

Closed-Door Policy of the Qing Dynasty and China's Defeat in the First Opium War

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Abstract

The implementation of the closed-door policy in the Qing dynasty and China's defeat in the Opium War also affected the country's development in terms of politics, administration, military, and foreign affairs including economy and society. Among the problems were bureaucratic corruption, incompetent rulers, a recession of traditional economic systems, outdated military systems, weapons, and equipment, as well as diplomatic neglect with Britain and the Western powers. In addition, the problems that accumulated within the country from the beginning of the Qing dynasty were all important factors that contributed to the total defeat of China in the Opium War.

Keywords: Closed-Door Policy, Qing dynasty, The First Opium War

Introduction

The Chinese empire held on to the belief in the mandate of heaven, also known as Tianming, a concept of governance that had been used for thousands of years until the time when it was defeated in the Opium Wars as a result of the Chinese rulers ignoring the development and change of the world. However, the empire continued to pursue a policy of secession from the world. As a result, China became a failing country in modern world history compared to western countries that managed to break free from the shackles of medieval feudal society and enter modern capitalist society while China was still slumbering under the self-sufficient feudal system. When the disputes arising in the first Opium War erupted, this was a key factor in the destruction of the Qing dynasty's closed-door policy, and the defeat in the First Opium War also enlightened China to accept the changes in a modern world where China was no longer the center of the world.

The Qing dynasty was the last dynasty to rule China from 1644-1912. Its rulers were Manchus (Manzu), which the Han Chinese believed to be barbarians. The Qing dynasty was not accepted by the Han Chinese. Therefore, the Qing government issued a policy of severe suppression of opposers. This caused the many Han Chinese who remained loyal to the Ming dynasty, displeasure, so they flee to southern China and continue to take action against the

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Qing dynasty. Zheng Chenggong's forces, known in the West as Koxinga, took control of Guangdong province, Zhejiang province, and Fujian province which was an area on the southeast coast of China. Zheng Chenggong's forces were a movement that defied the Qing dynasty's dominion for nearly 40 years until the Kangxi emperor was able to unify China in 1684.

In 1685 (the 24th year of Kangxi's reign), the Qing imperial enacted a ban on maritime trade (Haijin) to block the route of the supply of Zheng Chenggong's equipment in Guangdong province, Fujian province, Zhejiang province, Jiangsu province, and other coastal areas of the kingdom to move into an area 50 li (25 km) away from the coast. Four ports were also announced to close: Macau, Zhangzhou Fujian, Ningbo Zhejiang, and Yuntaishan Jiangsu, a sea route used for foreign trade. Later, in 1716 (the 55th reign of Kangxi), the Qing imperial prohibited merchant ships from trading in the southern Luzon islands (now the Philippines) and Java island in Indonesia but allowed them to trade with Korea, Japan, and Vietnam. Until Qianlong's reign, only wanting to block the seas became a closed-door policy and was one of the key factors in the Qing dynasty's defeat in the first Opium War (Han, 2002).

Implementation of the Country's Closed-Door Policy in the Qing Dynasty

The Qing dynasty adopted a closed-door policy since the reign of Shunzhi, declining to prohibit people from using sea routes to protect against the Qing dynasty on the southeast coast and Taiwan. When the Kangxi emperor conquest Taiwan in 1684. He canceled this policy for some time. However, as the pirate problem in the coastal area became more serious during the Qianlong reign in 1757 (the 22nd year of Qianlong's reign), the law on the protection of foreigners was enacted (Fangfan Waiyiguitiao) to control the use of sea routes by the people and control trade with foreigners more stringently. It also ordered the closure of ports in Xiamen, Ningbo, and Yuntaishan. The ports in Guangzhou were still allowed to trade with foreign merchants, but directly contacting the government was prohibited. All affairs involving foreign merchants must be transferred to Cohong (Gonghang), a trading group established by the Qing government in Guangzhou under a monopoly concession. All actions were taken to prevent the Qing resistance from conspiring with foreigners to threaten the Qing court's sovereignty. Also, the Qing imperial did not allow foreign women to enter Guangzhou. Foreigners were not allowed to sit on the sedan and it was not allowed to hire Chinese as servants. And foreigners were not allowed to stay in Guangzhou during the winter. The Qing court was also strict on exports such as grain, iron, steel, sulfur, and nitrate. Silk and tea were able to be exported, but the number of exports was limited (Han, 2002).

