CHAPTER NINETEEN

Empires in Collision

Europe, the Middle East, and East Asia

1800–1914

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"In the 170-plus years since the Opium War of 1840, our great country has weathered untold hardships. . . . Following the Opium War, China gradually became a semi-colonial . . . society, and foreign powers stepped up their aggression against China."[1] Speaking in 2011, Chinese President Hu Jintao thus reminded his listeners of Britain's violent intrusion into China's history in order to sell highly addictive opium to China's people. This conflict marked the beginning of what Chinese still describe as a "century of humiliation." In Hu Jintao's view it was only the victory of the Chinese Communist Party that enabled his country to finally escape from that shameful past. Memories of the Opium War remain a central element of China's "patriotic education" for the young, serve as a warning against uncritical admiration of the West, and provide a rejoinder to any Western criticism of China. Some 170 years after that clash between the Chinese and British empires, the Opium War retains an emotional resonance for many Chinese and offers a politically useful tool for the country's government.

CHINA WAS AMONG THE COUNTRIES THAT CONFRONTED an aggressive and industrializing West while maintaining its formal independence, unlike the colonized areas discussed in Chapter 18. So too did Japan, the Ottoman Empire, Persia (now Iran), Ethiopia, and Siam (now Thailand). Latin America also falls in this category (see pp. 853–61 in Chapter 17). The governments of these regions avoided outright incorporation into European colonial empires, retaining some ability to resist European aggression and to reform or transform their own

Carving Up the Pie of China: In this French cartoon from the late 1890s, the Great Powers of the day (from left to right: Great Britain's Queen Victoria, Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm, Russia's Tsar Nicholas II, a female figure representing France, and the Meiji emperor of Japan) participate in dividing China, while a Chinese figure behind them tries helplessly to stop the partition of his country. (The Art Archive at Art Resource, NY)

societies. But they shared with their colonized counterparts the need to deal with four dimensions of the European moment in world history. First, they faced the immense military might and political ambitions of rival European states. Second, they became enmeshed in networks of trade, investment, and sometimes migration that arose from an industrializing and capitalist Europe to generate a new world economy. Third, they were touched by various aspects of traditional European culture, as some among them learned the French, English, or German language; converted to Christianity; or studied European literature and philosophy. Finally, they too engaged with the culture of modernity—its scientific rationalism; its technological achievements; its belief in a better future; and its ideas of nationalism, socialism, feminism, and individualism. In those epic encounters, they sometimes resisted, at other times accommodated, and almost always adapted what came from the West. They were active participants in the global drama of nineteenth-century world history, not simply its passive victims or beneficiaries.

Dealing with Europe, however, was not the only item on their agendas. Population growth and peasant rebellion wracked China; internal social and economic changes eroded the stability of Japanese public life; the great empires of the Islamic world shrank or disappeared; rivalry among competing elites troubled Latin American societies; Ethiopia launched its own empire-building process even as it resisted European intrusions. Encounters with an expansive Europe were conditioned everywhere by particular local circumstances. Among those societies that remained independent, albeit sometimes precariously, while coping simultaneously with their internal crises and the threat from the West, this chapter focuses primarily on China, the Ottoman Empire, and Japan. Together with Latin America, they provide a range of experiences, responses, and outcomes and many opportunities for comparison.

SEEKING THE MAIN POINT

What differences can you identify in how China, the Ottoman Empire, and Japan experienced Western imperialism and responded to it? How might you account for those differences?

Reversal of Fortune: China's Century of Crisis

In 1793, just a decade after British King George III lost his North American colonies, he received yet another rebuff, this time from China. In a famous letter to the British monarch, the Chinese emperor Qianlong (chyan-loong) sharply rejected British requests for a less restricted trading relationship with his country. "Our Celestial Empire possesses all things in prolific abundance," he declared. "There was therefore no need to import the manufactures of outside barbarians." Qianlong's snub simply continued the pattern of the previous several centuries, during which Chinese authorities had strictly controlled and limited the activities of European missionaries and merchants. But by 1912, little more than a century later, China's long-established imperial state had collapsed, and the country had been transformed from a central presence in the global economy to a weak and dependent participant in a European-dominated world system in which Great Britain was the major economic and political

A Map of Time

1793	Chinese reject British requests for open trade
1798	Napoleon invades Egypt
1830s	Famine and rebellions in Japan
1838–1842	First Opium War in China
1838–1876	Tanzimat Reforms in the Ottoman Empire
1850–1864	Taiping Uprising in China
1856–1858	Second Opium War in China
1853	Admiral Perry arrives in Japan
1868	Meiji Restoration in Japan
1894–1895	Sino-Japanese War
1896	Ethiopian defeat of Italy preserves Ethiopia's independence
1899–1901	Boxer Rebellion in China
1904–1905	Russo-Japanese War
1908	Young Turk takeover in Ottoman Empire
1910	Japan annexes Korea
1911	Chinese revolution; end of Qing dynasty

player. It was a stunning reversal of fortune for a country that in Chinese eyes was the civilized center of the entire world—in their terms, the Middle Kingdom.

The Crisis Within

Causation
What accounts for the massive peasant rebellions of nineteenth-century China?

In many ways, China was the victim of its own earlier success. Its robust economy and American food crops had enabled substantial population growth, from about 100 million people in 1685 to some 430 million in 1853. Unlike Europe, though, where a similar population spurt took place, no Industrial Revolution accompanied this vast increase in the number of people, nor was agricultural production able to keep up. Neither did China's internal expansion to the west and south generated anything like the wealth and resources that derived from Europe's overseas empires. The result was growing pressure on the land, smaller farms for China's huge peasant population, and, in all too many cases, unemployment, impoverishment, misery, and starvation.

Furthermore, China's famed centralized and bureaucratic state did not enlarge itself to keep pace with the growing population. Thus the state was increasingly unable to effectively perform its many functions, such as tax collection, flood control, social

welfare, and public security. Gradually the central state lost power to provincial officials and local gentry. Among such officials, corruption was endemic, and harsh treatment of peasants was common. According to an official report issued in 1852, "Day and night soldiers are sent out to harass taxpayers. Sometimes corporal punishments are imposed upon tax delinquents; some of them are so badly beaten to exact the last penny that blood and flesh fly in all directions."[2] Finally, European military pressure and economic penetration during the first half of the nineteenth century (see pp. 936–38) disrupted internal trade routes, created substantial unemployment, and raised peasant taxes.

This combination of circumstances, traditionally associated with a declining dynasty, gave rise to growing numbers of bandit gangs roaming the countryside and, even more dangerous, to outright peasant rebellion. Beginning in the late eighteenth century, such rebellions drew on a variety of peasant grievances and found leadership in charismatic figures proclaiming a millenarian religious message. Increasingly they also expressed opposition to the Qing dynasty because of its foreign Manchu origins. "We wait only for the northern region to be returned to a Han emperor," declared one rebel group in the early nineteenth century.[3]

The culmination of China's internal crisis lay in the Taiping Uprising, which set much of the country aflame between 1850 and 1864. This was a different kind of peasant upheaval. Its leaders largely rejected Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism alike, finding their primary ideology in a unique form of Christianity. Its leading figure, Hong Xiuquan (1814–1864), proclaimed himself the younger brother of Jesus, sent to cleanse the world of demons and to establish a "heavenly kingdom of great peace." Nor were these leaders content to restore an idealized Chinese society; instead they insisted on genuinely revolutionary change. They called for the abolition of private property, a radical redistribution of land, the end of prostitution and opium smoking, and the organization of society into sexually segregated military camps of men and women. Hong fiercely denounced the Qing dynasty as foreigners who had "poisoned China" and "defiled the emperor's throne." His cousin, Hong Rengan, developed plans for transforming China into an industrial nation, complete with railroads, health insurance for all, newspapers, and widespread public education.

Taiping Rebellion
The Taiping rebels captured the city of Nanjing in 1853, making it their capital. Eleven years later, in 1864, imperial forces retook the city as illustrated in this Chinese print, effectively ending the Taiping Uprising. (The Art Archive at Art Resource, NY.)

Among the most revolutionary dimensions of the Taiping Uprising was

its posture toward women and gender roles. This outlook reflected its origins among the minority Hakka people of southern China where women were notably less restricted than Confucian orthodoxy prescribed. During the uprising, Hakka women, whose feet had never been bound, fought as soldiers in their own regiments; in liberated regions, Taiping officials ordered that the feet of other women be unbound. Their land reform program promised women and men equal shares of land. Women were now permitted to sit for civil service examinations and were appointed to supervisory positions, though usually where they exercised authority over other women rather than men. Mutual attraction rather than family interests was promoted as a basis for marriage.

None of this was consistently implemented during the short period of Taiping power, and the movement's leadership demonstrated considerable ambivalence about equality for women. Hong himself reflected a much more traditional understanding of elite women's role when he assembled a large personal harem and declared: "The duty of the palace women is to attend to the needs of their husbands; and it is arranged by Heaven that they are not to learn of the affairs outside."[4] Nonetheless, the Taiping posture toward women represented a sharp challenge to long-established gender roles and contributed to the hostility that the movement generated among many other Chinese, including women.

With a rapidly swelling number of followers, Taiping forces swept out of southern China and established their capital in Nanjing in 1853. For a time, the days of the Qing dynasty appeared to be over. But divisions and indecisiveness within the Taiping leadership and their inability to link up with several other rebel groups also operating separately in China provided an opening for Qing dynasty loyalists to rally and by 1864 to crush this most unusual of peasant rebellions. Western military support for pro-Qing forces likewise contributed to their victory. It was not, however, the imperial military forces of the central government that defeated the rebels. Instead provincial military leaders, fearing the radicalism of the Taiping program, mobilized their own armies, which in the end crushed the rebel forces.

Thus the Qing dynasty was saved, but it was also weakened as the provincial gentry consolidated their power at the expense of the central state. The intense conservatism of both imperial authorities and their gentry supporters postponed any resolution of China's peasant problem, delayed any real change for China's women, and deferred vigorous efforts at modernization until the communists came to power in the mid-twentieth century. More immediately, the devastation and destruction occasioned by this massive civil war seriously disrupted and weakened China's economy. Estimates of the number of lives lost range from 20 to 30 million. In human terms, it was the most costly conflict in the world during the nineteenth century, and it took China more than a decade to recover from its devastation. China's internal crisis in general and the Taiping Uprising in particular also provided a highly unfavorable setting for the country's encounter with a Europe newly invigorated by the Industrial Revolution.

