

Handout

Timeline of Major Events in China, 1839–1919

1839–1842

The Treaty of Nanking is signed (1842), ending the First Opium War, China's first war with Great Britain. The unequal treaty forces China to pay large sums of money to Great Britain and also guarantees Britain extraterritoriality, meaning that any British citizen in China is subject only to British, not Chinese, laws.

1856–1860

The Convention of Peking (1856) is signed, ending the Second Opium (Anglo-Chinese) War, fought by Britain and France against China. Like the Treaty of Nanking, this treaty involves major concessions to the Western powers.

1850–1864

The Taiping Rebellion, the deadliest civil rebellion to date in China, kills approximately 20 million people. The central government takes 14 years to put down the rebellion.

1884–1885

China is defeated in war with France, resulting in the loss of Vietnam, China's major protectorate in the south.

1894

First Sino-Japanese War. Japan is victorious over China and asserts its first gains as an imperial power. Korea is "turned over" (colonized) to Japan, and China cedes Taiwan to Japan. China's defeat signals for the first time a significant shift in regional dominance in East Asia from China to Japan.

1895–1900

Establishment of concessions in Shanghai and other coastal cities.

1900

The Boxer Siege (Boxer Rebellion) of Beijing, an uprising spurred by anti-Western and anti-Japanese sentiment, is ultimately put down with the help of eight Western nations. China is forced to make payments to the foreign countries who assisted in putting down the rebellion, who are also given permanent military posts in Beijing.

1911

The First People's Republic of China is proclaimed; fall of the Manchu Qing dynasty (founded in 1644).

1914

World War I begins. China is allied with United States and Great Britain.

1919

The Treaty of Versailles ends World War I. The treaty grants Japan control over valuable German concessions in Shandong, leading to outcry in China, which expected to receive the territory.

1. What are the most significant events that occurred in China during this period?
2. How would you summarize the impact of Western imperialism on China during this period?
3. What are the most significant events that occurred in Japan during this period?
4. How would you summarize the impact of Western imperialism on Japan during this period?