Later in 1817, the Jiaqing reign banned the export of tea for overseas sales in order to prevent fraud that could be caused by tax evasion. Until 1821, the Daoguang emperor continued the policy of seclusion and international isolation. In the face of constant threats and invasions from Western colonies, Daoguang thought "As long as he just shut down the city and expels all foreigners from China everything will be fine". As a result of the closed-door policy, China had been blocked from the outside world for a long time, causing development to halt and cut off. Therefore, China has stuck with arrogance and conservative thinking that "The Qing dynasty was a heavenly dynasty with abundant resources, and the western country is a foolish and barbaric nation" (Han, 2002).

Thus, in 1838, Daoguang appointed Lin Zexu, High Commissioner of Hunan, and Hubei provinces, to deal with the opium problem in Guangzhou. Lin Zexu ordered a British

merchant to deliver the opium and destroy more than 20,000 chests. Charles Elliot, British Trade Representative to China, sent news to the British government. British foreign secretary Lord Palmerston took the opportunity to open the door to trade by sending a fleet of warships to China in 1840, sparking a war between England and China, called “The Opium War”. This happened as the Qing rulers did not understand Britain’s changing political and economic situation, as well as Britain’s aim for a war to force China to open up and trade freely with Britain. Therefore, the implementation of the closed-door policy of the Qing court had an impact on politics, government, military, and foreign affairs as well as economic and social aspects, which were all important factors that led to the defeat of the British and Western powers in the Opium War.

Political and Administrative Impact

The long-term lockdown policy caused the Qing dynasty rulers to lack understanding of the world’s changing situation at the time. In addition, they did not learn to cope with the changes in the modern world. It also adheres to the backward concept of China together with political corruption. These caused the Qing dynasty to be gradually weak. These factors have been analyzed by Chinese historians of the Qing dynasty’s political failure during the Opium War. For example, Sun Shangen said that Daoguang was a person who refused to learn and understand the world situation at that time but chose to adhere to the concept of the great power of the Heavenly Dynasty. This was the belief that Chinese emperors had always held in the rule of the feudal system. They believed that England was a country of barbarians and chose traditional policies to deal with England. And the exclusion of the Han Chinese was a key factor in Daoguang’s decision to appoint Qi Shan, a Manchu civilian supremacist, to replace Lin Zexu to resolve opium trade and opium smoking issues in China. Slandered by Qi Shan, Lin Zexu caused Daoguang to become paranoid and distrustful of Lin Zexu and Han Chinese bureaucrats in solving the opium problem. This was the reason why Daoguang was unable to properly appoint competent people to deal with the problems of that period (Sun, 1997).

Sui Xiwen believed that the political corruption of the Qing imperial, especially the corruption of government officials, caused the Qing army to be unable to fully demonstrate its might in battle, thus leading to military failure. It also resulted in the failure of military discipline as well as the backwardness of military equipment, and many soldiers did not know how to use the weapons available in the army. In addition, opium smoking became a common practice in the military. This caused the Qing soldier’s body to rapidly weaken. In addition, the problem of corruption in the military premiums was another important factor that caused the army’s defeat during the First Opium War. The rulers of the Qing dynasty did not take this corruption and bribery problem seriously. This eventually led to the defeat of the Qing army against the British army (Sui, 1990). This is in line with Liu Qionxia’s belief that political corruption and the suppression of the people against the Qing dynasty were the fundamental causes of the failure of the first Opium War, which widespread corruption destroyed the Qing monarchy’s administrative structure and the suppression of the people exacerbated the domestic conflict. As a result, the Qing dynasty’s rulers were unable to effectively manage the problems that arose during the first Opium War (Liu, 2002).

