thirteenth century, was astounded by the size, wealth, and sophistication of the cities of Cathay that he visited—a wealth that helped lure various European navigators across uncharted seas in search of new routes to the fabulous East. The humanistic benevolence of China's traditional Confucian autocratic governments contrasted favorably with the brutal forms of government characteristic of much of the world for much of human history. As late as the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, European philosophers were inspired by what they understood of China's secular and humane system of government.⁶ In terms of art and technology, no pre-modern civilization surpassed China. The multitude of ancient discoveries bequeathed by Chinese inventors to mankind are well known. The walls of one of Beijing's subway stations, for example, are adorned with murals depicting China's "four great inventions": gunpowder, paper, printing, and the magnetic compass. Contemporary Chinese remain immensely proud of their ancient heritage and see it as proof that the present technological superiority of the West over China is a temporary aberration.

The proud recollection of this past grandeur has had a profound impact on modern China. In the words of Lucian Pye, "The most pervasive underlying Chinese emotion is a profound, unquestioned, generally unshakable identification with historical greatness. Merely to be Chinese is to be a part of the greatest phenomenon of history."⁷ This sentiment has extremely deep roots. The neolithic forebears of the Chinese developed ancestor worship very early on. Gradually this practice evolved into a concept of social order and harmony centering on observance of prescribed roles, a concept that allowed the early Chinese to distinguish very clearly between their own society and that of surrounding peoples. There was no doubt in Chinese minds as to which was superior. Probably by the middle of the second millennium B.C., the

Chinese had added to this notion the idea of a single supreme king within the civilized world. The next step came during the first two centuries A.D., when the Chinese concluded that intercourse with the surrounding "barbarian" peoples ought to take the form of symbolic acceptance by the latter of China's superiority.⁸

By the time of the Tang dynasty, the Chinese were convinced not only of the superiority of their civilization, but even that they were the only truly civilized people in the world. Civilization—that is, Chinese culture—stood literally and figuratively at the center of human affairs, Chinese believed. This was the notion of the "Middle Kingdom"—which is the literal meaning of *zhongguo*, the word translated nowadays as "China." Surrounded by more or less uncivilized peoples, the Middle Kingdom exerted a civilizing influence on those peoples as they interacted with it and partook of civilization—that is, of Chinese culture. Through submissive interaction with the Middle Kingdom, non-Chinese barbarians might gradually become civilized, an idea embodied by the words *lai hua*, "to come and be transformed." In other words, non-Chinese became civilized to the extent that they assimilated Chinese culture.

According to Confucian orthodoxy, China's superiority was based primarily on virtue rather than on material strength. The most important aspect of human existence, according to Confucianism, was to understand and live in accordance with the principles of correct conduct. People of all stations in society ought to strive to live in accordance with the precepts of the five cardinal relationships: between father and son, husband and wife, elder brother and younger brother, friend and friend, and emperor and subject. If everyone acted as they should, society would be orderly and prosperous. The heaviest responsibility of all fell on the emperor, the Son of Heaven or *tian zi*, whose outstanding moral example was the linchpin of the entire social, and indeed cosmological, order. When the emperor was virtuous, his officials would be virtuous. When the officials were virtuous, the people would be virtuous. When the people were virtuous, there would be harmony in human affairs, and between human affairs and the cosmos.

In terms of foreign relations, when there was proper order under heaven, when all was as it should be, foreign barbarians would be awestruck and submissive to China. Traditional Confucian thinkers were aware that barbarians might at times be more powerful than China. Power, however, was not the criterion of civilization. The unparalleled catastrophe of the Mongol conquest of China in the thirteenth century forced a hard reappraisal of the relationship between morality and power, but proper behavior still remained the bedrock of civilization, and proper conduct was still defined in terms of Confucian principles, albeit in a somewhat modernized version.

China was not unique in developing notions about its own

superiority. Many other countries, modern as well as ancient, have done likewise. But in China's case geographic circumstances conspired to allow this idea to develop relatively unchallenged. The other great civilizations of the Middle East, South Asia, the Mediterranean, and Europe were forced willy-nilly by their geography to rub elbows with one another. But China, or more precisely the East Asian area of Sinic civilization, was separated from other areas of great civilization by the vast steppes and deserts of Inner Asia and by the rugged Himalayan Mountains and Tibetan plateau. The non-Sinic societies well known to the Chinese included those of the nomadic peoples of Inner Asia and the tribal peoples inhabiting the mountainous areas to the south of Chinese settlement who practiced slash-and-burn agriculture. These peoples were simply not civilized by Chinese standards; comparison inspired not humility but arrogance. The several important non-Chinese, settled-agricultural, and literate societies within the confines of the East Asian world order—Korea, Japan, Vietnam—drew heavily and more or less consciously from the font of Chinese civilization, further confirming China's own ethnocentrism. Some knowledge of the alien but developed societies of South Asia, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean did seep into China. On occasion China even adopted elements of those alien cultures—Indian Buddhism being the most important example. But a process of intellectual filtration and compartmentalization prevented an awareness of foreign civilizations from calling into question China's assumptions regarding its own superiority.⁹

Gradually a set of practices were developed to institutionalize the "proper" relationship between the Chinese emperor and the emissaries from "barbarian" states. Central to this system were tribute-bearing missions from barbarian rulers to the Chinese emperor. By bearing gifts to the emperor and performing the prescribed rituals in the process (most notably the kowtow before the emperor), the foreign tributaries recognized the grandeur and superior virtue of the emperor. In return for their gifts, they received from the emperor gifts that typically were of greater value than those submitted to him. This was taken to be an indication of the emperor's munificence. In addition, the emperor would confer on tributary rulers a patent and an official seal of office, a rank in the Chinese aristocracy, and a calendar—all of which had certain practical utility for foreign rulers. On occasion the Chinese emperor would adjudicate disputes within tributary states—over succession to foreign thrones, for example—or would dispatch armies to help loyal tributary rulers suppress rebellions.¹⁰