Western Pressures

Connection
How did Western pressures stimulate change in China during the nineteenth century?

Nowhere was the shifting balance of global power in the nineteenth century more evident than in China's changing relationship with Europe, a transformation that registered most dramatically in the famous Opium Wars. Derived from Arab traders in the eighth century or earlier, opium had long been used on a small scale as a drinkable medicine, regarded as a magical cure for dysentery and described by one poet as "fit for Buddha."[5] It did not become a serious problem until the late eighteenth century, when the British began to use opium, grown and processed in India, to cover their persistent trade imbalance with China. By the 1830s, British, American, and other Western merchants had found an enormous, growing, and very profitable market for this highly addictive drug. From 1,000 chests (each weighing roughly 150 pounds) in 1773, China's opium imports exploded to more than 23,000 chests in 1832 (see Snapshot).

By then, Chinese authorities recognized a mounting problem on many levels. Because opium importation was illegal, it had to be smuggled into China, thus flouting Chinese law. Bribed to turn a blind eye to the illegal trade, many officials were

Snapshot Chinese/British Trade at Canton, 1835–1836[6]

What do these figures suggest about the role of opium in British trade with China? Calculate opium exports as a percentage of British exports to China, Britain's trade deficit without opium, and its trade surplus with opium. What did this pattern mean for China?

	Item	Value (in Spanish dollars)
British Exports to Canton	Opium	17,904,248
	Cotton	8,357,394
	All other items (sandlewood, lead, iron, tin, cotton yarn and piece goods, tin plates, watches, clocks)	6,164,981
	Total	32,426,623
British Imports from Canton	Tea (black and green)	13,412,243
	Raw silk	3,764,115
	Vermilion	705,000
	All other goods (sugar products, camphor, silver, gold, copper, musk)	5,971,541
	Total	23,852,899

corrupted. Furthermore, a massive outflow of silver to pay for the opium reversed China's centuries-long ability to attract much of the world's silver supply, and this imbalance caused serious economic problems. Finally, China found itself with many millions of addicts—men and women, court officials, students preparing for exams, soldiers going into combat, and common laborers seeking to overcome the pain and drudgery of their work. Following an extended debate at court in 1836—whether to legalize the drug or to crack down on its use—the emperor decided on suppression. An upright official, Commissioner Lin Zexu (lin zuh-SHOO), led the campaign against opium use as a kind of "drug czar." (See the Portrait of Lin Zexu, pp. 940–41.) The British, offended by the seizure of their property in opium and emboldened by their new military power, sent a large naval expedition to China, determined to end the restrictive conditions under which they had long traded with that country. In the process, they would teach the Chinese a lesson about the virtues of free trade and the "proper" way to conduct relations among countries. Thus began the first Opium War, in which Britain's industrialized military might proved decisive. The Treaty of Nanjing, which ended the war in 1842, largely on British terms, imposed numerous restrictions on Chinese sovereignty and opened five ports to European traders. Its provisions reflected the changed balance of global power that had emerged with Britain's Industrial Revolution. To the Chinese, that agreement represented the first of the "unequal treaties" that seriously eroded China's independence by the end of the century.

Addiction to Opium
Throughout the nineteenth century, opium imports created a massive addiction problem in China, as this photograph of an opium den from around 1900 suggests. Not until the early twentieth century did the British prove willing to curtail the opium trade from their Indian colony. (© Hulton-Deutsch Collection/ Corbis)

But it was not the last of those treaties. Britain's victory in a second Opium War (1856–1858) was accompanied by the brutal vandalizing of the emperor's exquisite Summer Palace outside Beijing and resulted in further humiliations. Still more ports were opened to foreign traders. Now those foreigners were allowed to travel freely and buy land in China, to preach Christianity under the protection of Chinese authorities, and to patrol some of China's rivers. Furthermore, the Chinese were forbidden to use the character for "barbarians" to refer to the British in official documents. Following military defeats at the hands of the French (1885) and Japanese (1895), China lost control of Vietnam, Korea, and Taiwan. By the end of the century, the Western nations plus Japan and Russia all had carved out spheres of influence within China, granting themselves special privileges to establish military bases, extract raw materials, and build railroads. Many Chinese believed that their country was being "carved up like a melon" (see Map 19.1 and the chapter-opening photo on p. 930).

Coupled with its internal crisis, China's encounter with European imperialism had reduced the proud Middle Kingdom to dependency on the Western powers as it

Map 19.1 China and the World in the Nineteenth Century
As China was reeling from massive internal upheavals during the nineteenth century, it also faced external assaults from Russia, Japan, and various European powers. By the end of the century, large parts of China were divided into spheres of influence, each affiliated with one of the major industrial powers of the day.

became part of a European-based "informal empire." China was no longer the center of civilization to which barbarians paid homage and tribute, but just one weak and dependent nation among many others. The Qing dynasty remained in power, but in a weakened condition, which served European interests well and Chinese interests poorly. Restrictions imposed by the unequal treaties clearly inhibited China's industrialization, as foreign goods and foreign investment flooded the country largely unrestricted. Chinese businessmen mostly served foreign firms, rather than developing as an independent capitalist class capable of leading China's own Industrial Revolution.

The Failure of Conservative Modernization

Connection
What strategies did China adopt to confront its various problems? In what ways did these strategies reflect China's own history and culture as well as the new global order?

Chinese authorities were not passive in the face of their country's mounting crises, both internal and external. Known as "self-strengthening," their policies during the 1860s and 1870s sought to reinvigorate a traditional China while borrowing cautiously from the West. An overhauled examination system, designed to recruit qualified candidates for official positions, sought the "good men" who could cope with the massive reconstruction that China faced in the wake of the Taiping rebellion. Support for landlords and the repair of dikes and irrigation helped restore rural social and economic order. A few industrial factories producing textiles and steel were established, coal mines were expanded, and a telegraph system was initiated. One Chinese general in 1863 confessed his humiliation that "Chinese weapons are far inferior to those of foreign countries."[7] A number of modern arsenals, shipyards, and foreign-language schools sought to remedy this deficiency.

Self-strengthening as an overall program for China's modernization was inhibited by the fears of conservative leaders that urban, industrial, or commercial development would erode the power and privileges of the landlord class. Furthermore, the new industries remained largely dependent on foreigners for machinery, materials, and expertise. And they served to strengthen local authorities, who largely controlled those industries, rather than the central Chinese state.

The general failure of "self-strengthening" became apparent at the end of the century, when an anti-foreign movement known as the Boxer Uprising (1898–1901) erupted in northern China. Led by militia organizations calling themselves the Society of Righteous and Harmonious Fists, the "Boxers" killed numerous Europeans and Chinese Christians and laid siege to the foreign embassies in Beijing. When Western powers and Japan occupied Beijing to crush the rebellion and imposed a huge payment on China as a punishment, it was clear that China remained a dependent country, substantially under foreign control.

No wonder, then, that growing numbers of educated Chinese, including many in official elite positions, became highly disillusioned with the Qing dynasty, which was both foreign and ineffective in protecting China. By the late 1890s, such people were organizing a variety of clubs, study groups, and newspapers to examine China's desperate situation and to explore alternative paths. The names of these organizations reflect their outlook—the National Rejuvenation Study Society, Society to Protect the Nation, and Understand the National Shame Society. They admired not only Western science and technology but also Western political practices that limited the authority of the ruler and permitted wider circles of people to take part in public life. They believed that only a truly unified nation in which rulers and ruled were closely related could save China from dismemberment at the hands of foreign imperialists. Among the small number of women who took part in these discussions, traditional gender roles became yet another focus of opposition. Qiu Jin (1875–1907), the rebellious daughter of a gentry family, left a husband and two children to study in Japan. Upon her return to China, she started a women's journal, arguing that liberated

PORTRAIT

Lin Zexu, Confronting The Opium Trade[8]

When the Chinese emperor decided in 1838 on firm measures to suppress the opium trade, he selected Lin Zexu to enforce that policy. Born in 1785, Lin was the son of a rather poor but scholarly father, who had never achieved an official position. Lin, however, excelled academically, passing the highest level examinations in 1811 after two failed attempts, and then rising rapidly in the ranks of China's bureaucracy. In the process, he gained a reputation as a strict and honest official, immune to bribery, genuinely concerned with the welfare of the peasantry, and unafraid to confront the corruption and decadence of rich and poor alike.

And so in December of 1838, after some nineteen personal audiences with the emperor, Lin found himself in Canton, the center of the opium trade and the only Chinese city legally open to foreign merchants. He was facing the greatest challenge of his professional life. Undertaken with the best of intentions, his actions propelled the country into a century of humiliating subservience to an industrializing Europe and forced growing numbers of Chinese to question their vaunted civilization.

Commissioner Lin Zexu. (From Alexander Murray, Doings in China: Being the personal narrative of an officer engaged in the late Chinese Expedition, from the Recapture of Chusan in 1841, to the Peace of Nankin in 1842, *(London: Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty, 1843), pl. ii.)*

In established Confucian fashion, Lin undertook his enormous task with a combination of moral appeals, reasoned argument, political pressure, and coercion, while hoping to avoid outright armed conflict. It was an approach that focused on both the demand and supply sides of the problem. In dealing with Chinese opium users, Lin emphasized the health hazards of the drug and demanded that everyone turn in their supplies of opium and the pipes used to smoke it. By mid-1839, he had confiscated some 50,000 pounds of the drug together with over 70,000 pipes and arrested some 1,700 dealers. Hundreds of local students were summoned to an assembly where they were invited to identify opium distributors and to suggest ways of dealing with the problem. Opium-using officials

women were essential for a strong Chinese nation. Recruiting students into the anti-Qing movement, she often dressed in male clothing. "My aim is to dress like a man," she declared. "In China, men are strong and women are oppressed because they are supposed to be weak."[9] (See Document 19.3, pp. 962–63.) Thus was born the immensely powerful force of Chinese nationalism, directed alike against Western imperialists, the foreign Qing dynasty, and aspects of China's traditional culture.

The Qing dynasty response to these new pressures proved inadequate. A flurry of progressive imperial edicts in 1898, known as the Hundred Days of Reform, was soon squelched by conservative forces. More extensive reform in the early twentieth century, including the end of the old examination system and the promise of a national parliament, was a classic case of too little too late. In 1911, the ancient imperial

became the target of investigations, and five-person teams were established to enforce the ban on opium smoking on one another.