Moreover, Jiang Zengli said that the Qing dynasty’s rulers viewed the Han Chinese people as enemies, making the policy that the Qing dynasty ruled from the beginning of China’s rule. It was a policy that controls and uses force to suppress violently, causing the

loss of military forces to suppress many Han Chinese people. This caused the Qing dynasty's military force to weaken and was an important precondition for victory in war, especially when faced with the challenges of Western powers during the Opium Wars. In addition, the absolute monarchy of the Qing dynasty was the most prosperous in the reign of Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong, when the cultural dictatorship policy was implemented and promoted the practice of new Confucianism. It also suppressed public opinions against the Qing dynasty's rule. The intellectuals at that time did not dare to interfere in politics and administration. With the violent crackdown on the Han Chinese people, the number of people who resisted the Qing government grew even more. When the Qing dynasty was faced with the threat from outside the country. The domestic opposition took this opportunity to create divisions. The Qing dynasty faced internal and external threats from the eruption of the first Opium War. As a result, the political power of the Qing government was instability in the administration of the country during the war and was a major factor in the Qing dynasty's defeat and eventual collapse (Jiang, 1990).

Military Impact

In 1793, England sent an envoy of Lord Macartney as a special envoy to lead a delegation to China to explore the state of China at that time because they desired to expand the market to trade with China. Lord Macartney asked Qianlong to allow the English merchants to trade in Zhoushan, Tianjin, Ningbo, and Beijing, but Qianlong reject all offers. During Lord Macartney's visit to China, he studied detailed information on population, land, natural resources, minerals, taxes, military equipment, and Chinese defense forces based on the available data, the British compared the Qing government to only a paper tiger. It also assured that any time two to three small warships were sent to destroy the entire navy along China's coast in two months. This is consistent with the analysis of Shen Bo who said that the defeat in the Opium War stemmed from the weakness and backwardness of its navy in coastal defense, which China had long been neglecting to strengthen its navy. Due to the Qing dynasty's emphasis on strengthening the army rather than the navy, the navy was unable to adapt to the current world situation. There was also a conflict among the military aristocracy that controlled power in the army, depriving the army of unity and inability to resist the large and modern British naval raids. The Qing dynasty was therefore unable to cope with large-scale naval attacks because the navy was not set up independently. The centralized command simply did not exist. The navy equipment and tactics are also lagging behind. Most of the warships were made of wood. In addition, the Qing government did not attach importance to naval training, causing the navy to lack discipline. The available military force was insufficient and there was also a lack of unity and flexibility in the coordination of this war. The rulers themselves were unaware of the serious threat of this British invasion (Shen, 1993).

In addition, Liu Qiongxia analyzed that corruption within the Green Banner was also a major cause of China's failure in the Opium War because the Green Banner was the force that the Han Chinese soldiers belonged to and were scattered in the provinces of the Chinese empire at that time. Therefore, it was difficult to collect and operate in the event of an invasion. In addition, during the late Qing dynasty, military discipline and combat efficiency greatly declined because most soldiers were not educated, thus the quality of officers was extremely low. In addition, the Qing dynasty's rulers had always been suspicious of the Green Banner. As a result, the soldiers received a very low monthly salary that was insufficient to support their families. As a result, the soldiers under the Green Banner obscure their training

time to work in other fields as well while they were still in the banner. So the military efficiency of the banner division was deteriorating (Liu, 2002). Gong Zeqi suggested that because of the Qing dynasty's very backward development of the household peasant economy, the Qing dynasty's fiscal income was insufficient for military spending. This directly affected the size of the Army because it was unable to mobilize enough troops during the war. It demonstrated a lack of unity and unity in times of war due to the different ethnic policies of the Qing dynasty towards the military system of the Manchus and Han Chinese. In addition, the existing troops were slack, low discipline, and oppressed by the army's top generals. Weapons and equipment including the warships of the army were not modern compared to the Western powers. This put the Qing army at an inevitable disadvantage in the first Opium War.