Often rulers of the non-Chinese states of Inner Asia and Southeast Asia, and later of Europe, accepted such Chinese practices only reluctantly or superficially as a matter of practical expediency. Not infrequently they refused to accept them at all. Dealing with such "rebellious" behavior by barbarians, especially militarily powerful ones,

was a major diplomatic problem for traditional China. Chinese statesmen displayed considerable flexibility in dealing with such problems, resorting to such means as payments of money, indoctrination via cultural-ideological means (sending Chinese wives or advisers to foreign rulers, for example), maneuvering one barbarian state into conflict with another, or simply accepting the barbarian's refusal to perform prescribed rituals while recording that the necessary acts had, in fact, been performed. It may well be, in fact, that the set of ideals embodied in the tribute system was more a Chinese myth than a reality. Yet that myth reflected deeply ingrained notions about the proper relation between China and other countries—about how the world ought to be.

It is perhaps well to stress that China was not unique in developing notions of its cultural superiority and civilizing mission. Other nations have done likewise. The United States, for example, has typically seen itself as the promoter of liberty and democracy around the world. Britain, France, Japan, the Soviet Union, and India, among others, have also developed strong senses of international mission at one time or another.

The intellectual premises of the traditional Chinese world order were quite different from those upon which the European international order, and the modern world order extrapolated from the European model, was based. The Chinese world order was, in theory, hierarchical and centralized, with China at the apex and centered about the Son of Heaven. The European state system was based on the ideal of equal, sovereign states coexisting without any superior power. In the European system, each state enjoyed exclusive sovereignty over a precisely defined national territory. In the Chinese world order, the territorial limitations were imprecise and the purpose of interaction was the transformation of lesser societies along the lines of the Chinese model. During the nineteenth century, Chinese statesmen had great difficulty handling the discrepancies between the diplomatic practices based on these two systems.

Scholarly opinion differs greatly regarding the contemporary impact of the traditional Chinese world view. Some scholars, such as Mark Mancall and C.P. Fitzgerald, contend that traditional ideas continue to exert great influence.¹¹ Those scholars point to the many similarities between the behavior of traditional and modern China. In terms of diplomatic style, for example, they point to the persistence of the practice of ritual bestowal of gifts on foreign countries (though now these gifts are bestowed on "the people" rather than on the rulers of those countries), the emperor-like inaccessibility of Mao Zedong and other Chinese leaders, the stylized audiences granted to foreign representatives by China's leaders, and so on. They also point to China's efforts to lead Asia or the Third World, or the moralistic tone of Chinese

pronouncements on world affairs—as if other nations have mere interests, while China has principles. Again one hears echoes of Chinese virtue chastising barbarian avarice and cupidity. Nor is it difficult to find post-1949 Chinese statements that reflect traditional notions about China's civilizing mission. For example:

The Chinese people have elevated their nation to its rightful place as one of the leaders of the world.... We have set a new standard for the people of Asia and the Pacific. We have given them a new outlook on their own problems. [Beijing] serves as the birthplace of the new unity of the Asian and Pacific peoples in their struggle for harmony among nations.¹²

The influence of tradition is seen not only in relatively minor matters of style, but also, so these scholars argue, in terms of substantive policy issues. The similarity between China's traditional, hierarchical, universalistic, moralistic world view and the Stalinist approach to international relations in the 1950s was, scholars such as Fitzgerald and Mancall maintain, one factor predisposing the CCP to accept the latter. From a slightly different perspective, whether the CCP was upholding true doctrine (i.e., virtue) against the unprincipled Soviet Communist Party in the early 1960s or pontificating to the Third World on how best to develop and defeat U.S. imperialism, the central idea was the same: China was lawgiver to the foreigners. In most general terms, Chinese remain convinced that their new socialist way, whether Maoist or Dengist, is as superior to all other as they formerly felt that the Confucian empire was superior to those of the barbarians. As Professor Fitzgerald puts it, "The Chinese view of the world has not fundamentally changed; it has been adjusted to take account of the modern world, but only so far as to permit China to occupy, still, the central place in the picture."¹³

Most scholars would not go as far as Fitzgerald and Mancall. While acknowledging that the traditional Chinese world view has some influence on modern Chinese foreign policy, especially on its style and tone, the more mainstream position argues that this influence is slight, and that the discontinuities with tradition are far more important than the similarities. This viewpoint concedes that tradition did have a significant influence on the thinking and policies of some Qing officials during the nineteenth century, and that the smugness, complacency, and rigidity engendered by this traditional perspective contributed to China's difficulty in dealing with the imperialist onslaught of that era. Resorting to previously successful methods of dealing with powerful and aggressive barbarians—such as allowing them to be governed by their own laws and consuls while residing in China—also backfired when applied to the far more powerful seaborne Westerners. Yet as early as the 1830s and 1840s, some Chinese thinkers were beginning to ponder

the viability of traditional ways in dealing with China's modern problems, and by the late nineteenth century China's leading statesmen and intellectuals had broken with traditional views.¹⁴