Lin applied a similar mix of methods to the foreign suppliers of opium. A moralistic appeal to Queen Victoria argued that the articles the English imported from China—silk, tea, and rhubarb—were all beneficial. "By what right," he asked, "do [the barbarians] use this poisonous drug to injure Chinese people?" He pointedly reminded Europeans that new regulations, applying to Chinese and foreigners alike, fixed the penalty for dealing in opium at "decapitation or strangling." Then he demanded that foreign traders hand over their opium, and without compensation. When the merchants hesitated, Lin tightened the screws, ordering all Chinese employed by foreigners to leave their jobs and blockading the Europeans in their factories. After six weeks of negotiations, the Europeans capitulated, turning over some 3 million pounds of raw opium to Lin Zexu.

Disposing of the drug was an enormous task. Workers, stripped and searched daily to prevent looting, dug three huge trenches into which they placed the opium mixed with water, salt, and lime and then flushed the concoction into the sea. Lin offered a sacrifice to the Sea Spirit, apologizing for introducing this poison into its domain and "advising the Spirit to tell the creatures of the water to move away for a time." He informed the emperor that throngs of local people flocked to witness the destruction of the opium. And foreigners too came to observe the spectacle. According to Lin, they "do not dare to show any disrespect, and indeed I should judge from their attitudes that they have the decency to feel heartily ashamed."

Had Lin been correct in his appraisal, history would have taken a very different turn. But neither Lin nor his superiors anticipated the response that these actions provoked from the British government. They were also largely unaware of the European industrial and military advances, which had decisively shifted the balance of power between China and the West. Arriving in 1840, a British military expedition quickly demonstrated its superiority and initiated the devastating Opium War that marked Lin's policies in Canton as a failure.

As a punishment for his unsatisfactory performance, the emperor sent Lin to a remote post in western China. Although his career rebounded somewhat after 1845, he died in 1850 while on the way to an appointment aimed at suppressing the Taiping Rebellion. While his reputation suffered in the nineteenth century, it recovered in the twentieth as an intensely nationalist China recalled his principled stand against Western imperialism.

Questions: How might Lin Zexu have handled his task differently or more successfully? Or had he been given an impossible mission?

order that had governed China for two millennia collapsed, with only a modest nudge from organized revolutionaries. It was the end of a long era in China and the beginning of an immense struggle over the country's future.

The Ottoman Empire and the West in the Nineteenth Century

Like China, the Islamic world represented a highly successful civilization that felt little need to learn from the "infidels" or "barbarians" of the West until it collided with an expanding and aggressive Europe in the nineteenth century. Unlike China, though, Islamic civilization had been a near neighbor to Europe for 1,000 years. Its most

prominent state, the Ottoman Empire, had long governed substantial parts of the Balkans and posed a clear military and religious threat to Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. But if its encounter with the West was less abrupt than that of China, it was no less consequential. Neither the Ottoman Empire nor China fell under direct colonial rule, but both were much diminished as the changing balance of global power took hold; both launched efforts at "defensive modernization" aimed at strengthening their states and preserving their independence; and in both societies, some people held tightly to old identities and values, even as others embraced new loyalties associated with nationalism and modernity.

"The Sick Man of Europe"

In 1750, the Ottoman Empire was still the central political fixture of a widespread Islamic world. From its Turkish heartland in Anatolia, it ruled over much of the Arab world, from which Islam had come. It protected pilgrims on their way to Mecca, governed Egypt and coastal North Africa, and incorporated millions of Christians in the Balkans. Its ruler, the sultan, claimed the role of caliph, successor to the Prophet Muhammad, and was widely viewed as the leader, defender, and primary representative of the Islamic world. But by the middle, and certainly by the end, of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire was no longer able to deal with Europe from a position of equality, let alone superiority. Among the Great Powers of the West, it was now known as "the sick man of Europe." Within the Muslim world, the Ottoman Empire, once viewed as "the strong sword of Islam," was unable to prevent region after region — India, Indonesia, West Africa, Central Asia — from falling under the control of Christian powers.

■ Change
What lay behind the decline of the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century?

The Ottoman Empire's own domains shrank considerably at the hands of Russian, British, Austrian, and French aggression (see Map 19.2). In 1798, Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, which had long been a province of the Ottoman Empire, was a particularly stunning blow. A contemporary observer, Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti, described the French entry into Cairo:

> [T]he French entered the city like a torrent rushing through the alleys and streets without anything to stop them, like demons of the Devil's army. . . . And the French trod in the Mosque of al-Azhar with their shoes, carrying swords and rifles. . . . They plundered whatever they found in the mosque. . . . They treated the books and Quranic volumes as trash. . . . Furthermore, they soiled the mosque, blowing their spit in it, pissing and defecating in it. They guzzled wine and smashed bottles in the central court.[10]

When the French left, a virtually independent Egypt pursued a modernizing and empire-building program of its own and on one occasion came close to toppling the Ottoman Empire itself.

Beyond territorial losses to stronger European powers, other parts of the empire, such as Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania, achieved independence based on their

own surging nationalism and support from the British or the Russians. The continued independence of the core region of the Ottoman Empire owed much to the inability of Europe's Great Powers to agree on how to divide it up among themselves.

Behind the contraction of the Ottoman Empire lay other problems. As in China, the central Ottoman state had weakened, particularly in its ability to raise necessary revenue, as provincial authorities and local warlords gained greater power. Moreover, the Janissaries, once the effective and innovative elite infantry units of Ottoman military forces, lost their military edge, becoming a highly conservative force within the empire. The technological and military gap with the West was clearly growing.

Economically, the earlier centrality of the Ottoman and Arab lands in Afro-Eurasian commerce diminished as Europeans achieved direct oceanic access to the treasures of Asia. Competition from cheap European manufactured goods hit Ottoman artisans hard and led to urban riots protesting foreign imports. Furthermore, a series of agreements, known as capitulations, between European countries and the Ottoman Empire granted Westerners various exemptions from Ottoman law and taxation. Like the unequal treaties with China, these agreements facilitated European penetration of the Ottoman economy and became widely resented. Such measures eroded Ottoman sovereignty and reflected the changing position of that empire relative to Europe. So too did the growing indebtedness of the Ottoman Empire, which came to rely on foreign loans to finance its efforts at economic development. By 1882,

Map 19.2 The Contraction of the Ottoman Empire Foreign aggression and nationalist movements substantially diminished the Ottoman Empire during the nineteenth century, but they also stimulated a variety of efforts to revive and reform Ottoman society. (Credit line TK.)

its inability to pay the interest on those debts led to foreign control of much of its revenue-generating system, while a similar situation in Egypt led to its outright occupation by the British. Like China, the Ottoman Empire had fallen into a position of considerable dependency on Europe.

Reform and Its Opponents

Change
In what different ways did the Ottoman state respond to its various problems?

The leadership of the Ottoman Empire recognized many of its problems and during the nineteenth century mounted increasingly ambitious programs of "defensive modernization" that were earlier, more sustained, and far more vigorous than the timid and half-hearted measures of self-strengthening in China. One reason perhaps lay in the absence of any internal upheaval, such as the Taiping Uprising in China, which threatened the very existence of the ruling dynasty. Nationalist revolts on the empire's periphery, rather than Chinese-style peasant rebellion at the center, represented the primary internal crisis of nineteenth-century Ottoman history. Nor did the Middle East in general experience the explosive population growth that contributed so much to China's nineteenth-century crisis. Furthermore, the long-established Ottoman leadership was Turkic and Muslim, culturally similar to its core population, whereas China's Qing dynasty rulers were widely regarded as foreigners from Manchuria.

Ottoman reforms began in the late eighteenth century when Sultan Selim III sought to reorganize and update the army and to draw on European advisers and techniques. Even these modest innovations stirred the hostility of powerful factions among both the *ulama* (religious scholars) and the elite military corps of Janissaries, who saw them in conflict with both Islam and their own institutional interests. Opposition to his measures was so strong that Selim was overthrown in 1807 and then murdered. Subsequent sultans, however, crushed the Janissaries and brought the ulama more thoroughly under state control than elsewhere in the Islamic world.

Then, in the several decades after 1839, more far-reaching reformist measures, known as Tanzimat (TAHNZ-ee-MAT) (reorganization), took shape as the Ottoman leadership sought to provide the economic, social, and legal underpinnings for a strong and newly recentralized state. Factories producing cloth, paper, and armaments; modern mining operations; reclamation and resettlement of agricultural land; telegraphs, steamships, railroads, and a modern postal service; Western-style law codes and courts; new elementary and secondary schools—all of these new departures began a long process of modernization and Westernization in the Ottoman Empire.

Even more revolutionary, at least in principle, were changes in the legal status of the empire's diverse communities, which now gave non-Muslims equal rights under the law. An imperial proclamation of 1839 declared:

> Every distinction or designation tending to make any class whatever of the subjects of my Empire inferior to another class, on account of their religion, language or race shall be forever effaced. . . . No subject of my Empire shall be hindered in the

> exercise of the religion that he professes. . . . All the subjects of my Empire, without distinction of nationality, shall be admissible to public employment.

This declaration represented a dramatic change that challenged the fundamentally Islamic character of the state. Mixed tribunals with representatives from various religious groups were established to hear cases involving non-Muslims. More Christians were appointed to high office. A mounting tide of secular legislation and secular schools, drawing heavily on European models, now competed with traditional Islamic institutions.

Although Tanzimat-era reforms did not directly address gender issues, they did stimulate modest educational openings for women, mostly in Istanbul, with a training program for midwives in 1842, a girls' secondary school in 1858, and a teacher training college for women in 1870. Furthermore, the reform-minded class that emerged from the Tanzimat era generally favored greater opportunities for women as a means of strengthening the state, and a number of upper- and middle-class women were involved in these discussions. During the 1870s and 1880s, the prominent female poet Sair Nigar Hanim held weekly "salons" in which reformist intellectuals of both sexes participated.

Comparison
In what different ways did various groups define the Ottoman Empire during the nineteenth century?