Furthermore, Yang Guangxi and Li Cuizhen expressed the view that at the start of the first Opium War, China had a clear advantage. Because the war took place on the vast territory of China. With abundant resources and a large population, it was of great benefit to China in dealing with invaders, which was different from the British who had to bring troops from far away. They risked food shortages and troops if the war was prolonged. The long distance was a disadvantage for the British to always strengthen the army. But because of the weakness of Daoguang's lack of determination to defeat the invaders from outside, China suffered a setback in the first Opium War. Moreover, China's failure to develop a fundamental economy was another factor contributing to the failure of the first Opium War. Although China's weapons and equipment became a major disadvantage. It was not the decisive factor in this war, because if the Qing government had the people's support to resist British aggression, it would not be decisive. China might have had an advantage in the battle and defeated the then-powerful British army. But the corruption and imperial weakness of the Chinese emperor destabilized the politics of governance, together with the shortage of money and food shortages. The people were dissatisfied with the administration of the state. Resulting in the mobilization of troops to create a large army to deal with the British. Although the large population structure was China's advantage in this war, the failure to solve economic problems for the people caused China not to be able to reach victory over Britain (Yang & Li, 1990).

Foreign Affairs Impact

Before the 19th century, China and the West had no diplomatic ties with each other due to the distance and inaccessibility of transportation, although Westerners bought large quantities of Chinese goods such as porcelain, silk, and tea leaves. China had little demand for Western goods, which always led to China's trade balance. For this reason, China did not see the importance of trading with Western nations. Another important aspect is the concept of "Tian and Tianxia", that was, "Heaven" or "Tian" determined the possibilities of all things. The place where humans lived was called "Tianxia", which means "under the earth". The Han Chinese kingdom was at the center of Tianxia, so the Han Chinese called their own land "Zhongguo" (China or Middle Kingdom). Chinese emperors were like sons of heaven. Therefore, the royal court ruled by the heavenly sons was regarded as "The Royal Court of Heaven or Tianchao" people under the rule of the royal court of the heavens were the highest civilizations. In contrast, people in other territories or kingdoms, if who did not adopt the customs of the Heavenly Kingdom, would be considered barbarians, causing China to view Westerners who wished to come to the Chinese kingdom to pay tribute to learn civilization

from China or to request assistance from the Chinese royal court to make trade relations between China and the West become special because the Chinese royal court stipulated that Western merchants could trade only in Guangzhou through local trade associations that had been granted concessions from the court to trade with foreigners, and there was no fixed tariff. Although the royal court did not impose large taxes, local nobles often collaborated with trade associations to monopolize trade and impose unfair taxes, greatly displeasing foreign merchants (Han, 2002).

In the late 19th century, most of the trade between the West and China was in the hands of the East Indian Company. Because England was just going through a period of the Industrial Revolution, machines were used instead of human labor. England therefore, needed a market to drain the product. The fact that China's trade restrictions were not good for British economic expansion. At the same time, the British occupation of a trading port in India increased confidence in expanding trade influence to the East. The British believed that the barriers to trade were primarily from the local nobility and thought that if the Qianlong emperor had heard of this, it would have caused a change. Therefore, in 1792, the British sent a large envoy to pay their respects to the 80-year-old Qianlong reign by bringing the finest artifacts to Qianlong and required everyone on the diplomatic mission to strictly follow Chinese customs. When the diplomatic corps made the following proposals to the Qianlong emperor. First, Britain asked for the establishment of diplomatic relations with China through which ambassadors could be exchanged with the countries of both sides. Second, the British asked China to open up more foreign trade ports. Third, the British asked China to set clear tariffs. Lastly, Britain asked for permission to use the small island of China as a trading station and accommodation for British merchants. Although Qianlong was pleased and welcomed the ambassadors very well. Qianlong still regarded it as just a general tribute corps. There was no reasonable cause to follow. Therefore, he rejected the proposal of the ambassador causing negotiations between China and Britain to fail. Although the British attempted to send diplomatic corps to negotiate with China a second time in 1816, which coincided with Jiaqing was also unsuccessful, leading modern scholars to argue that the meeting between the West and the East was whether the British ambassador showed a Chinese salute by kneeling down with his forehead touching the ground or not because according to the Western worldview, ambassadors are representatives of the head of the country. In modern diplomatic relations, the two states were equal. Therefore, the ambassador may have refused to show a Chinese salute, causing the emperor to reject the offer. However, the Chinese document notes that the ambassadors actually bowed their foreheads touching the ground because, for the Chinese empire, the preservation of customs was of the utmost importance, which foreigners, especially barbarians, had to obey. If they understood and followed Chinese customs in return, the Chinese royal court may have offered favors to those from afar (Yao, 2015).