THE BREAKDOWN OF THE TRADITIONAL WORLD VIEW

As one might expect, Chinese thinkers and leaders in the nineteenth century responded variously to China's National Humiliation. Most initially clung doggedly to traditional views, but a few began to challenge traditional notions quite early on. Shortly after China's defeat in the first opium war in 1842, Lin Zexu, the commissioner whose attempts to suppress the opium trade at Canton had precipitated the war, advanced the radical proposition that China needed to study Western military techniques and acquire Western weapons. At about the same time, some middle-level scholar-officials began informing Chinese about an outside world that differed substantially from the one derived from traditional Confucian assumptions. In 1848 Xu Jiyu, then governor of Fujian province (a position that placed him in frequent contact with Westerners), published a geography of the world informing Chinese readers that their country occupied only one corner of one continent on the globe, and that the Western countries then pressing in on China had long histories and impressive cultural achievements of their own. Xu also gave a positive appraisal of the wealth and power of the Western countries. He further wrote that the international society that China now faced was an amoral order based on power and characterized by constant diplomatic maneuvering. He informed his contemporaries about the European colonization of India, Africa, and Southeast Asia then underway, and warned that such a fate might befall China too if it failed to respond appropriately to the new Western threat. Xu's prescription was that China should hold off the Western powers via diplomatic maneuvers while studying them and borrowing their advanced techniques. When first published, Xu's radical ideas had little impact on top-level Chinese thinking. By the 1860s, however, his book was reshaping the Chinese view of their position in the world.¹⁵

Regarding the transformation of China's view of the world in the nineteenth century, Michael Hunt makes the important point that intense Chinese self-esteem did not necessarily translate into isolation and chauvinism. While such xenophobia was the common Chinese reaction to the West in the mid-nineteenth century, Hunt says, Chinese pride could also manifest itself in a more cosmopolitan form that welcomed extensive interaction with, and learning from, foreign countries.¹⁶ Chinese intellectuals came to this latter position only reluctantly, however. In the 1840s and 1850s the overwhelming majority of Chinese scholar-officials had only contempt and

complacency toward the mounting Western intrusion. There was no need to study the barbarians, they maintained. Indeed, to do so would only further weaken China by giving the barbarians an opportunity to corrupt young Chinese. The true path to national strength, they argued, was to strengthen China's traditional virtues. There is a consensus among contemporary scholars that this conservatism led to an ineptness that greatly exacerbated the difficulties faced by China in dealing with the West in the nineteenth century.

It took the shock of defeat in the second opium war in 1858, the Anglo-French capture of Beijing and the burning of the Summer Palace in 1860, and the growing strength of the Taiping Rebellion at about the same time to overcome this conservatism. In 1860 a group of reformers who styled themselves "Self-Strengtheners" came to power under the auspices of the Manchu Prince Kung, half-brother of the Xianfeng emperor until 1861 and then regent for the new Tongzhi emperor from 1862 to 1874. From 1860 to 1896 the Self-Strengtheners sought to develop new institutions while drawing on Western expertise and technology to strengthen China militarily. Initially the Self-Strengtheners thought largely in terms of military strength, and did not think it was necessary to abandon Confucian political and social institutions. Yet they were ready to modernize within those limited parameters, and under their auspices a Western-style foreign ministry, a customs service, a foreign languages school, two shipyards, and an arsenal were set up. Gradually their understanding of the changes that were necessary to strengthen China deepened. Over time they spoke increasingly of the need for overall economic and industrial development.¹⁷

The most prominent and farsighted of the Self-Strengtheners were Li Hongzhang and Zhang Zhidong. Gradually, Li and Zhang began to understand that China's weakness was linked to its general poverty. National wealth and power were tied together, they began to argue, and to make China strong it was necessary to develop coal and iron mines, metal smelters and mills, harbors, railways, telegraphs, and so on. Such ideas seemed radical in the 1860s, but by the 1890s they represented the mainstream of thinking among Chinese intellectuals—although not among the imperial court.¹⁸

By the end of the nineteenth century such seminal thinkers as Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, men whose ideas exerted a profound influence on Chinese thinking in the twentieth century, had concluded that China's survival demanded rejection of traditional social and political institutions. To ensure the political survival of the Chinese people, and of what they took to be the core values of the Chinese tradition, Chinese society had to be remade, for a very great part of the traditional Confucian order stood in the way of China's advance, Kang and Liang argued. If China was to survive, it had to reject its old complacent attitude and learn from the foreigners. For Kang and Liang,

China had to master not just Western technology, but the entire corpus of Western knowledge, from social philosophies to natural sciences. In short, China had to be remade, they argued. A "New China," and a new type of Chinese person, had to be created. Only in this way could China survive as a nation.¹⁹

This was the watershed between commitment to tradition and nationalism. For Liang Qichao, especially, the commitment to the societal entity known as the nation took priority over commitment to particular institutions. Liang and later Chinese thinkers still derived solace from a belief in the superiority of China's national past, and could imagine that the core traditional values would be retained in the transition to the future society. Yet "traditional" values covered a very wide spectrum of possibilities, and picking and choosing those for retention was done on the basis of whether they facilitated the search for national wealth and power.²⁰

Regarding international relations, Kang and Liang followed the examples of such people as Xu Jiyu and Li Hongzhang in explicitly rejecting the idea that human society was some sort of universal moral order centered around China. Instead they recognized that the international system is made up of competing and frequently hostile nations and that the common denominator of international politics is power. To survive in this competitive and amoral world, China must be powerful and maneuver like other nations.

It is difficult for Westerners to comprehend the full boldness and significance of this shift in viewpoints. The nearest equivalent in the West was, perhaps, the intellectual revolution wrought by Copernican astronomy in the sixteenth century, when the Earth was displaced from the center of the universe to become a mere planet circling one of a great number of stars. Similarly revolutionary, non-traditional ideas fundamentally shaped the thinking of the men and women who created and led the People's Republic of China. This drastic break with China's traditional world view is one reason why most scholars are reluctant to ascribe to traditional attitudes much influence on modern China's foreign relations.

FOREIGN INFLUENCE AND MAINTAINING THE CHINESE ESSENCE

While Chinese intellectuals were led to increasingly radical conclusions about the need for change in Chinese society, they continued to believe that there was a unique, distinctive moral essence at the center of Chinese civilization that should be preserved. As indicated previously, this is an ancient notion, closely tied to the idea that society is a totalistic moral order in which stability and prosperity depend upon maintaining virtue. The problem Chinese faced, as they realized that

they would have to adopt many ideas and techniques from the West, was how to assimilate Western things without allowing those foreign things to corrode China's distinctive moral essence?

