

What happened
during the boxer
rebellion?



During the Qing Dynasty ruling, there were growing periods of political unrest culminating in the Boxer rebellion.

The Boxer rebellion was a conflict against foreign influence in China including the Qing and Western traders. This particular rebellion weakened the Qing by diminishing their political control and losing their support from the people. This culminated in the end of the dynasty in 1911 when the last emperor abdicated. This primary photograph of a Boxer rebel, taken in the year 1900, shows the rebel waving a banner in support of the Boxer Uprising. The Boxer Rebellion was an attempt to free China of its increased number of foreigners that were taking over. It was seen as one of the first indications of Chinese Nationalism after the humiliation of the defeat in the Opium Wars. The Boxer and Manchu rulers, led by Empress Dowager Cixi, attempted to drive out the foreign traders only to lose control of the country's economy and loss of prestige amongst the within Chinese people.

Political, military and social changes were emerging in China by 1600 (along with natural disasters) referred to as the Qing Dynasty; the last imperial dynasty of China (ruling from 1644-1912), which was then followed by the Republic of China. Major changes followed the arrival (for the first time in Chinese history), western explorers, missionaries and traders when they arrived by boat in large numbers. With the Ming dynasty long since passing its peak, it was quickly becoming weak, allowing the Manchus and certain clans and tribes in particular to take advantage and increase their power base. Eventually the Nurhaci, a member of the Tong clan, unified Jurchen tribes and was the founder of the Qing Dynasty. Nurhaci was free to increase his power through state building work he began in 1583 after his father,

Taksi, and his grandfather, Giocangga, were killed in action in 1582 while helping the Ming. Their deaths lead to Nurhaci starting his state-building work in 1583. He dominated the Jurchen tribes by warfare and diplomacy. In 1616, Nurhaci announced himself the ruler of the kingdom of Jin, and soon after he overthrew the Ming army, creating a new Qing dynasty. As you can see, the map shown on the PowerPoint is a map of China at the time of the Qing Dynasty. In the late seventeenth century, the Qing seized Mongolia and then Tibet in the eighteenth century. Although it is a secondary source, it is still a very reliable source as it has accurate events displayed such as the rebellions and attacks.

The Boxer Rebellion, also known as the Boxer Uprising or the Righteous Harmony Society Movement, began in 1898 due to bad harvests, imperialist expansion, missionary evangelism, natural disasters and plagues by the Westerners and Japanese that had caused dismay and upset to the Boxers. The Boxers were mainly young male farmers who practiced a mixture of spirit possession and martial arts. Female Boxers, known as Red Lanterns, later joined the uprising. They feared that the Chinese would become servants to the Europeans. This led them to their anti-western beliefs and anything that was western was seen as evil. The Boxers practiced traditional martial arts and used Chinese weapons. These weapons consisted of spears and curved halberds. They targeted the Manchus and the Europeans in China. On the Power Point, two images of Japanese officers are in Peking at the foreign legations to besiege the Boxers. This siege continued for 55 days until a relief force came from Tientsin to rescue the people of the legations. This photograph is a primary source as it was taken at the time of the Boxer

Rebellion. It was believed that the defeat of the Sino war was due to the Europeans, who were dominant in China at the time, and that they alone were responsible for China's downfall; and many of the Chinese began to feel the same. By the end of the 19th Century, a nationalism spread over China and many of them wanted to salvage China for the Chinese citizens. All of these feelings led to the rebellion in 1898.

The Boxer rebellion began in north China in the Shantung Province which was at that time under a German influence. All of the factories, coal mines and railway lines in Shantung were dominated by the Germans. They made a large profit from this while the Chinese were poorly paid and lived in poverty. In the boxer's eyes, all foreigners were seen as '1st class devils', all Christian converts were '2nd class devils', and those who worked for the foreigners were '3rd class devils'. By the year 1900, the Boxers had many followers and supporters within the Chinese court. Their most honourable supporter was Empress Dowager. At this time, China was struggling and was viewed as a very vulnerable country with difficult political situations. The Empress saw the boxers as her solution to settle the anti-western feelings among the Chinese. Although the Manchu court was alarmed by this uprising, they were also very satisfied that they were getting revenge on the foreign powers after being humiliated. In May 1900, the Qing secretly began supporting the Boxers. On the 9th of June boxers burnt down the racecourse which was their first attack on western property in Pecking. On the 16th June the Boxers set fire and destroyed over 4, 000 shops that had any relation the Westerners. On the 19th of June, the Ministers received a demand that all foreigners are to evacuate within the next 24 hours of they could not be

guaranteed protection, yet they refused to move, and finally on the 20th of June at 4pm an eight-week siege of the foreign legations in Beijing began. A day later, on June the 21st, Empress Dowager Cixi declared war on the foreign authorities. Diplomats, foreign civilians, soldiers and some Chinese Christians fled to the Legation Quarter where they hid for 55 days until the Eight-Nation Alliance brought 20, 000 troops to rescue them. On August the 14th, the foreign powers sent 20, 000 troops marching into Beijing to seize the mutiny. This image shows the gateway of the English bridge barring the Chinese from the Western Legations in Canton, 1900. It is a primary source as it was taken at the time of the rebellion. During the late imperial period, 48 treaty ports were opened to the Europeans. The foreigners established their own European-style residential compounds and buildings.

What were the consequences of the Boxer Rebellion for the Qing Dynasty? (Conclusion)

On the 7th of September, the Boxer Protocol ended. Severe punishments were made one punishment being a guarantee of 67 million pounds. The foreign powers gained a large amount of concessions to China's mineral wealth and trade, and China's armies now appeared weak and out of date. Despite the Manchu and Empress Dowager's actions, they were forgiven with minor punishments. Dowager received a punishment of the European nations by the Westerners re-establishing their authorities over the Chinese citizens. The European force, now supported by the Qing, took revenge on Boxers and gave them no mercy as they were publicly executed. The Qing dynasty was weakened and overthrown by the 1911 revolution, which led to the establishment of the Chinese Republic.