Thus, the encounter between the East and the West also represents the clash of their trade worldviews, cultures, and customs. This is in line with Xu Hu's analysis of the Qing imperial shutdown policy, which is like blinding the whole country as well as rejecting Western learning in science and technology. This put the Qing army in an irreversible and inevitable situation of defeat in the first Opium War (Xu, 1990). In addition, Ceng believed that the royal court's diplomatic neglect of Britain was a key cause of the failure of the Opium War because the British had planned a war of invasion of China for a long time. In particular, Lord Macartney's visit to China in 1793 and in 1816 Lord Amherst's visit to China but the

Qing dynasty was still not aware of this. From 1837, the situation between China and England became tenser. During that time, Lin Zexu and his group traveled to Macau. While living there, he tried to study and learn about the western aspects of living, dresses, hairstyles, and etiquette including Western customs and sentiments. These things made Lin Zexue know the West more deeply, but the Daoguang emperor was convinced of the Manchu nobles who wanted to slander Lin Zexu, and he was punished before winning the war. Consequently, the defeat in the first Opium War caused the old worldview to begin to change, especially among the intellectuals. Many encounters with the West had led China to begin to recognize that it was no longer the center of the world. But it was just one of the many states in the world that had to do whatever it took for their own safety. Therefore, the fact that China allowed foreigners to set up embassies and consulates in China. China's willingness to send ambassadors abroad and acceptance of international law clearly reflected the changing worldview of China.

Economic and Social Impact

The implementation of the lockdown policy during the Qing dynasty greatly affected China's social and economic foundations because the lockdown policy made the peasants exploit and live in poverty and unable to trade goods with foreigners. Nobles and merchants used their exploitative wealth to buy land and exploited the feudal system to create wealth for themselves and their comrades. The royals and nobles lived in luxury to satisfy their own needs, ignoring the troubles of a declining economy. Moreover, high-ranking rulers also rejected the trade terms of foreign merchants. Many Chinese scholars, such as Zhang Xiaojun, believe that the destruction of the peasant household economy, the traditional Chinese economy of the past was a major cause of the failure of the first Opium War. The traditional economy can stabilize society. But British traders' entry into the opium trade had a detrimental effect on China's trading system, costing China a lot of its currency. As a result, farmers had to pay higher taxes and China faces a gradual escalation of domestic unrest as well as lower tariffs on citizens. The Qing imperial did not have enough money to spend on the First Opium War with Britain, causing the Qing's army to be ultimately defeated (Zhang, 2019).