The reform process raised profound and highly contested questions. What was the Ottoman Empire, and who were its people? To those who supported the reforms, the Ottoman Empire was a secular state whose people were loyal to the dynasty that ruled it, rather than a primarily Muslim state based on religious principles. This was the outlook of a new class spawned by the reform process itself—lower-level officials, military officers, writers, poets, and journalists, many of whom had a modern Western-style education. Dubbed the Young Ottomans, they were active during the middle decades of the nineteenth century, as they sought major changes in the Ottoman political system itself. They favored a more European-style democratic, constitutional regime that could curtail the absolute power of the emperor. Only such a political system, they felt, could mobilize the energies of the country to overcome backwardness and preserve the state against European aggression. Known as Islamic modernism, such ideas found expression in many parts of the Muslim world in the second half of the century. Muslim societies, they argued, needed to embrace Western technical and scientific knowledge, while rejecting its materialism. Islam in their view could accommodate a full modernity without sacrificing its essential religious character. After all, the Islamic world had earlier hosted impressive scientific achievements and had incorporated elements of Greek philosophical thinking.

In 1876, the Young Ottomans experienced a short-lived victory when the Sultan Abd al-Hamid II (r. 1876–1909) accepted a constitution and an elected parliament, but not for long. Under the pressure of war with Russia, the Sultan soon suspended the reforms and reverted to an older style of despotic rule for the next thirty years, even renewing the claim that he was the caliph, successor to the Prophet, and the protector of Muslims everywhere.

The First Ottoman Constitution
This Ottoman era postcard celebrates the short-lived constitutional era of 1876–1878 and the brief political victory of the Young Ottoman reformers. The country is represented by an unveiled woman being released from her chains, while an angel carries a banner inscribed with the slogan of the French Revolution: liberty, equality, fraternity. ("The Ottoman Constitution, December 1895," color postcard. Artist unknown)

Opposition to this revived despotism soon surfaced among both military and civilian elites known as the Young Turks. Largely abandoning any reference to Islam, they advocated a militantly secular public life, were committed to thoroughgoing modernization along European lines, and increasingly thought about the Ottoman Empire as a Turkish national state. "There is only one civilization, and that is European civilization," declared Abdullah Cevdet, a prominent figure in the Young Turk movement. "Therefore we must borrow western civilization with both its rose and its thorn."[11]

A military coup in 1908 finally allowed the Young Turks to exercise real power. They pushed for a radical secularization of schools, courts, and law codes; permitted elections and competing parties; established a single Law of Family Rights for all regardless of religion; and encouraged Turkish as the official language of the empire. They also opened modern schools for women, including access to Istanbul University; allowed them to wear Western clothing; restricted polygamy; and permitted women to obtain divorces in some situations. Women established a number of publications and organizations, some of them linked to British suffrage groups. In the western cities of the empire, some women abandoned their veils.

But the nationalist Turkish conception of Ottoman identity antagonized non-Turkic peoples and helped stimulate Arab and other nationalisms in response. For some, a secular nationality was becoming the most important public loyalty, with Islam relegated to private life. Nationalist sentiments contributed to the complete disintegration of the Ottoman Empire following World War I, but the secularizing and Westernizing principles of the Young Turks informed the policies of the Turkish republic that replaced it.

Outcomes: Comparing China and the Ottoman Empire

By the beginning of the twentieth century, both China and the Ottoman Empire, recently centers of proud and vibrant civilizations, had experienced the consequences of a rapidly shifting balance of global power. Now they were "semi-colonies" within the "informal empires" of Europe, although they retained sufficient independence for their governments to launch catch-up efforts of defensive modernization. But neither was able to create the industrial economies or strong states required to fend off European intrusion and restore their former status in the world. Despite their di-

minished power, however, both China and the Ottoman Empire gave rise to new nationalist conceptions of society, which were initially small and limited in appeal but of great significance for the future.

In the early twentieth century, that future witnessed the end of both the Chinese and Ottoman empires. In China, the collapse of the imperial system in 1911 was followed by a vast revolutionary upheaval that by 1949 led to a communist regime within largely the same territorial space as the old empire. By contrast, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire following World War I led to the creation of the new but much smaller nation-state of Turkey in the Anatolian heartland of the old empire, which lost its vast Arab and European provinces.

China's twentieth-century revolutionaries rejected traditional Confucian culture far more thoroughly than the secularizing leaders of modern Turkey rejected Islam. Almost everywhere in the Islamic world, traditional religion retained its hold on the private loyalties of most people and later in the twentieth century became a basis for social renewal in many places. Islamic civilization, unlike its Chinese counterpart, had many independent centers and was never so closely associated with a single state. Furthermore, it was embedded in a deeply religious tradition that was personally meaningful to millions of adherents, in contrast to the more elitist and secular outlook of Confucianism. Many rural Chinese, however, retained traditional Confucian values such as filial piety, and Confucianism has made something of a comeback in China over the past several decades. Nonetheless, Islam retained a hold on its civilization in the twentieth century rather more firmly than Confucianism did in China.

SUMMING UP SO FAR

In what ways were the histories of China and the Ottoman Empire similar during the nineteenth century? And how did they differ?

The Japanese Difference: The Rise of a New East Asian Power

Like China and the Ottoman Empire, the island country of Japan confronted the aggressive power of the West during the nineteenth century, most notably in the form of U.S. commodore Matthew Perry's "black ships," which steamed into Tokyo Bay in 1853 and forcefully demanded that this reclusive nation open up to more "normal" relations with the world. However, the outcome of that encounter differed sharply from the others. In the second half of the nineteenth century, Japan undertook a radical transformation of its society — a "revolution from above," according to some historians — turning it into a powerful, modern, united, industrialized nation. It was an achievement that neither China nor the Ottoman Empire was able to duplicate. Far from succumbing to Western domination, Japan joined the club of imperialist countries by creating its own East Asian empire, at the expense of China and Korea. In building a society that was both modern and distinctly Japanese, Japan demonstrated that modernity was not a uniquely European phenomenon. This "Japanese miracle," as some have called it, was both promising and ominous for the rest of Asia. How had it occurred?

The Tokugawa Background

For 250 years prior to Perry's arrival, Japan had been governed by a shogun (a military ruler) from the Tokugawa family who acted in the name of a revered but powerless emperor, who lived in Kyoto, 300 miles away from the seat of power in Edo (Tokyo). The chief task of this Tokugawa shogunate was to prevent the return of civil war among some 260 rival feudal lords, known as daimyo, each of whom had a cadre of armed retainers, the famed samurai warriors of Japanese tradition.

Based on their own military power and political skills, successive shoguns gave Japan more than two centuries of internal peace (1600–1850). To control the restive daimyo, they required these local authorities to create second homes in Edo, the country's capital, where they had to live during alternate years. When they left for their rural residences, families stayed behind, almost as hostages. Nonetheless, the daimyo, especially the more powerful ones, retained substantial autonomy in their own domains and behaved in some ways like independent states with separate military forces, law codes, tax systems, and currencies. With no national army, no uniform currency, and little central authority at the local level, Tokugawa Japan was "pacified . . . but not really unified."[12] To further stabilize the country, the Tokugawa regime issued highly detailed rules governing occupation, residence, dress, hairstyles, and behavior of the four hierarchically ranked status groups into which Japanese society was divided—samurai at the top, then peasants, artisans, and, at the bottom, merchants.

Change
In what ways was Japan changing during the Tokugawa era?

Much was changing within Japan during these 250 years of peace in ways that belied the control and orderliness of Tokugawa regulations. For one thing, the samurai, in the absence of wars to fight, evolved into a salaried bureaucratic or administrative class amounting to 5 to 6 percent of the total population, but they were still fiercely devoted to their daimyo lords and to their warrior code of loyalty, honor, and self-sacrifice.

More generally, centuries of peace contributed to a remarkable burst of economic growth, commercialization, and urban development. Entrepreneurial peasants, using fertilizers and other agricultural innovations, grew more rice than ever before and engaged in a variety of rural manufacturing enterprises as well. By 1750, Japan had become perhaps the world's most urbanized country, with about 10 percent of its population living in sizable towns or cities. Edo, with perhaps a million residents, was among the world's largest cities. Well-functioning markets linked urban and rural areas, marking Japan as an emerging capitalist economy. The influence of Confucianism encouraged education and generated a remarkably literate population, with about 40 percent of men and 15 percent of women able to read and write. Although no one was aware of it at the time, these changes during the Tokugawa era provided a solid foundation for Japan's remarkable industrial growth in the late nineteenth century.

Such changes also undermined the shogunate's efforts to freeze Japanese society in the interests of stability. Some samurai found the lowly but profitable path of commerce too much to resist. "No more shall we have to live by the sword," declared one of them in 1616 while renouncing his samurai status. "I have seen that great profit

can be made honorably. I shall brew *sake* and soy sauce, and we shall prosper."[13] Many merchants, though hailing from the lowest-ranking status group, prospered in the new commercial environment and supported a vibrant urban culture, while not a few daimyo found it necessary, if humiliating, to seek loans from these social inferiors. Thus merchants had money, but little status, whereas samurai enjoyed high status but were often indebted to inferior merchants. Both resented their positions.

Despite prohibitions to the contrary, many peasants moved to the cities, becoming artisans or merchants and imitating the ways of their social betters. A decree of 1788 noted that peasants "have become accustomed to luxury and forgetful of their status." They wore inappropriate clothing, used umbrellas rather than straw hats in the rain, and even left the villages for the city. "Henceforth," declared the shogun, "all luxuries should be avoided by the peasants. They are to live simply and devote themselves to farming."[14] This decree, like many others before it, was widely ignored.

More than social change undermined the Tokugawa regime. Corruption was widespread, to the disgust of many. The shogunate's failure to deal successfully with a severe famine in the 1830s eroded confidence in its effectiveness. At the same time, a mounting wave of local peasant uprisings and urban riots expressed the many grievances of the poor. The most striking of these outbursts left the city of Osaka in flames in 1837. Its leader, Oshio Heihachiro, no doubt spoke for many ordinary people when he wrote:

> We must first punish the officials who torment the people so cruelly; then we must execute the haughty and rich Osaka merchants. Then we must distribute the gold, silver, and copper stored in their cellars, and bands of rice hidden in their storehouses.[15]

From the 1830s on, one historian concluded, "there was a growing feeling that the *shogunate* was losing control."[16]

American Intrusion and the Meiji Restoration

It was foreign intervention that brought matters to a head. Since the expulsion of European missionaries and the harsh suppression of Christianity in the early seventeenth century (see p. 678), Japan had deliberately limited its contact with the West to a single port, where only the Dutch were allowed to trade. By the early nineteenth century, however, various European countries and the United States were knocking at the door. All were turned away, and even shipwrecked sailors or whalers were expelled, jailed, or executed. As it happened, it was the United States that forced the issue, sending Commodore Perry in 1853 to demand humane treatment for castaways, the right of American vessels to refuel and buy provisions, and the opening of ports for trade. Authorized to use force if necessary, Perry presented his reluctant hosts, among other gifts, with a white flag for surrender should hostilities follow. (For a Japanese perception of Perry and his ships, see Visual Sources: Japanese Perceptions of the West, pp. 966–71.)