Michel Oksenberg and Steve Goldstein argue that the spectrum of political debate in modern China has revolved around this question. At one extreme of the Chinese political spectrum dubbed the nativist isolationist pole by Oksenberg and Goldstein, have been those who maintained that the only way to protect China's national essence was isolation from the outside world. At the other extreme of the political spectrum, were people relatively unconcerned about protecting China's unique cultural essence, either because they were confident of the resiliency of that essence or because they viewed its fundamental change as a positive development. People at this end of the political spectrum, whom Oksenberg and Goldstein call Westernizers, were ready to throw open the doors to all sorts of foreign influences without much regard for the subversive impact they might have on the moral matrix of Chinese society. At times people representing one or the other of these extreme points of view were able to determine Chinese policy. Usually, however, a more centrist outlook prevailed. This centrist, mainstream, viewpoint attempted to reconcile the arguments of the two extremes by saying that while foreign technology and techniques should be brought into China and assimilated, undesirable, corrosive values and ideas should be filtered out. By the 1890s China's Self-Strengtheners encapsulated this idea in the slogan "Chinese learning for the essence, Western learning for practical use" (*Zhong xue wei ti, xi xue wei yong*).²¹ Ninety years later, this idea remained at the center of the Chinese political spectrum, with Deng Xiaoping characterizing his grand goal as "building socialism with Chinese characteristics." To Deng, this meant extensive assimilation of foreign techniques while firmly upholding the "four cardinal principles" to ensure that China remained socialist.²²

Both the Maoist and post-Mao regimes have shown great concern about protecting the distinctive moral characteristics of Chinese society. In the PRC, virtue and correct behavior have not been defined in Confucian terms, but in terms of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. Yet in one regard the underlying notion remains very much the same: Social unity, order, and prosperity depend on protecting the moral basis of society from foreign contamination. Any society must to some degree encourage morality among its members, but the Chinese tradition has placed a special stress on morality as the very basis of social order, and more important for us, has seen foreign influence as a basic source of corruption. China's post-1949 rulers have perennially been concerned that foreign values and ideas might corrode or subvert the essential moral characteristics of Chinese socialism.

During the forty-year history of the PRC, the political pendulum has swung from all-out Westernization in the 1950s, to nativist isolationism

in the 1960s, and back to the center of selective assimilation in the 1980s. During the period of close Sino-Soviet cooperation in the 1950s, policies of all-out Westernization were implemented. (Americans should keep in mind that the Soviet Union was, after all, a Western country.) In the 1950s Beijing pushed through a breathtakingly comprehensive effort to remake Chinese society along the lines of the Soviet model. The economy was reorganized according to the Soviet system of centralized, comprehensive planning, complete with material quotas and one-man management of enterprises. Educational institutions were remodeled along Soviet-style lines. Soviet books in virtually all fields of knowledge were translated into Chinese and used as textbooks. The political institutions of the new PRC—from the constitution of 1954, to the system of elections and popular representative institutions, to trade union organization—were modeled after those of the Soviet Union. In virtually all areas, the Soviet Union was held up as China's "big brother," the one China should emulate. The 1950s was perhaps the only period of genuine "all-out Westernization" in the PRC's history.

This period did not last long. By 1957 and 1958 many Chinese chafed at the mimicking of the Soviet Union, and Mao Zedong began searching for a distinctive, Chinese road to socialism. The Great Leap Forward was a bold experiment in this direction, with Soviet-style institutions and policies being replaced by others inspired by an egalitarian and collectivist ethos. The political pendulum moved further toward the nativist isolationist extreme of the political spectrum with the Cultural Revolution decade of 1966 to 1976. Foreign trade stagnated as policies of economic autarky were adopted. Even after the import of advanced foreign technology was resumed in 1971 and 1972, contacts between Chinese people and the outside world remained minimal in order to decrease dangers of ideological-moral contamination.

With the consolidation of Deng Xiaoping's regime in 1978, politics moved back toward the center of the spectrum. Deng's regime opened wide the doors of China to foreign technology, scientific knowledge, and even organizational techniques, but simultaneously waged repeated campaigns to ensure that Western values and ideas did not gain hold in China. Deng explained this orientation to Zimbabwean Prime Minister Robert Mugabe in August 1985:

By setting things to rights, we mean developing the productive forces while upholding the Four Cardinal Principles. To develop the productive forces, we have to reform the economic structure and open to the outside world. It is in order to assist the growth of the socialist productive forces that we absorb capital from capitalist countries and introduce their technology....In the course of reform it is very important for us to maintain our socialist orientation....The policies of invigorating our domestic economy and opening to the outside world are being carried out in accordance with the principles of socialism.²³

In other words, while Western science, technology, and organizational methods are welcome, these imports are not to be allowed to erode China's distinctive, superior socialist morality. In line with this, in 1980 Deng authorized suppression of the movement of dissident young intellectuals advocating Western-style liberty. In 1983 there was another campaign against Western-derived "spiritual pollution." Again in 1987 another campaign was launched against "bourgeois liberalism." Finally, in 1989 there was a massive clampdown on all forms of heterodox thinking and activity. These repressive campaigns had complex origins. One of their objectives was to prevent the spread of Western individualistic and liberal values among the Chinese populace.

CHINESE NATIONALISM

Recollections of ancient grandeur combined with outrage at China's century of National Humiliation provides the starting point for modern Chinese nationalism. The common denominator of the leaders of modern China—from Sun Yat-sen, to Chiang Kai-shek, to Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping—has been a deep bitterness at China's "humiliation," and a determination to blot out that humiliation and restore China to its rightful place as a great and respected power. Those men no longer thought of China as the Middle Kingdom, but they did harbor a deep conviction that China ought to stand among the front ranks of the nations of the world and that there was something profoundly wrong with a world that denied it this status. This determination to restore China's national grandeur is the crux of Chinese nationalism.