In addition, Li Da said that The Qing dynasty's economy was based on peasant households, which were the only units of production for daily needs. It was not an economic system capable of responding to modern capitalism as well as being lagging behind in the development of science and high technology. During the Qianlong reign, the Qing dynasty neglected to modernize the country in all aspects, thus preventing the Qing army from defeating the Western powers with modern weapons and equipment (Li, 1990). This is in line with the ideas of Wang Longping who mentioned the failure of the Qing army in the First Opium War. This was mainly due to the economic disparity between China and Britain. Because after the industrial revolution, Western countries, including England, developed rapidly. They also needed raw materials to be a factor in production including expanding the market to support products. This made England the most powerful capitalist country in the world. On the other hand, the Qing dynasty still adhered to the ancient feudal concept of China. This was a major obstacle that hindered the development of China's country to enter the modern world. At the same time, the population growth from the end of the Qianlong reign exacerbated the conflict over arable land and food shortages, leading to people's starvation. And the Qing government was unable to collect enough tax from the people

compared to the population of the country, which greatly affected the development of the country, especially the development of modern weapons and equipment. The Qing dynasty also had a trade deficit when the British began importing opium to trade in China. Many Chinese were addicted to opium, especially the lower classes, who were a key labor force in the production system when the Qing government, when faced with fiscal wise, made the Chinese military lack the strength to deal with British forces.

So, in 1842, when China was defeated by Britain in the Opium War, Therefore, the Qing government had to sign the Nanjing Treaty, which forced China to abolish the warship system and open seaport cities to free trade. The Chinese government had to pay war indemnity and accept extraterritorial rights, including ceding Hong Kong to the British. The defeat in the Opium War was the fuel that sparked the anti-Qing dynasty to take action in various parts of China. And made the Chinese intellectual of that era such as Wei Yuan state, *“ During the Opium War, the powerful ships and guns of the Western powers shocked the Chinese rulers and awakened them from the belief that the Kingdom of Heaven had the political and cultural influence of traditional Chinese society. Since China could not destroy barbarians with the belief of Hua-Yi, who used to play an important role in governing the country. A number of Chinese people began to question the feudal society and Chinese culture that was once believed to be great, and the arrival of Western nations further underlined that Chinese society at that time was becoming a backward and underdeveloped society. When traditional forms were destroyed and faced with the loss of civilization, the Chinese had to learn to control the West through Western methods”* (Yao, 2015).

Based on the ideas of Wei Yuan, the emphasis was on realizing the importance of Western imperialism to East Asians at that time. Wei Yuan suggested an urgent fix. Because the Chinese are not as advanced in their military as the West. China needs to learn from the barbarians in dealing with teams. But China’s trading system is called the “Tribute system” which has been a very important system in China’s trading system since the Song dynasty. This is the system that the Chinese used to trade with the Japanese, Arabs, Southeast Asia, and Europe, where the tribute system set restrictions to control trade. And there is a ban on personal free trade. Fairbank saw that capitalism could not exist in China as merchants were subject to landowners, scholars, and bureaucrats. Merchants can develop themselves in the city system. Because the landowner class had power over the land which had nothing to do with the city. The inhabitants were therefore free and governed by a city system that was created to protect them. China does not have these conditions because the Chinese regime relies on scholars, which prevents merchants from being protected. While graduates are tied to bureaucracy and land, not to trade and industry. Links between graduates and civil servants forced both groups to control merchants as a source of capital rather than giving them space to trade or run their own businesses (Fairbank, 1998).

When the tribute system is related to the system of government within the Chinese empire and China controls and restricts trade with this system Thus, in the 19th century, the world of capitalism and globalization began to threaten the trading system that China had held for a long time. Western trade demands in the 1830s put severe pressure on China’s tribute trade system. Together with the concept of free trade occurred in England and was very popular. Causing Western merchants to want a free trade system and a more clear taxation system Conflicts between the world economy and the Chinese empire’s trade controls led to the subsequent Opium Wars (Harrison, 2001).

China's Historical Lesson in the Opium War

The Qing dynasty founded by the Manchus in 1644, took advantage of social turmoil during the late Ming dynasty to settle in Beijing. After more than 40 years of fighting, the Qing dynasty was able to suppress the resistance movement and defend the Qing dynasty regime, and prevented foreign aggression that may have contributed to China's internal political struggle. For example, when Zheng Chenggong fought against the Qing dynasty. Westerners also supported it by selling arms to help Zheng Chenggong in his fight against the Qing dynasty. Therefore, the closed-door policy was a measure taken to prevent the gathering of anti-Qing forces. On the other hand, this policy weakened the Qing dynasty, leading to its defeat in the Opium Wars and the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911.