Viewing the Americans
This print shows a Japanese view of Admiral Perry (on the right) and his second-in-command (on the left) not long after the Americans' unwelcome arrival in Japan. (Courtesy, Ryosenji Treasure Museum)

In the end, the Japanese avoided war. Aware of what had happened to China in resisting European demands, Japan agreed to a series of unequal treaties with various Western powers. That humiliating capitulation to the demands of the "foreign devils" further eroded support for the shogunate, triggered a brief civil war, and by 1868 led to a political takeover by a group of young samurai from southern Japan. This decisive turning point in Japan's history was known as the Meiji (MAY-jee) restoration, for the country's new rulers claimed that they were restoring to power the young emperor, then a fifteen-year-old boy whose throne name was Meiji, or Enlightened Rule. Despite his youth, he was regarded as the most recent link in a chain of descent that traced the origins of the imperial family back to the sun goddess Amaterasu. Having eliminated the shogunate, the patriotic young men who led the takeover soon made their goals clear—to save Japan from foreign domination not by futile resistance, but by a thorough transformation of Japanese society drawing on all that the modern West had to offer. "Knowledge shall be sought throughout the world," they declared, "so as to strengthen the foundations of imperial rule."

Japan now had a government committed to a decisive break with the past, and it had acquired that government without massive violence or destruction. By contrast, the defeat of the Taiping Uprising had deprived China of any such opportunity for a fresh start, while saddling it with enormous devastation and massive loss of life. Furthermore, Japan was of less interest to Western powers than either China, with its huge potential market and reputation for riches, or the Ottoman Empire, with its strategic location at the crossroads of Asia, Africa, and Europe. The American Civil War and its aftermath likewise deflected U.S. ambitions in the Pacific for a time, further reducing the Western pressure on Japan.

Modernization Japanese Style

■ Change
In what respects was Japan's nineteenth-century transformation revolutionary?

These circumstances gave Japan some breathing space, and its new rulers moved quickly to take advantage of that unique window of opportunity. Thus they launched a cascading wave of dramatic changes that rolled over the country in the last three decades of the nineteenth century. Like the more modest reforms of China and the Ottoman Empire, Japanese modernizing efforts were defensive, based on fears that Japanese independence was in grave danger. Those reforms, however, were revolutionary in their cumulative effect, transforming Japan far more thoroughly than even the

most radical of the Ottoman efforts, let alone the limited "self-strengthening" policies of the Chinese.

The first task was genuine national unity, which required an attack on the power and privileges of both the daimyo and the samurai. In a major break with the past, the new regime soon ended the semi-independent domains of the daimyo, replacing them with governors appointed by and responsible to the national government. The central state, not the local authorities, now collected the nation's taxes and raised a national army based on conscription from all social classes.

Thus the samurai relinquished their ancient role as the country's warrior class and with it their cherished right to carry swords. The old Confucian-based social order with its special privileges for various classes was largely dismantled, and almost all Japanese became legally equal as commoners and as subjects of the emperor. Limitations on travel and trade likewise fell as a nationwide economy came to parallel the centralized state. Although there was some opposition to these measures, including a brief rebellion of resentful samurai in 1877, it was on the whole a remarkably peaceful process in which a segment of the old ruling class abolished its own privileges. Many, but not all, of these displaced elites found a soft landing in the army, bureaucracy, or business enterprises of the new regime, thus easing a painful transition.

Accompanying these social and political changes was a widespread and eager fascination with almost everything Western (see Visual Sources 19.2 and 19.3, pp. 968–69). Knowledge about the West—its science and technology; its various political and constitutional arrangements; its legal and educational systems; its dances, clothing, and hairstyles—was enthusiastically sought out by official missions to Europe and the United States, by hundreds of students sent to study abroad, and by many ordinary Japanese at home. Western writers were translated into Japanese; for example, Samuel Smiles's *Self-Help*, which focused on "achieving success and rising in the world," sold a million copies. "Civilization and Enlightenment" was the slogan of the time, and both were to be found in the West. The most prominent popularizer of Western knowledge, Fukuzawa Yukichi, summed up the chief lesson of his studies in the mid-1870s—Japan was backward and needed to learn from the West: "If we compare the knowledge of the Japanese and Westerners, in letters, in technique, in commerce, or in industry, from the largest to the smallest matter, there is not one thing in which we excel. . . . In Japan's present condition there is nothing in which we may take pride vis-à-vis the West."[17]

After this initial wave of uncritical enthusiasm for everything Western receded, Japan proceeded to borrow more selectively and to combine foreign and Japanese elements in distinctive ways (see Visual Source 19.3, p. 969). For example, the Constitution of 1889, drawing heavily on German experience, introduced an elected parliament, political parties, and democratic ideals, but that constitution was presented as a gift from a sacred emperor descended from the Sun Goddess. The parliament could advise, but ultimate power, and particularly control of the military, lay theoretically with the emperor and in practice with an oligarchy of prominent reformers acting in his name. Likewise, a modern educational system, which achieved universal

primary schooling by the early twentieth century, was also laced with Confucian-based moral instruction and exhortations of loyalty to the emperor. Christianity made little headway in Meiji Japan, but Shinto, an ancient religious tradition featuring ancestors and nature spirits, was elevated to the status of an official state cult. Japan's earlier experience in borrowing massively but selectively from Chinese culture perhaps served it better in these new circumstances than either the Chinese disdain for foreign cultures or the reluctance of many Muslims to see much of value in the infidel West.

Like their counterparts in China and the Ottoman Empire, some reformers in Japan—male and female alike—argued that the oppression of women was an obstacle to the country's modernization and that family reform was essential to gaining the respect of the West. The widely read commentator Fukuzawa Yukichi urged an end to concubinage and prostitution, advocated more education for girls, and called for gender equality in matters of marriage, divorce, and property rights. But most male reformers understood women largely in the context of family life, seeing them as "good wife, wise mother." By the 1880s, however, a small feminist movement arose, demanding—and modeling—a more public role for women. Some even sought the right to vote at a time when only a small fraction of men could do so. A leading feminist, Kishida Toshiko, not yet twenty years old, astonished the country in 1882 when she undertook a two-month speaking tour, where she addressed huge audiences. Only "equality and equal rights," she argued, would allow Japan "to build a new society." Japan must rid itself of the ancient habit of "respecting men and despising women."

While the new Japanese government included girls in their plans for universal education, it was with a gender-specific curriculum and in schools segregated by sex. Any thought of women playing a role in public life was harshly suppressed. A Peace Preservation Law of 1887, in effect until 1922, forbade women from joining political parties and even from attending meetings where political matters were discussed. The Constitution of 1889 made no mention of any political rights for women. The Civil Code of 1898 accorded absolute authority to the male head of the family, while grouping all wives with "cripples and disabled persons" as those who "cannot undertake any legal action." To the authorities of Meiji Japan, a serious transformation of gender roles was more of a threat than an opportunity.

At the core of Japan's effort at defensive modernization lay its state-guided industrialization program. More than in Europe or the United States, the government itself established a number of enterprises, later selling many of them to private investors. It also acted to create a modern infrastructure by building railroads, creating a postal system, and establishing a national currency and banking system. By the early twentieth century, Japan's industrialization, organized around a number of large firms called *zaibatsu*, was well under way. The country became a major exporter of textiles and was able to produce its own munitions and industrial goods as well. Its major cities enjoyed mass-circulation newspapers, movie theaters, and electric lights. All of this was accomplished through its own resources and without the massive foreign debt that

Japan's Modernization
In Japan, as in Europe, railroads quickly became a popular symbol of the country's modernization, as this woodblock print from the 1870s illustrates. (The Art Gallery Collection/Alamy)

so afflicted Egypt and the Ottoman Empire. No other country outside of Europe and North America had been able to launch its own Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century. It was a distinctive feature of Japan's modern transformation.

Less distinctive, however, were the social results of that process. Taxed heavily to pay for Japan's ambitious modernization program, many peasant families slid into poverty. Their sometimes violent protests peaked in 1883–1884 as the Japanese countryside witnessed infanticide, the sale of daughters, and starvation.

If state authorities rigidly excluded women from political life and denied them adult legal status, they badly needed female labor in the country's textile industry, which was central to Japan's economic growth. Accordingly, the majority of Japan's textile workers were young women from poor families in the countryside. Recruiters toured rural villages contracting with parents for their daughters' labor in return for a payment which the girls had to repay from their wages. That pay was low and their working conditions terrible. Most lived in factory-provided dormitories and worked twelve or more hours per day. While some committed suicide or ran away and many left after earning enough to pay off their contracts, others organized strikes and joined the anarchist or socialist movements that were emerging among a few intellectuals. One such woman, Kanno Suga, was hanged in 1911 for participating in a plot to assassinate the emperor. Efforts to create unions and organize strikes, both illegal in Japan at the time, were met with harsh repression even as corporate and state authorities sought to depict the company as a family unit to which workers should give their loyalty, all under the beneficent gaze of the divine emperor.

Japan and the World

Connection
How did Japan's relationship to the larger world change during its modernization process?

Japan's modern transformation soon registered internationally. By the early twentieth century, its economic growth, openness to trade, and embrace of "civilization and enlightenment" from the West persuaded the Western powers to revise the unequal treaties in Japan's favor. This had long been a primary goal of the Meiji regime, and the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of 1902 now acknowledged Japan as an equal player among the Great Powers of the world.

Not only did Japan escape from its semi-colonial entanglements with the West, but it also launched its own empire-building enterprise, even as European powers and the United States were carving up much of Asia and Africa into colonies or spheres of influence. It was what industrializing Great Powers did in the late nineteenth century, and Japan followed suit. Successful wars against China (1894–1895) and Russia (1904–1905) established Japan as a formidable military competitor in East Asia and the first Asian state to defeat a major European power. Through those victories, Japan also gained colonial control of Taiwan and Korea and a territorial foothold in Manchuria. (See Visual Source 19.4, p. 970, for an image of Japan's new relationship with China and the West.)

