Why was 19th century Meiji 明治维新Japan able to modernize‑现代化 so effectively如此有效, but not China?

 （19世纪60-90年代日本的改革运动）

答案一来自Kaiser Kuo, Dabbler in history

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1. Part of the answer, ironically讽刺的使, is that the Qing dynasty was actually in pretty非常 good shape良好状态 when it encountered遭遇到, in force已经生效/大量, the power of the west. Look closely走近了看 of course课程/航线 and there were sure确定的 signs迹象 of decline衰落 from its peak巅峰 in the Yongzheng and Qianlong reigns统治, but China was still robust强壮/强健/强大 enough to support a kind of complacency自满 and a certain一定程度 arrogance骄傲自大. China borrowed借鉴 ideas from outside, for sure, but the periods时期 when these borrowings were happening—the popularization普及 of Buddhism佛教, for instance, or the adoption采取 of Central Asian artistic motifs基本的图案/各种艺术的主题 and musical instruments乐器—happened a long, long time ago from the perspective角度 of mid-19th century China, and by that time清朝, they were regarded视作 as basically Chinese already. There wasn't this sense感觉 that borrowing ideas from abroad海外 was something that Chinese people did.
2. That was never the case情况 in Japan. Japan was very aware意识到 of the extent程度 to which it had borrowed. Its very writing system (kanji日本文字 literally字面上 means Han (Chinese) characters), dress (from Tang), architecture (from Tang), governing管理 philosophy哲学 (Neo-Confucian新儒家), and much more were unmistakably确定无疑 Chinese in origin起源. And Japan's state状态 wasn't in a place where complacency自满 and arrogance自大 were likely: The Tokugawa bakufu德川幕府 was much more obviously sick, with a heavily严重的 indebted负债, mostly parasitic寄生 class of Samurai武士 who made the Bannermen—who were also dissolute道德沦丧 and not exactly不完全 in fighting shape状态— Qing look like the picture of health看起来使健康的.
3. Japan benefited too by having a second but still traditional source来源 of legitimacy合法性 in the Meiji emperor皇帝. It could end the shogunate幕府时代 but pack打包 massive reforms改革 into what was outwardly表面上看 a "restoration恢复" of traditional, imperial帝国的/皇帝的 authority权威.
4. Japan had time to react作出反应, too, and to appreciate意识到 the scale规模 of the threat威胁: By the time在。。时候 Commodore海军准将  Perry's "black ships" sailed into Edo Bay, Japan had already seen what China had gone through经历 at the hands of the British during the first Opium War鸦片战争. They knew that militarily军事上 in the 1850s they weren't even a match对手 for the Qing, and look at the drubbing轻易获胜 that this much larger, much more resource-rich and traditionally传统 respected受尊敬 neighbor had been given. 江户湾
5. Then there's something that really doesn't have a grounding基础知识 in good history but which I actually believe: It's the surface-to-volume ratio表面体积比—specifically具体来说, coastline海岸线 to land area国土面积. Honshu本州 is a long, skinny皮包骨/瘦, island and ideas, trade goods, institutions机构, technologies, all these things from without从外面 penetrate渗透 and permeate弥漫 much more quickly than they would in a country like China. 表面体积比 本州 渗透；弥漫

第二篇文章

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1. The Japanese people are extremely非常 united团结. Conformity遵守 is highly stressed强调 in their culture, so when the government ordered to modernize, most of the Japanese were on board加入. The Chinese were not at all united团结 in the 19th century; the ruling+统治 imperial皇帝 family were Manchus满族, but the majority大多数 were Han. Although racial tensions紧张关系 between Han and Manchu don’t exist anymore, they were very much alive存在 back in the 19th century.
2. Chinese lost the Opium War to Britain, and as a result, had to legalize opium鸦片. A significant portion（部分）人口中的大多数 of the population became addicted上瘾 to opium, which killed the productivity生产率 of the country.
3. Chinese still had the belief that the conqueror will become the conquered. The Manchus are an excellent example of this: they were originally最初的 not Chinese, but after conquering China, they became so assimilated同化 that there is no difference between a Manchu and a Han today. However, what the Chinese failed没做到 to understand was that by the 19th century, things were different. Westerners couldn’t be assimilated into the Chinese culture, for two reasons: one, because Europe was too far away; and two, by then, Western culture and lifestyle had become superior优于 to the Chinese way of life in every single regards. So instead of不是 assimilating同化 Westerners, it was the Chinese who got assimilated. By the time the Chinese realized this, it was too late. Japan did not have this belief, and in fact, the primary主要的 reason why Japan modernized was because it was afraid of becoming a Western colony殖民地.
4. When a great power threatens威胁 East Asia, China is always the biggest victim受害者. This is because all of the great powers would focus on taking拿下 China down, with little interest on China’s surrounding周围 countries. We see this with the Mongols蒙古人 and Manchus, who were determined决定 to conquer China, even though it took several decades to accomplish完成. On the other hand另外一方面, the Mongols gave up on Japan relatively相对来说 quickly; the Manchus tried to conquer Burma缅甸 but failed, and agreed to settle+签订协议 with a peace treaty协议. Claiming that you’ve conquered China will earn you a spot一席之地 in the history books forever, but conquering smaller nations around China have little to no merit价值. This also means that if you’ve failed to conquer them, no one is really going to care either. This is why the Western nations tried very hard to take as much Chinese lands and ports as possible, but left Japan relatively alone in comparison形成对比.