Sun Yat-sen is generally regarded as the father of Chinese nationalism. When systematizing his thoughts on China's struggle into the Three Principles of the People in 1924, Sun stated clearly that the purpose of those Principles was to secure China's National Salvation, or *jū guo*: "They [the Three Principles] will elevate China to an equal position among the nations...so that she can permanently exist in the world."²⁴

The first of the Three Principles was nationalism, which Sun defined as the loyalty of the Chinese race or nation—and to Sun race and nation were virtually synonymous—to the Chinese state. China's history had been unique, Sun felt, in that all people of a particular race had been ruled by a single state. Throughout most of history the Chinese nation/race was far superior to all others. Indeed, in the 1920s it was still superior, Sun said, in terms of cultural level. Over the past few hundred years, however, the European nations had excelled in science and technology while China had gradually lost its sense of nationalism. Thus, while China ought to be advancing in line with the nations of Europe and America, Sun wrote, it faced instead the possibility of loss of

its state and the eventual destruction of the Chinese race. Sun laid out a number of prerequisites for achieving national salvation, including popular solidarity with the state and the cultivation of virtue. "Coming to the crux of the matter," Sun wrote, "If we want to restore our race's standing, besides uniting all into a great national body, we must first recover our ancient morality—then and only then can we plan how to attain again the national position we once held."²⁵

Mao Zedong was brought to political activity as a youth by an overriding concern with the possibility that the Chinese people might lose their state and become slaves without a country. Throughout his life, nationalism remained a key theme of his thought. But Mao was a revolutionary as well as a nationalist. This meant that he went much further than Sun Yat-sen in terms of the scope of social change necessary to accomplish China's national restoration. According to Mao, to emancipate itself from imperialist domination China had to destroy the social and political power of the classes and groups in Chinese society that were linked to and served the interests of foreign imperialism. Foremost among these were the landowners and the capitalists who cooperated with foreign interests. After the foreign and domestic exploiters of the Chinese people were swept away by revolution, the Chinese people, and especially the Han people, would once again manifest their genius to the world.²⁶

Nationalism has been the lingua franca of successful politics in twentieth-century China. Those who would rule had to propound, and successfully implement, a program of national salvation that would save China from national extinction and then restore its lost national grandeur. A central aspect of the long contest between the Nationalists and the Communists from 1921 to 1949 was a struggle to win nationalist legitimacy. Both Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong propounded nationalist programs to win popular support.

Chiang Kai-shek's program centered on national unification, moral rejuvenation, and the abolition of unequal treaties imposed on China in the nineteenth century. The practice of extraterritoriality was especially pernicious, in Chiang's view, and Chiang's government devoted a considerable amount of energy to renegotiating those treaties. Extraterritoriality was finally ended during World War II.²⁷ Chiang's nationalist program also included the recovery of China's "lost territories." At a minimum these included Hong Kong and Macao, Outer Mongolia, Xinjiang, Manchuria, and Taiwan. Maximally, they included the Ryukyu Islands, parts of Soviet Siberia, the Pamir Mountains region of Soviet Central Asia, and northern Myanmar.

Chiang's nationalist program seemed adequate and persuasive to most Chinese in the 1920s, and Chiang's Nationalist Party (the Kuomintang, or KMT) rode to national power on a wave of patriotism that swept across south and central China in the middle of that decade.

Once ensconced in Nanjing, the Nationalist government set out to unite China by subordinating various regional warlords and crushing the Communist insurgency; oust the Russians from Manchuria; negotiate an end to the special treaty privileges of the European powers; and develop a modern army and munitions industry, with German help. (Germany was the only major power then having no special rights in China, having lost them during World War I.) Nationalist implementation of this program was disrupted first by mounting Japanese pressure in the early 1930s and then by all-out Sino-Japanese war after 1937.

The Japanese invasion of China during the 1930s was, from the Chinese perspective, the bitter culmination of the century of National Humiliation. It began with the seizure of Manchuria by the Japanese army in September 1931. Early the next year, the Japanese set up a puppet government in Manchuria that declared Manchuria an independent nation, named Manchukuo and allied with Japan. Manchukuo was ostensibly the homeland of the Manchu people. (The Manchu were once a distinct people whose homeland was in fact in Manchuria. Massive migration of Han from north China into Manchuria during the early twentieth century had, however, rendered the Manchu a small minority of that region's population by the 1930s. Moreover, most of the Manchu were highly sinicized.)

After seizing Manchuria, Japan began expanding step by step into north China. Chiang Kai-shek's government, convinced that China was too weak to win a war against Japan and that defeat by Japan would only further embolden Japanese aggression and create opportunities for the Chinese Communist Party, initially retreated before the Japanese advance. By 1937, however, mounting nationalist sentiment within China, together with the success of the German-assisted military and industrial development program—and deepening Soviet, British, and American concern about Japan's advance in Asia—persuaded Chiang that China had to risk a war with Japan. The result was a Chinese refusal to back down after a clash between Chinese and Japanese patrols at the Marco Polo Bridge outside Beijing. The Sino-Japanese conflict rapidly turned into a large and open-ended conflict, with Japan steadily escalating the war in a quest for victory.

