

# Strangers at the Gate

# Opium and the Opium War

- China has no desire to organize trade on the European model – what was the story after?
- Social life of opium in China: for medical purpose; in 18<sup>th</sup> century, smoke pure opium sap in a pipe to relieve physical and emotional pain – but addictive.
- In India, British invested in the manufacture and distribution of opium – seeing its sale as a way to solve the problem of their balance of payments with China. (200 chests in 1729; 1,000 chests in 1767; 4,500 by 1800; 10,000 by 1825; 40,000 in 1828).

# Opium Smokers

- Calcutta: private merchants smuggling opium
- Southern China: smuggling and smoking
- 1800-1818: Chinese private merchants
  - Macao --- “fast boats”
  - through Canton --- inland
  - along the sea coast --- inland (Suzhou, 100,000 smokers around the time)
- Smokers: not only nobles, high officials, but also lower gentry class, soldiers
- Why? After 1819, more opium harvest, competition lowered the cost.

# Balance of Trade

- 18<sup>th</sup> century: tea, porcelain, silk --- first ten years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, 26 million income
- 1828-1836, 38 million outflow from China
- In 1830, at least 4 million pounds were transferred from India to England -----

Using the rest of profits:

A. to buy more opium to sell to Chinese; B. to buy tea back to England to sell

# To Suppress Opium

- Chinese officials wanted to control the situation, *i.e.* moralists
- In 1820, Ruan Yuan put 16 Chinese (Cantonese) merchants who smuggled opium trade into jail.
- However, 1822-1830 the trading still reached its peak time 18,760 chests.
- Why? (waterways, opium transportation, bribes)
- 1839 Daoguang Emperor sent an incorrupt Imperial Commissioner, Lin Zexu, to compel foreign traders to stop opium.

- Daoguang Emperor and the debate – supported the suppressing movement of opium smoking and trading
- 1837, 2000 Chinese merchants who participated the opium smuggling were put into jail
- 1838, those who smoked opium will be put into jail.  
Question: how do you know who are smokers?
- 1838, Lin Zexu, a moralist, and his proposal of “moral value” --“moral advice to Queen Victoria” 1839.

# Attitude to the war

- The British
  - Before the industry revolution --- to buy something from the east;
  - After the industry revolution --- to look for a market
  - In their own country, a parliament debate whether to abandon EIC monopoly --- “free trading”
- The Chinese – what did Lin Zexu do as an Imperial Commissioner at Canton?

- Did the Chinese (high officials) predict that there will be a war? To win or to lose?
- Confidence:
  - A. Past experience told them ...
  - B. Through a war, they may teach the “barbarians”...
  - C. After war, things will be back to “tributary system”
- In fact, what did the so-called “confidence” bring to the Chinese? (Example of Lin Zexu’s memorial to Daoguang Emperor)



- In fact, Chinese soldiers' spears, swords, and big knives vs. The *Nemesis*, gunpowder and cannons.
- Chinese soldiers: Manchus, not even rigidly trained; Han-Chinese, to “sell” their service, not willing to fight (opium smokers)
- 1841, Chuanbi negotiation, a Manchu official Chi-shan replaced Lin Zexu: Hong Kong, treaty ports, indemnity, opium trade (illegal!) --- not a single one is fitted into “tributary system”
- March – May 1841, the stage set for the San-yuan-li incident



- The English proudly commemorated their victory in the Opium War. (Chinese wooden ships were destroyed by the Nemesis, a paddle-wheel iron ship that could operated by steam).

# San-yuan-li Incident

- Militia/braves and their social functions?
- Why “the people’s righteousness” is considered as essential in Lin and other officials’ mindset?
- What was the gentry’s role in the San-yuan-li Incident?  
How did the people get organized during the Incident?
- What the *pao-chia* (*baojia*) system was? How did it work?
- The first manifestation of modern Chinese nationalism?