Japan's entry onto the broader global stage was felt in many places (see Map 19.3). It added yet one more imperialist power to those already burdening a beleaguered China. Defeat at the hands of Japanese upstarts shocked Russia and triggered the 1905 revolution in that country. To Europeans and Americans, Japan was now an economic, political, and military competitor in Asia.

In the world of subject peoples, the rise of Japan and its defeat of Russia generated widespread admiration among those who saw Japan as a model for their own modern development and perhaps as an ally in the struggle against imperialism. Some Poles, Finns, and Jews viewed the Russian defeat in 1905 as an opening for their own liberation from the Russian Empire and were grateful to Japan for the opportunity. Despite Japan's aggression against their country, many Chinese reformers and nationalists found in the Japanese experience valuable lessons for themselves. Thousands flocked to Japan to study its achievements. Newspapers throughout the Islamic world celebrated Japan's victory over Russia as an "awakening of the East," which might herald Muslims' own liberation. Some Turkish women gave their children Japanese names. Indonesian Muslims from Aceh wrote to the Meiji emperor asking for help in their struggle against the Dutch, and Muslim poets wrote odes in his honor. The Egyptian nationalist Mustafa Kamil spoke for many when he declared: "We are amazed by Japan because it is the first Eastern government to utilize Western civilization to resist the shield of European imperialism in Asia."[18]

Those who directly experienced Japanese imperialism in Taiwan or Korea no doubt had a less positive view, for its colonial policies matched or exceeded the brutality of European practices. In the twentieth century, China and much of Southeast Asia suffered bitterly under Japanese imperial aggression. Nonetheless, both the idea of Japan as a liberator of Asia from the European yoke and the reality of Japan as an

Map 19.3
The Rise of Japan
As Japan modernized after the Meiji restoration, it launched an empire-building program that provided a foundation for further expansion in the 1930s and during World War II.

oppressive imperial power in its own right derived from the country's remarkable modern transformation and its distinctive response to the provocation of Western intrusion.

Reflections: Success and Failure in History

Beyond describing what happened in the past and explaining why, historians often find themselves evaluating the events they study. When they make judgments about the past, notions of success and failure frequently come into play. Should Europe's Industrial Revolution and its rise to global power be regarded as a success? If so, does

that imply that others were failures? Should we consider Japan more successful than China or the Ottoman Empire during the nineteenth century? Three considerations suggest that we should be very careful in applying these ideas to the complexities of the historical record.

First, and most obviously, is the question of criteria. If the measure of success is national wealth and power, then the Industrial Revolution surely counts as a great accomplishment. But if preservation of the environment, spiritual growth, and the face-to-face relationships of village life are more highly valued, then industrialization, as Gandhi argued, might be more reasonably considered a disaster.

Second, there is the issue of "success for whom?" British artisans who lost their livelihood to industrial machines as well as those Japanese women textile workers who suffered through the early stages of industrialization might be forgiven for not appreciating the "success" of their countries' transformation, even if their middle-class counterparts and subsequent generations benefited. In such cases, issues of both social and generational justice complicate any easy assessment of the past.

Finally, success is frequently associated with good judgment and wise choices, yet actors in the historical drama are never completely free in making their decisions, and none, of course, have the benefit of hindsight, which historians enjoy. Did the leaders of China and the Ottoman Empire fail to push industrial development more strongly, or were they not in a position to do so? Were Japanese leaders wiser and more astute than their counterparts elsewhere, or did their knowledge of China's earlier experience and their unique national history simply provide them with circumstances more conducive to modern development? Such questions regarding the possibilities and limitations of human action have no clear-cut answers, but they might caution us about any easy assessment of success and failure.

Second Thoughts

What's the Significance?

Taiping Uprising, 933–35
Opium Wars, 936–37
unequal treaties, 937
self-strengthening movement, 939
Boxer Uprising, 939
Commissioner Lin, 940–41
Chinese Revolution of 1911, 940–41
"the sick man of Europe," 942–44
Tanzimat, 944–46
Young Ottomans, 945
Sultan Abd al-Hamid II, 945
Young Turks, 946
informal empires, 946–47
Tokugawa Japan, 948–49
Meiji restoration, 949–50
Russo-Japanese War, 1904–1905, 954

Big Picture Questions

1. "The response of each society to European imperialism grew out of its larger historical development and its internal problems." What evidence might support this statement?

2. "Deliberate government policies were more important than historical circumstances policies in shaping the history of China, the Ottoman Empire, and Japan during the nineteenth century." How might you argue for and against this statement?
3. What kinds of debates, controversies, and conflicts were generated by European intrusion within each of the societies examined in this chapter?
4. **Looking Back:** How did the experiences of China, the Ottoman Empire, Japan, and Latin America, which retained their independence despite much European pressure, differ from that of Africa, India, and Southeast Asia, which fell under formal colonial rule?

Next Steps: For Further Study

For Web sites and additional documents related to this chapter, see **Make History** at bedfordstmartins.com/strayer.

William Bowman et al., *Imperialism in the Modern World* (2007). A collection of short readings illustrating the various forms and faces of European expansion over the past several centuries.

Carter V. Finley, *The Turks in World History* (2004). A study placing the role of Turkish-speaking peoples in general and the Ottoman Empire in particular in a global context.

Maurice Jansen, *The Making of Modern Japan* (2000). A well-regarded account of Japan since 1600 by a leading scholar.

Jonathan Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (1999). Probably the best single-volume account of Chinese history from about 1600 through the twentieth century.

E. Patricia Tsurumi, *Factory Girls: Women in the Thread Mills of Meiji Japan* (1990). An examination of the lives of women in Japan's nineteenth-century textile factories.

Arthur Waley, *The Opium War through Chinese Eyes* (1968). An older classic that views the Opium War from various Chinese points of view.

MIT, "Visualizing Cultures: Image Driven Scholarship," 2002. http://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/home/index.html A collection of thoughtful essays and stunning images dealing with China and Japan during the nineteenth century.

Documents

Considering the Evidence: Changing China

By the end of the nineteenth century, growing numbers of thoughtful Chinese recognized that their country was in crisis. Repeated European military interventions since the first Opium War in 1839 had humiliated the once proud Middle Kingdom, reducing it to a semicolonial dependent of various European powers. A decisive military defeat in a war with Japan in 1894–1895 represented a further humiliation at the hands of a small country long under the cultural influence of China. China also continued to face the enormous problem of widespread poverty among its peasant population, a dilemma reflected in repeated upheavals in the countryside. Both of these issues—foreign imperialism and peasant rebellion—found expression in the Boxer Uprising of 1898–1901 (see p. 939). This upheaval demonstrated—once again—the ability of China's vast peasant population to make its presence felt in the political life of the country as it had in the Taiping Uprising of the 1850s and '60s (see pp. 934–35). The Boxer Rebellion's virulent anti-foreign and anti-Christian outlook disclosed the depth of feeling against imperialism even among rural dwellers. The outcome of that rebellion—foreign occupation of Beijing and large reparation payments from China's government—revealed China's continuing weakness relative to European and Japanese powers.

In this context, many plans for changing China emerged. Some of them were reformist and aimed at preserving the Qing dynasty regime; others were more revolutionary and sought to replace dynastic China with a new society and political system altogether. During a brief three-month period in 1898, known as the Hundred Days of Reform, and then again in the decade following the Boxer Uprising, some of these reform proposals began to be implemented, including the end of the traditional civil service examination system and creation of elected provincial assemblies. But more substantial change in China had to await the collapse of the Qing dynasty and the end of the monarchy in 1912, and the most dramatic changes occurred after the communists came to power in 1949. Nonetheless, the proposals of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were significant, for they reveal both the mounting pressures for a new path and the obstacles that confronted those who advocated such changes.

Document 19.1

Toward a Constitutional Monarchy

Among the leading advocates of reform in the aftermath of China's defeat by Japan was Kang Youwei (1858–1927), a brilliant Confucian scholar, whose views informed the Hundred Days of Reform in 1898. Understanding Confucius as a reformer, Kang Youwei argued that the Chinese emperor could be an active agent for China's transformation while operating in a parliamentary and constitutional setting. With its emphasis on human goodness, self-improvement, and the moral example of superiors, Confucianism could provide a framework for real change even as it protected China from "moral degeneration" and an indiscriminate embrace of Western culture. In a memorial to the emperor in early 1898, Kang Youwei spelled out his understanding of what China needed.

- In what ways does Kang Youwei reflect a Confucian outlook, and in what respects does he show an awareness of a larger world?
- What obstacles to reform does Kang Youwei identify?
- Why does he advocate the Russia of Peter the Great and the Japan of the Meiji reforms as models for China?

Kang Youwei

Memorial to Emperor Guangxu

1898

A survey of all states in the world will show that those states which undertook reforms became stronger while those states which clung to the past perished. . . . If Your Majesty, with your discerning brilliance, observes the trends in other countries, you will see that if we can change, we can preserve ourselves; but if we cannot change, we will perish.

It is a principle of things that the new is strong but the old is weak. . . . [T]here are no institutions that should remain unchanged for a hundred years. Moreover our present institutions are but unworthy vestiges of the Han, Tang, Yuan, and Ming dynasties. . . . [T]hey are the products of fancy writing and corrupt dealing of the petty officials rather than the original ideas of the ancestors. To say that they are ancestral institutions is an insult to the ancestors. Furthermore institutions are for the purpose of preserving one's territories. Now that the ancestral territory cannot be preserved, what good is it to maintain the ancestral institutions?

Nowadays the court has been undertaking some reforms, but the action of the emperor is obstructed by the ministers, and the recommendations of the able scholars are attacked by old-fashioned bureaucrats. If the charge is not "using barbarian ways to change China," then it is "upsetting ancestral institutions." Rumors and scandal are rampant, and people fight each other like fire and water. A reform in this way is as effective as attempting a forward march by walking backward. . . . I beg Your Majesty to make up your mind and to decide on the national policy.

Source: J. Mason Gentzler, *Changing China* (New York: Praegar, 1977), 86–87.