When the Qing emperor implemented a serious lockdown policy from the beginning of the Qing dynasty until the First Opium War trade and foreign exchange bans are restricted. The first measure taken was "A sea ban" to deal with anti-Qing forces on the southeast coast and in Taiwan. Later, for fear that domestic merchants would conspire with maritime pirates to carry out activities against the Qing dynasty. Therefore, trading was allowed only in the eastern part of China. Measures also became more stringent, including prohibiting people from traveling abroad to trade and live abroad. The export of goods was prohibited and the construction of large ships was prohibited. Chinese sailors and merchants traveling abroad were given placards engraved with their surnames and birthplaces to hang on their waists for the guards to patrol. The Qing court chose to make things more difficult for both Chinese and overseas Chinese doing business overseas, especially the arms ban, causing Chinese merchant ships to lose their ability to defend themselves from pirates, which had a serious impact on foreign trade and livelihood.

The Qing dynasty's implementation of the lockdown policy had a serious impact on Chinese society in the fight to prevent the aggression of Western powers, although the closed-door policy temporarily suppressed the aggression of Western capitalism. But from the point of view of historical development. The lockdown policy had a negative impact on the country's economic development, social development, and people's lives in Chinese society, and the state's fiscal income declined. It also disrupted silk and tea exports. Imports and exports were controlled by the Qing court. It also hinders China from learning the world's advanced science and technology. In addition, Qing dynasty intellectuals were bound by conservative ideas that kept China in a state of ignorance and backwardness before the first Opium War in terms of ideology, culture as well as military training, weapons, and equipment that were more obsolete than all Western countries. In the end, China's backward civilization was unable to withstand the invasion of foreign powers and stop capitalist aggression. These only stimulate China's downfall. Protecting national independence, strengthening the nation, and changing the balance of power between China and foreign countries could never be achieved through separation. Moreover, the closed-door policy could not change the nature of invaders. It could only make them ignore them and stay in their own place.

Furthermore, the Qing court's closed-door policy led China to a direct failure in the Opium War, because the policy fostered corruption and bribery of government officials, degrading the Qing government and incapable of strengthening national defense, as well as military disparities, all of which were the direct causes of the failure of the First Opium War.

The gradual deterioration of military strength led the people to lose faith and support their rulers in defense of the country. When a country was deprived of the strong strength of its people to fully resist war, many contributing factors could not encourage China to defeat its enemies and could not escape the tragic fate of becoming a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society. But the rumble of cannons in the Opium War helped awaken ignorant Chinese people that they could no longer control the barbarians by shutting down the country. They had to open their eyes to the world and stepped into the world and begin to create a learning process and modern national consciousness for all Chinese people.

From China's long history, it was learned that ancient conservatism was the key factor that led China to decline while openness promoted the prosperity of civilization. When current globalization spreads all over the world, every country had to adapt to the global trend. Embracing modernization reforms was an important option for China to become a superpower. In the past, from the Ming dynasty, there was a growing exchange of learning with Westerners, with many missionaries coming to China. This was the beginning of the Western learning process in the Eastern world. The arrival of these missionaries was very popular during the late Ming dynasty. But the closed-door policy during the Qing dynasty, the learning process for both sides was hindered because the Qing court had the idea of preserving the ideas of ancient Chinese culture. Therefore, it issued a closed-door policy to cope with unprecedented changes. This greatly affected the development of Chinese society in world history.