For the next eight years Japan expanded the war in an effort to force China into submission. Japanese armies advanced southward from Beijing into the Yangtze River valley and westward up that valley. Shanghai fell in November 1937, and Nanjing, then China's capital, in December. Wuhan in central China fell in October 1938, as did Canton. Japanese forces seized one coastal city after another in an attempt to stanch the flow of foreign war materials into China. But while Japan could defeat China's armies, it could not destroy Chinese resistance. China was simply too vast and Japan's military forces simply too limited. By 1940 Japan controlled the main cities and transportation lines of

northern, eastern, and southeastern China, but the northwest and southwest still provided a base for continued powerful Chinese Nationalist resistance. In the huge rural areas behind Japanese lines, extensive guerrilla war developed against the occupying forces. Japan's forces were stretched so thin that they were always vulnerable at some places to resistance forces who could concentrate and disperse rapidly. Very often these guerrilla forces were organized and led by the Chinese Communist Party.²⁸

Ultimately Japan's attack on the United States at Pearl Harbor precipitated the Sino-American alliance and laid the conditions for Japan's ultimate defeat and dislocation from the Asian continent. Had Tokyo and Washington been able to avert war, China's situation would have been desperate. At a minimum, its recovery of Manchuria and Xinjiang would have been extremely problematic. In the worst case, a partition of China between Russia and Japan could not be ruled out. Figure 1-3 depicts China's situation in 1941.

The Sino-Japanese war of 1937-1945 was a brutal, searing experience for China. Japanese occupation forces were imbued with a spirit of contempt for China and the Chinese, and they often acted barbarically. Calculated brutality was also sometimes a deliberate part of Japanese policy, used in an attempt to break the spirit of Chinese resistance. The murder of perhaps 200,000 civilians in Nanjing after the fall of that city in December 1937 was the most infamous instance of such barbarity, but many other smaller incidents occurred. In 1940 Japanese forces began trying systematically to depopulate areas affected by guerrilla activity. Chinese civilian and military casualties were heavy.²⁹

The Japanese aggression from 1931 to 1945 had a deep impact on PRC foreign relations. Fears of Japan rooted in that experience contributed, for example, to China's 1949 decision to ally with the USSR and, again in the 1980s, to the decision to normalize relations with Moscow as Japan reemerged as a major military power. Memories of the period from 1937 to 1945 also colored China's reaction to the extensive Japanese economic relations with China that developed after 1978. Student demonstrators in 1985 and 1986, for example, condemned the flood of Japanese goods into China as a "second Japanese invasion." (The first invasion, of course, began in 1937.) China's experience of Japanese aggression also influenced Chinese perceptions of the United States, which was closely associated with Japan after 1945. For several decades Chinese propaganda proclaimed that Washington was trying to revive Japanese militarism to serve as an instrument of aggression against China. As we shall see in our subsequent discussion of China's national security, for many years China's security policy was oriented toward defeating a large-scale U.S. invasion of China. To some degree, this was a manifestation of the lesson learned during the period from

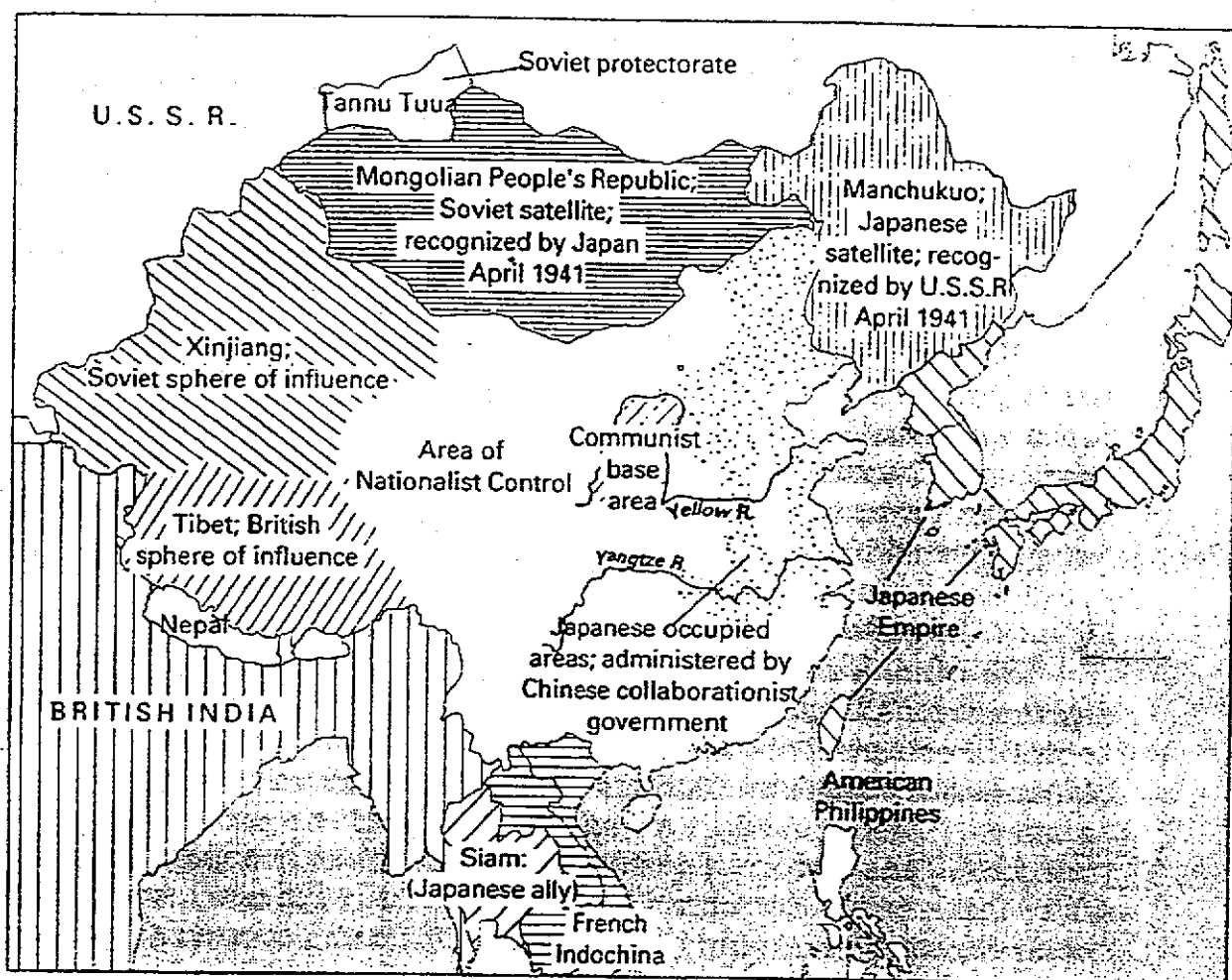


Figure 1-3 China in 1941

1931 to 1945. And in 1950, when U.S. forces approached China's borders with Korea, memories of the earlier Japanese invasion of China over this route contributed to China's decision to go to war to push back the United States.