After studying ancient and modern institutions, Chinese and foreign, I have found that the institutions of the sage-kings and the Three Dynasties [Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties of very ancient times] were excellent, but ancient times were different from today. I hope that Your Majesty will daily read Mencius [a famous Confucian writer] and follow his example of loving the people. The development of the Han, Tang, Song and Ming dynasties may be learned, but it should be remembered that the [present] age of universal unification is different from that of sovereign nations. . . . As to the republican governments of the United States and France and the constitutional governments of Britain and Germany, these countries are far away and their customs are different from ours. . . . Consequently I beg Your Majesty to adopt the purpose of Peter the Great of Russia as our purpose and to take the Meiji Reform of Japan as the model of our reform. The time and place of Japan's reforms are not remote and her religion and customs are somewhat similar to ours. Her success is manifest; her example can be followed.

Document 19.2

Education and Examination

At the heart of Chinese culture and government lay the country's fabled examination system and the Confucian-based educational system on which it rested. Those examinations had long been used to select the officials who governed China. The classical texts and rhetorical style that the examinations tested were widely regarded as essential to preserving the essence of Chinese culture while creating common values among the elite. But for those seeking fundamental change in China, the examination system represented everything that was conservative, backward, and out of date, preventing the country from effectively modernizing. In 1905, that ancient examination system was formally and permanently abolished. The two brief selections that follow make the case for educational reform. The first comes from an anonymous editorial in a Chinese newspaper in 1898, while the second was part of an edict from the reforming Emperor Guangxu during the Hundred Days of Reform, also in 1898.

- What criticisms of the old examination system do these excerpts make?
- What kind of education do they advocate?
- How might conservatives respond to these documents?

ANONYMOUS

Editorial on China's Examination System

1898

The dynasty's examination system is extremely annoying and cumbersome. . . . Students go through innumerable hardships before they can obtain the right to wear the robes designating them as officially authorized students. Hence year after year they persist in their studies until their hair turns white. One half of each year is taken up with examinations, and the other half is burdened with wife, children, home, and family. Any spare time is spent trying to master the eight-legged essay. And yet it is very difficult to attain satisfactory competence in the eight-legged style, even though it is considered so vital. What then, if in addition, one wants to read useful books and study useful subjects? . . .

For the court to use poetry, rhyme-prose, and fine script as the criteria for passing or failing the examinations for men of ability is truly vulgar and ridiculous. . . . [T]he multitude of problems on the coast [a reference to European penetration] has steadily weakened the nation. Poetry and rhyme-prose are not adequate to cope with this changing situation, and fine script is not adequate to withstand the enemy. How are we to devise a policy to bring peace and to emulate the wealth and power [of the Western nations]? Every meaningless and extravagant custom should be reformed. . . . Only then will officials of the court . . . be able to devote themselves to useful studies. Their ambitions will no longer be diverted by eight-legged essays, poetry, rhyme-prose and fine script, nor will their minds be disturbed by all the various examinations.

Sources: J. Mason Gentzler, *Changing China* (New York: Praegar, 1977), 88–89; Isaac Taylor Headland, *Court Life in China* (New York: F. H. Revell, 1909).

EMPEROR GUANGXU

Edict on Education

1898

Our scholars are now without solid and practical education; our artisans are without scientific instructors; when compared with other countries. We soon see how weak we are. Does anyone think that our troops are as well drilled or as well led as those of the foreign armies? Or that we can successfully stand against them? Changes must be made to accord with the necessities of the times. . . . Keeping in mind the morals of the sages and wise men, we must make them the basis on which to build newer and better structures. We must substitute modern arms and western organization for our old regime; we must select our military officers according to western methods of military education; we must establish elementary and high schools, colleges and universities, in accordance with those of foreign countries; we must abolish the Wen-chang (literary essay) and obtain a knowledge of ancient and modern world-history, a right conception of the present-day state of affairs, with special reference to the governments and institutions of the countries of the five great continents; and we must understand their arts and sciences.

Document 19.3

Gender, Reform, and Revolution

Among those seeking to change China, the question of women's roles in society frequently arose. Kang Youwei (see Document 19.1), for example, looked forward to the end of traditional marriage, hoping it would be replaced by a series of one-year contracts between a man and woman, which he thought would ensure gender equality. But the most well-known advocate for women was Qiu Jin (1875–1907). Born into a well-to-do family with liberal inclinations, she received a fine literary education, developing a passion for reading as well as for swordplay, horseback riding, and fighting with boys. Married to a much older man at age 18, she was distinctly unsatisfied in such a conventional life. In 1903, she did something almost unthinkable for a Chinese woman when she left her husband and children to pursue an education in Japan. Returning in 1906, she started a women's magazine and became active in revolutionary circles. For her role in an abortive plot to overthrow the Qing dynasty, she was arrested and beheaded in 1907. The selection that follows comes from her most famous appeal for the rights of women.

- What are the "injustices" that Qiu Jin identifies?
- How does she account for the sad conditions which Chinese women faced?
- What does she advocate as a remedy for the problems she identifies?
- How might you compare Qiu Jin's address with that of Elizabeth Cady Stanton in Document 16.4, pp. 818–19?

Qiu Jin

An Address to Two Hundred Million Fellow Countrywomen

1904

Alas! The greatest injustice in this world must be the injustice suffered by our female population of two hundred million. If a girl is lucky enough to have a good father, then her childhood is at least tolerable. But if by chance her father is an ill-tempered and unreasonable man, he may curse her birth: "What rotten luck: another useless thing." Some men go as far as killing baby girls while most hold the opinion that "girls are eventually someone else's property" and treat them with coldness and disdain. In a few years, without thinking about whether it is right or wrong, he forcibly binds his daughter's soft, white feet with white cloth so that even in her sleep she cannot find comfort and relief until the flesh becomes rotten and the bones broken. What is

Source: Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, trans. Nancy Gibbs (New York: Free Press, 1993), 343–344 (excerpts).

all this misery for? Is it just so that on the girl's wedding day friends and neighbors will compliment him, saying, "Your daughter's feet are really small"? Is that what the pain is for?

But that is not the worst of it. When the time for marriage comes, a girl's future is placed in the hands of shameless matchmakers and a family seeking rich and powerful in-laws. . . . [T]he girl . . . is not allowed to breathe one word about her future. After her marriage, if the man doesn't do her any harm, she is told that she should thank Heaven for her good fortune. But if the man is bad or he ill-treats her, she is told that her marriage is retribution for some sin committed in her previous existence. . . . When Heaven created people it never intended such injustice because if the world is without women, how can men be born? Why is there no justice for women?

Dear sisters, you must know that you'll get nothing if you rely upon others. You must go out and get things for yourselves. . . . It seems clear now that it was we women who abandoned our responsibilities to ourselves and felt content to let men do everything for us. As long as we could live in comfort and leisure, we let men make all the decisions for us. . . . At the same time we were insecure in our good fortune and our physical comfort, so we did everything to please men. When we heard that men like small feet, we immediately bound them just to please them, just to keep our free meal tickets. . . .

Let us put aside our former selves and be resurrected as complete human beings. . . . If your husbands want to open schools, don't stop them; if your good sons want to study abroad, don't hold them back. . . . After your sons are born, send them to schools. You must do the same for your daughters and, whatever you do, don't bind their feet. As for you young girls among us, go to school if you can. If not, read and study at home. . . . You must know that when a country is near destruction, women cannot rely on the men anymore because they aren't even able to protect themselves. If we don't take heart now and shape up, it will be too late when China is destroyed.

Document 19.4

Prescriptions for a Revolutionary China

While some advocates for changing China pressed for various reforms within the framework of Qing dynasty China, others felt that the millennia-old monarchy itself had to be overthrown if China was to modernize and prosper as a nation. The leading figure among China's late-nineteenth century revolutionaries was Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925), a convert to Christianity, a trained medical doctor, and by the 1890s an ardent revolutionary. From exile in Europe, the United States, and Japan, Sun plotted various uprisings against the Qing dynasty and in 1905 created the Revolutionary Alliance in an effort to bring together the various groups seeking to end the ancient imperial system. But what kind of society and political structure did Sun envisage for his country? In 1906 Sun spelled out an early formulation of his "three people's principles"—nationalism, democracy, and people's livelihood—that articulated his vision for China's future.

- Why does Sun Yat-sen believe that China requires a revolution rather than reform?
- In his view, who are the enemies of the Chinese nation?

- What elements of Sun's prescriptions for China's future derive from traditional Chinese practice and which reflect Western influence?
- Is Sun Yat-sen advocating a socialist future for China?
- How might Kang Youwei in Document 19.1 respond to Sun Yat-sen's prescriptions for the future?

Sun Yat-sen

The Three People's Principles and the Future of the Chinese People

1906

Nationalism . . . has to do with human nature and applies to everyone. Today, more than 260 years have passed since the Manchus entered China proper, yet even as children we Han [ethnic Chinese] would certainly not mistake them for fellow Han. This is the root of nationalism. . . . It simply means not allowing such people [the Manchu rulers of the Qing dynasty] to seize our political power, for only when we Han are in control politically do we have a nation. . . .

Actually we are already a people without a nation. . . . Our nation is the most populous, most ancient, and most civilized in the world, yet today we are a lost nation. . . . We Han are now swiftly being caught up in a tidal wave of nationalist revolution, yet the Manchus continue to discriminate against the Han. They boast that their forefathers conquered the Han because of their superior unity and that they intend . . . to dominate the Han forever. . . . Certainly once we Han unite, our power will be thousands of times greater than theirs and the success of our nationalist revolution will be assured.

As for the Principle of Democracy, it is the foundation of the political revolution. . . . For several thousand years China has been a monarchial autocracy, a type of political system intolerable to those living in freedom and equality. A nationalist revolution is not itself sufficient to get rid of such a system . . . a political revolution is an absolute necessity. The aim of the political revolution is to create a constitutional democratic political system. . . . [Such a] revolution would be necessary even if the monarch were a Han.

As for the Principle of the People's Livelihood . . . , we must try to improve the economic structures of society so as to preclude a social revolution in the future. . . . As civilization advanced, people relied less on physical labor and more on natural forces, since electricity and steam could accomplish things a thousand times faster than physical strength. . . . [N]ow with the development of natural forces that human labor cannot match, agriculture and industry have fallen completely into the hands of capitalists. Unable to compete, the poor have naturally been reduced to destitution. . . . [E]very informed person knows that a social revolution is inevitable in Europe and America.