Therefore, in the face of great history, one should not place himself as a mere spectator. But you must learn to discover, analyze, and be alert to the history of the world. Both the Eastern Roman Empire and the Chinese Empire had a similar fate. Both empires had great civilizations, but they lagged behind the world because they were obsessed with their past achievements and did not intend to advance themselves. On this issue, the Chinese Empire is different from the Japanese Empire that which learned and reformed the country to be as modern as the Western world, leading to the Meiji Reform, which was the reform and development of Japan as a civilized country. Southeast Asian countries such as Thailand, especially during the reign of King Rama IV, became aware of Western threats and initiated various national reforms, especially in 1855 when John Bowring, The British Consul in China and the governor of Hong Kong, led ambassadors to Thailand and forced Thailand to sign the Bowring Treaty, a contract on trade between Thailand with England and the granting of extraterritorial rights to England as well. And when King Rama 5 ascended the throne, he realized the survival of the nation, so he implemented a policy that emphasizes building good diplomatic relations, building forces to protect the country's modern government, reforming and developing the country's economy to support an industrial country including raising the level and standards of education in the country.

From the studies, the important historical lessons that reflect the important reforms of all countries are that the rulers must have a good understanding of the world situation, be able to adapt the country to the current trends in a timely manner, be able to Set goals for national reform clearly and cover all aspects of society, and must have centralized governance. They must have the power to govern and formulate policies that are consistent with the situation both within the country and outside the country. These are important guarantees for the reform and development of the country to be modern.

Conclusion

From its defeat in the Opium War in 1842, the kingdom known as the ancient center of world power, China, was severely shaken by the arrival of Western nations. The elites of the Qing Dynasty felt such a threat and needed to do something to combat the Western invasions. The only way to be able to fight the West as quickly as possible was to learn what made the Western world more prosperous and stronger. But bringing the West into the country would bring about change and it was difficult to predict how severe the impact of that change would be. This was where the elite feel most sensitive and fearful. The next problem was how to embrace the West in order to strengthen oneself and at the same time control the effects of the change within the boundaries that the elites were able to control. It eventually emerged as a policy that was called the Western Affairs Movement. Which mainly focuses on changes in science and technology. But it still honored the Confucian traditions and principles that sustained the power and legitimacy of the Qing dynasty's elite. Thus, this reform did not result in much social and political change. After thirty years of implementing such a policy, China began to have a modern industry. It had Western-style infrastructure and a modern army with modern weapons as well as the western world. In order to get these things, China had to waste a huge budget, but the economy still depended mainly on the agricultural sector and most of the state's income came from all the people in the country.

From implementing the policy of self-strengthening from 1851 until the Sino-Japanese (War between 1894–1895) or the first war between China and Japan. This is a testament to the country's reforms in the past of China in terms of the military and the use of modern weapons in war. But the outcome war ended in the defeat of the Qing court. This represents the complete failure of this reform. China's defeat to Japan has hurt and Chinese intellectuals have raised questions about China's unsuccessful reforms like the Meiji Restoration in Japan. This made them realize that simply reforming science and technology was not enough. This caused a wave of demands that led to the Hundred Days Reform, an effort among the new elite of the Qing court, the Guangxu emperor, and intellectuals who hope to reform politics and government including developing China's society to advance and be par with the Western world and Japan, but they still lost the tide of resistance from the majority of the elites who feared uncontrollable and predictable changes. Changes in China continued to lead to a revolution that eventually overthrew the Qing dynasty.

In 1911, after the Xinhai Revolution, the feudal rule that China had used for more than 2,000 years collapsed. China has adopted the Republic of China regime. Later, the People's Republic of China was established in 1949. Since then, China has made great efforts to modernize the country. Even when faced with conflicts within the country and foreign threats But as the 21st century enters, China has become a major player on the world stage, especially in its rapidly growing economy, including trade surpluses, the influence of the yuan in the world market, the mergers and the acquisitions of business both in England and in countries in the European Union, including building economic cooperation One Belt One Road. There are also developments in science and technology because China aims to become a world space superpower. In addition, in 2021, China successfully eradicated extreme poverty and continues to strive to solve the problems of inequality and poverty for the people in order to develop the country towards sustainability in the future.

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