The prominent international standing of the PRC is also rooted in China's contribution to the defeat of Japan during World War II. During that war Chiang Kai-shek was able to use China's role in tying down a million or so Japanese troops to win American, Soviet, and British support for his nationalist program. Manchuria and Taiwan were returned to China. China became one of the Allied Big Four and won a permanent seat on the Security Council of the newly created United Nations. Chiang secured (half-hearted) American support and Soviet acquiescence for his efforts to crush the CCP, thereby restoring—so Chiang hoped—national unity. Chiang also seized the opportunity presented by the Soviet-German war to oust the Soviets from Xinjiang and reintegrate that vast mineral-rich region into China. These were impressive achievements and Chiang hoped that they would win popular acclaim, if not active popular support, for his post-war regime.

One important factor that led to the failure of Chiang's expectations was the strongly negative, patriotic reaction to his acceptance of the

Soviet demands on China that flowed from the American-Soviet-British agreement at Yalta in February 1945. On the basis of the Yalta agreement, Moscow demanded that China formally recognize Outer Mongolian independence and grant the USSR extensive special rights in Manchuria. (This is discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.) In practical terms it is difficult to see how Chiang could have rejected joint U.S., Soviet, and British demands; the realities of international politics in 1945 left Chiang very little room to maneuver. But to Chinese nationalist sentiment, the agreements imposed on China in 1945 were akin to the "humiliating" unequal treaties of the last century. Nationalist passions had been fanned to a white heat by the searing experiences and sacrifices of China's eight-year war against Japan. Those absolutist passions found no room for compromise, and Chiang's pragmatism was condemned.³⁰ Chiang Kai-shek's experience stands as a warning to Chinese leaders who are tempted to compromise Chinese nationalism.

The Nationalists and the Communists tried to undermine each other's nationalist credentials. The Communists charged that the KMT was subservient to the interests of one or another imperialist power. The proof of this, they said, lay first in the Nationalist refusal to resist Japanese aggression prior to 1937 and then, once the Sino-Japanese war began, in the KMT's efforts to limit the CCP's expansion of its anti-Japanese guerrilla forces in the hinterlands of north and central China. This was a strategy admirably designed to combine the expansion of Communist-led revolutionary power with nationalist appeal. It worked marvelously. The KMT's efforts to curb the growth of Communist power were hamstrung by popular nationalist sentiment. To the extent that the KMT ignored this sentiment and tried to check the Communists, it undermined its own nationalist credentials. The Communists were effectively able to depict KMT moves against the CCP as traitorous attempts to weaken national resistance to Japan.

For their part, the Nationalists condemned the CCP as a Soviet puppet, a mechanism of Soviet aggression against China. The CCP's base area in China's northwest was, the KMT charged, the Soviet Union's equivalent of Japan's Manchukuo. To substantiate these charges, the Nationalists pointed to the CCP's long and apparently loyal obedience to the Communist International (the Comintern). They also pointed to the Comintern documents seized during a raid on the Soviet embassy in Beijing in 1927, which made clear the extent to which Moscow directed CCP policy in the mid-1920s. At that time there was little evidence suggesting that the CCP was other than what the KMT said it was—a loyal and pliant component of Moscow's Third International. Moreover, in retrospect, it seems clear that from the founding of the CCP in 1921 through 1935, Moscow did effectively dominate that party.³¹

It is also apparent that Mao Zedong's rise to power within the CCP was closely tied to a nationalist rebellion against Comintern control.

After pushing aside the Comintern's loyalists and seizing paramount power within the Party at the Zunyi Conference in January 1935, Mao reduced Soviet influence on the CCP. Then after the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941, he eliminated that influence entirely. To emancipate the CCP from Moscow, Mao had to defeat the Soviet-dominated Internationalists within the CCP, a group led by Wang Ming. For a number of very practical reasons, Mao could not afford to break with the Soviet Union. He was convinced, however, that if the policies of the CCP were based on Soviet national interests rather than on the expansion of revolutionary power within China, the CCP would fail in its historic mission of "saving China." This was unacceptable to Mao, and he outmaneuvered both Stalin and Wang Ming to persist in the implementation of his independent, revolutionary line.