Indeed this constitutes a lesson for China. . . . Civilization [advanced industrial capitalist countries] yields both good and bad fruits, and we should embrace the good and reject the bad. In Europe and America the rich monopolize the good fruits of civilization, while the poor suffer from its evil fruits. . . .

With respect to a solution . . . the procedure I most favor is land valuation. For example, if a landlord has land worth 1000 dollars, its price can be set at 1000 or even 2000 dollars. Perhaps in the future, after communications have been developed, the value of his land will rise to 10,000 dollars; the owner should receive 2000, which entails a profit and no

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Julie Lee Wei et al., *Prescriptions for Saving China: Selected Writings of Sun Yat-sen* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1994), 41–50.

loss, and the 8000 increment will go to the state. Such an arrangement will greatly benefit both the state and the people's livelihood. Naturally it will also eliminate the shortcomings that have permitted a few people to monopolize wealth. . . .

As to the future constitution I propose that we introduce a new principle, that of the "five separate powers." Under this system there will be two other powers in addition to the [executive, legislative, and judicial]. One is the examination power. . . . American official are either elected or appointed. Formerly there were no civil service examinations, which led to serious shortcomings. . . . With respect to elections, those endowed with eloquence ingratiated themselves with the public and won elections, while those who had learning and ideals but lacked eloquence were ignored. Consequently members of America's House of Representatives have often been foolish and ignorant people who have made its history quite ridiculous. . . . Therefore the future constitution of the Republic of China must provide for an independent branch expressly responsible for civil service examinations. Furthermore all officials, however high their rank, must undergo examinations in order to determine their qualifications.

The other power is the supervisory power, responsible for monitoring matters involving impeachment. . . . Since ancient times, China had a supervisory organization, the Censorate, to monitor the traditional social order.

Using The Evidence: Changing China

1. **Defining obstacles to change:** What hindrances to China's effective transformation are stated or implied in these documents? Do their authors perceive any positive qualities in Chinese civilization that might facilitate the country's transformation?
2. **Assessing goals:** "China as a culture and a political system must be destroyed in order to preserve China as nation." To what extent would the authors of these documents have agreed or disagreed with this statement?
3. **Identifying differences:** Imagine a conversation among the authors of these documents. What points of agreement might they find? What conflicts among them would likely arise?
4. **Considering "Westernization" and "modernization":** To what extent do these proposals represent plans to "westernize" China? Or might they rather be considered "modernizing" efforts? What is the difference between the two concepts?

Visual Sources

Considering the Evidence: Japanese Perceptions of the West

The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed a profound transformation of Japanese life (see pp. 947–53). The Tokugawa shogunate, which had governed the country for over two centuries, came to an inglorious end in the Meiji restoration of 1868, and the country then embarked on a massive process of modernization and industrialization. Accompanying these upheavals, Japan's political and military relationship to the West changed dramatically, as its government and its people found themselves required to confront both Western power and Western culture, a common feature of nineteenth-century world history in many places. Accordingly, Japanese understanding of the West, and what they had to fear or gain from it, also changed. Those evolving perceptions of the West found artistic expression, especially in Japanese woodblock printing, an art form that reached its high point in the late nineteenth century. Such images provide for historians a window into Japanese thinking about their own society and the larger world impinging on them during this critical half century.

The initial occasion for serious Japanese reflection on the West occurred in 1853–1854, in the context of American commodore Matthew Perry's efforts to "open" Japan to regular commercial relationships with the United States. His nine coal-fired steamships, belching black smoke and carrying a crew of some 1,800 men and more than 100 mounted cannons, became known in Japan as the "black ships." Visual Source 19.1, created around 1854, represents perhaps the best known of many such Japanese depictions of the American warships.

- What general impression of the American intrusion did the artist seek to convey?
- What specific features of the image help the artist make his case?
- Why might the artist have chosen to depict the gunfire coming from the American ship as streams of light?

Beyond portraying the American warships, Japanese artists sought to depict their inhabitants, especially Commodore Perry and his top aides. Some Japanese men rowed their small boats out to the black ships, hoping to catch

a glimpse of Perry himself. But the commodore remained largely inaccessible, and the Japanese called his secluded on-board cabin "The Abode of His High and Mighty Mysteriousness." The image on page 950 depicts one of many portrayals of Perry (on the right), together with his second-in-command. They are shown here as a particular kind of goblin, known as *tengu*, that have long noses and are viewed as dangerous, demonic, and warlike. His creased and hairy face likewise conveys a sense of otherness compared to the smooth and hairless faces of respected Japanese figures.

By the 1880s, Japan was in the midst of an amazing transformation, in part the outcome of Perry's forced "opening" of the country. By then Japan had a new government committed to the country's rapid modernization. Particularly among the young, there was an acute awareness of the need to create a new culture that could support a revived Japan. "We have no history," declared one of these students; "our history begins today."[19] In this context, much that was Western was enthusiastically embraced. The technological side of this borrowing was illustrated in the woodblock print on page 953.

But borrowing extended as well to more purely cultural matters. Eating beef became popular, despite Buddhist objections. Many men adopted Western

Visual Source 19.1 The Black Ships (Courtesy, Ryosenji Treasure Museum)

Visual Source 19.2 Women and Westernization (Hashimoto Chikanobu, Japanese, 1838–1912. Publisher: Ōmori Kakutarō, Japanese. Singing by the Plum Garden (Baien shōka zu). Japanese, Meiji era, 1887 (Meiji 20), December. Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper. Vertical ōban triptych; 35.4 x 71.6 cm (13 15/16 x 28 3/16 in.). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Gift of L. Aaron Lebowich. RES.53.82-4. Photograph © 2014 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.)

hairstyles and grew beards, even though the facial hair of Westerners had earlier been portrayed as ugly. In 1872, Western dress was ordered for all official ceremonies. Women in elite circles likewise adopted Western ways, as illustrated in Visual Source 19.2, an 1887 woodblock print titled *Illustration of Singing by the Plum Garden*. At the same time, the dress of the woman in the middle seems to reflect earlier Japanese court traditions that encouraged women to wear many layers of kimonos.

- What elements of Western culture can you identify in this visual source?
- In what ways does this print reflect the continuing appeal of Japanese culture? Pay attention to the scenery, the tree, and the flowers.
- Why were so many Japanese so enamored of Western culture during this time? And why did the Japanese government so actively encourage their interest?

Not everyone in Japan was so enthusiastic about the adoption of Western culture, and by the late 1870s and into the next decade numerous essays and images satirized the apparently indiscriminate fascination with all things European. Visual Source 19.3, drawn by Japanese cartoonist Kobayashi Kiyochika in 1879, represents one of those images. Its full English-language caption read as follows: "Mr. Morse [an American zoologist who introduced Darwin's theory of evolution to Japan in 1877] explains that all human beings were monkeys in the beginning. In the beginning—but even now aren't we still monkeys?

Visual Source 19.3 Kobayashi Kiyochika's Critique of Wholesale Westernization (Library of Congress)

When it comes to Western things we think the red beards are the most skillful at everything."[20]

- What specific aspects of Japan's efforts at Westernization is the artist mocking?
- Why might the artist have used a Western scientific theory (Darwinian evolution) to criticize excessive Westernization in Japan?
- Why do you think a reaction set in against the cultural imitation of Europe?

Behind Japan's modernization and Westernization was the recognition that Western imperialism was surging in Asia and that China was a prime example of what happened to countries unable to defend themselves against it. Accordingly, achieving political and military equality with the Great Powers of Europe and the United States became a central aim of Japan's modernization program.

Strengthening Japan against Western aggression increasingly meant "throwing off Asia," a phrase that implied rejecting many of Japan's own cultural traditions and its habit of imitating China as well as creating an Asian empire of its own. Fukuzawa Yukichi, a popular advocate of Western knowledge, declared:

> We must not wait for neighboring countries to become civilized so that we can together promote Asia's revival. Rather we should leave

> their ranks and join forces with the civilized countries of the West. We don't have to give China and Korea any special treatment just because they are neighboring countries. We should deal with them as Western people do. Those who have bad friends cannot avoid having a bad reputation. I reject the idea that we must continue to associate with bad friends in East Asia.[21]

Historically the Japanese had borrowed a great deal from China—Buddhism, Confucianism, court rituals, city-planning ideas, administrative traditions, and elements of the Chinese script. But Japan's victory in a war with China in 1894–1895 showed clearly that it had thrown off the country in whose cultural shadow it had lived for centuries. Furthermore, Japan had begun to acquire an East Asian empire in Korea and Taiwan. And its triumph over Russia in another war ten years later illustrated its ability to stand up to a major European power. The significance of these twin victories is expressed in Visual Source 19.4, a Japanese image created during the Russo-Japanese War and titled *The Japanese Navy Uses China as Bait to Trap the Greedy Russian*.

Visual Source 19.4 Japan, China, and Europe: A Reversal of Roles (Artist Unknown, Japanese. Publisher: Manzai kan. The Avarice and A Trap of Wisdom from the series Laughing Stock. Japanese, late Meiji era, about 1904–05. Color lithograph; ink on card stock. Overall: 8.8 x 13.8 cm (3 7/16 x 5 7/16 in.). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Leonard A. Lauder Collection of Japanese Postcards. 2002.3504. Photograph © 2014 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.)

- What overall message did the artist seek to convey in this print?
- What is the significance of the Chinese figure with a chicken in hand, lying as "bait" at the bottom of the image?
- How is the Russia character portrayed?
- What had changed in Japanese thinking about China and Europe during the nineteenth century?

Using the Evidence: Japanese Perceptions of the West

1. **Explaining change:** How and why had Japanese perceptions of themselves and their relationship to the West changed in the half century since the Meiji restoration? What elements of continuity in Japanese traditions are evident in these visual sources?
2. **Making comparisons:** Based on these visual sources and the documents about "Changing China," how might you compare Japanese and Chinese perceptions of the West by the end of the nineteenth century? What accounts for both the similarities and differences?
3. **Distinguishing modernization and Westernization:** Based on a careful reading of Chapter 19, including the documents and images, do you think that technological borrowing (modernization) requires cultural borrowing (Westernization) as well? Was it possible during the nineteenth century to modernize while avoiding the incorporation of Western culture at the same time? What do the examples of China, the Ottoman Empire, and Japan suggest about this question?