Mao's emancipation of the CCP and the Chinese revolution from Comintern domination was a major victory for Chinese nationalism. It helped in two ways to win power for Mao. First, Mao's independent, nationalist line increasingly made sense to the other leaders of the CCP. During the war against Japan they came to realize that Mao's combination of patriotic resistance to Japan and determined expansion of Communist power was the key to the eventual conquest of full state power in China. Conversely, they realized that adopting the policies urged by Wang Ming and Moscow would sacrifice the expansion of revolutionary power for the sake of enhancing Soviet national security as defined by Soviet diplomacy. Further, the sinicization of Marxist-Leninist doctrine, which was the theoretical underpinning of Mao's independence from Moscow, greatly enhanced the appeal of that doctrine to Chinese intellectuals. Marxism-Leninism appeared to educated and patriotic Chinese no longer as an alien, European doctrine, but as a Chinese philosophy based on Chinese history and incorporating a large part of Chinese culture. This made it much easier for them to accept. Thus, in several ways Mao's successful amalgamation of Communism and nationalism played a crucial role in his and the CCP's rise to power.³²

Just as the KMT and the CCP represented different brands of Chinese nationalism before 1949, so too there have been different variants of Chinese nationalism within the PRC. Michel Oksenberg has built on his earlier concept of the Chinese political spectrum to develop a four-category topology of Chinese nationalism. Each variant posits different explanations of China's weakness, as well as solutions for overcoming those weaknesses. "Xenophobic nationalists" have believed that the subversion of indigenous Chinese virtues and strength was the root of China's weakness, and argued that the eradication of foreign influences was the route to revived national strength. "Emotional nationalists" have been deeply ambivalent about foreign contacts, feeling that China's ills are primarily due to foreign transgressions and that the sine qua non of national recovery is vigilance against foreign insults and

pressure. "Assertive nationalists" also see foreign economic exploitation and cultural infiltration as a key reason for China's weakness, but recognize that interaction with the outside world, and especially the acquisition of advanced technology, is essential for China's advance. The favored solution of "assertive nationalists" is to limit interactions with the outside world to transactions clearly beneficial to China's economic development, while watching carefully for unwanted consequences. Finally, there are what Oksenberg calls "confident nationalists." Leaders of this type attribute China's weakness primarily to its low level of economic development, and prescribe extensive interactions with foreign countries to secure a wide range of inputs essential to the development process. "Confident nationalists" are no less determined than the others to establish China as a leading nation, but they are more confident than the others that China's distinctive culture is sufficiently resilient to survive extensive contact with the outside world.³³

The four different nationalist perspectives have addressed essentially the same agenda. One item on that agenda is to maintain China's distinctive character while developing the economy so as to provide the basis for national wealth and power. This issue was addressed earlier in our discussion of the Chinese political spectrum. A second item on China's nationalist agenda has been the defense of current national boundaries and the recovery of lost territories. This too was discussed above and will be discussed further in the subsequent chapter on China's national security.

A third agenda item is securing international recognition as a great power. As with all other items on the nationalist agenda, the way in which that is to be done has been a subject of considerable experimentation and debate. China has used various forums to establish itself as a major international actor. At times it has claimed leadership of the Third World, of the Socialist Camp, or of the World Revolutionary Movement. China's decision to acquire nuclear weapons, its very expensive space program, and its vigorous participation in international athletic competitions all have national prestige as one objective. A desire for international status has also influenced the PRC's international alignments vis-à-vis the great powers. During the late 1950s, the desire for recognition as an independent great power, and, conversely, a sense of humiliation because China was regarded as Moscow's "little brother," probably contributed to Mao's decision to challenge Moscow's leadership of the socialist camp, even though that challenge was extremely costly in terms of China's economic development. In the early 1980s, China rejected close alignment with the United States, partly out of a fear that it was becoming a junior partner of the American superpower.

Concerns with security, development, and status are not unique to China. All nations seek security. Many poor nations are concerned with development. And many Third World nations that experienced European

domination in the pasts are highly sensitive to perceived slights and infringements on sovereignty. But in China's case there is something more: a deep and abiding conviction that China ought, by historical right, to be one of the great powers of the world. Only a very few contemporary countries have developed and still widely believe in such a myth justifying their putative world role. China's aspiration to a global role and recognition places it among a very small set of contemporary nations.

The importance of nationalism in Chinese politics increased in the 1970s and 1980s as revolutionary fervor ebbed. The reasons for what the Chinese media dubbed a "crisis of faith" are extremely complex and need not concern us here. It will suffice to note that by the 1980s, more and more Chinese doubted the attainability of the utopian goals extolled by the CCP and used to justify the heavy demands placed on the people. As noted earlier, Mao had welded together Chinese Communism and nationalism during the 1930s. But the Communist component of that amalgam became less and less appealing during the 1980s, and the CCP turned to nationalism to fill the ideological void. Nationalist themes were increasingly used in lieu of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist appeals to rally popular support. Allen Whiting points to the use of confrontations with foreign governments to rouse emotional, nationalist reactions among Chinese; e.g., Beijing's bitter condemnation of the 1982 move by Japan's Ministry of Education to revise the school textbook interpretation of Japan's aggression in China in the 1930s. By tapping deep-rooted feelings of resentment at foreign efforts to belittle or humiliate China, Beijing hoped to rally the Chinese people around the government.³⁴

Lucian Pye has also suggested that as ideological values recede, nationalist objectives, such as overtaking the most advanced countries, will become more salient—even though the policies extrapolated from those values might not make the most sense in terms of a narrower economic rationality. China may insist on acquiring the most sophisticated technology, for example, not because of a hard analysis of the economic costs and benefits of that technology, but because of a desire to catch up with more technologically advanced nations.³⁵

NOTES

1. Regarding the events constituting the century of National Humiliation, see John K. Fairbank, Edwin O. Reishauer, and Albert M. Craig, *East Asia, the Modern Transformation*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965; Paul H. Clyde and Burton F. Beers, *The Far East: A History of Western Impacts and Eastern Responses, 1830-1975*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1975; *The Cambridge History of China*, John K. Fairbank and Kwang-ching Liu, eds., vol. 11 (1800-1911), New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988. An older but still extremely valuable work is Hosea B. Morse, *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, three volumes, London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1910-1918. Regarding the Opium War, see Hsin-pao Chang, *Commissioner Lin and the Opium War*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964; Jack Beeching, *The Chinese Opium Wars*, New York: Harcourt Brace, 1975; Maurice Collis, *Foreign Mud: The Opium Imbroglia at Canton in the 1830s and the Anglo-Chinese War*, New York: W.W. Norton, 1946. Regarding the "carving of