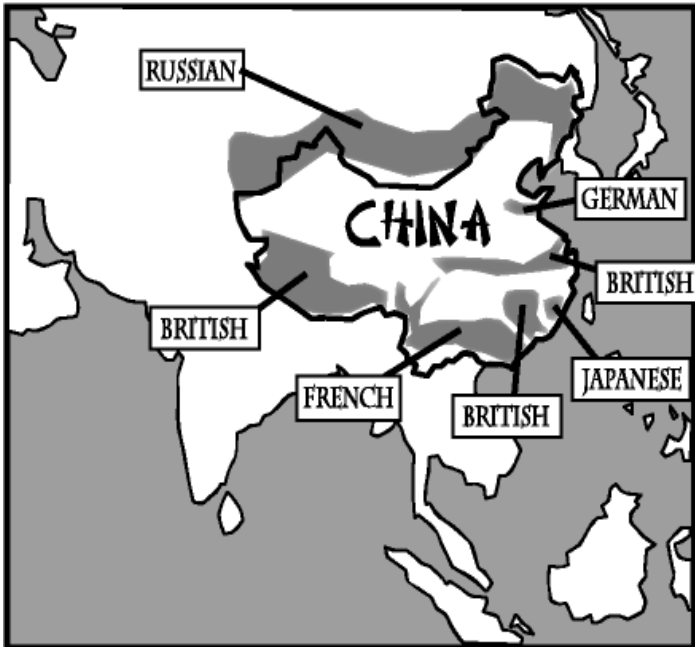


Imperialism in China

With a long and rich history, China is one of the world's oldest civilizations. At a time when Europe was no more than a loose collection of small villages and towns, China was already a booming society with advanced technology and an organized government. As an agrarian (agricultural) society, China had little need to open themselves up to the West. However, as a nation which produced valuable goods such as porcelain, high quality cotton, and silk, Western nations were very interested in establishing trade with China; at any cost.



SPHERES OF INFLUENCE IN CHINA 1900



Spheres of Influence

Unlike imperialism in India and Africa, European involvement in China was somewhat different. Many European powers and Japan controlled much of the business and investment in China throughout the late 1800's. These foreign powers had territories near the borders of China that brought them into constant contact with Chinese people. Naturally over time, Chinese business and people became reliant upon the presence of the foreigners. This indirect control of culture, economics, or politics by a foreign nation is called a sphere of influence. Imperialism in China took the form of a sphere of influence and not colony building.

How are spheres of influence different from building a colony?

The Opium Trade

For centuries China had been the center of trade in the eastern world. Europeans were allowed limited trade in certain Chinese ports. In addition to Chinese silk, cotton, and porcelain, Europeans also wanted Chinese raw materials as they did in India and Africa. However, the Chinese had little interest in trading with the Europeans. They had seen the European technology and crafts but were not impressed. Eventually, the British found one good that eventually caught on in China; the addictive drug known as **opium**.



Use the video clip to answer the questions below

How did the custom of Opium smoking begin in China?

How did Opium affect the Chinese people?

A letter from a Chinese official to Queen Victoria of Britain in 1839:

"By what right do the British merchants (traders) use the poisonous drug [opium] to hurt the Chinese people? I have heard that your country strictly forbids the smoking of opium. This is because the harm caused by opium is clearly understood. Since it is not permitted to do harm in your country, then even less should you let it be passed on to harm other countries... Therefore, in the new regulations in regard to those barbarians who bring opium to China, the penalty is fixed with strangulation or decapitation. This is what is called getting rid of a harmful thing on behalf of mankind..."

Lin Zexu

What kind of evidence does he give to prove that the opium trade is wrong?

Use the video clip to answer the questions below

How does Lin get rid of the Opium?

The Opium War

By the time Lin Tse Hsu sent his letter to Queen Victoria (she never received the letter), over 12 million Chinese were addicted to opium. The Chinese government finally passed a law declaring it illegal to bring the drug into China. This new law did not stop the British, who continued to bring opium into the country. In 1839, the Chinese seized 20,000 chests of opium and destroyed it. Angry that their valuable goods were destroyed, the British declared war on China. This became known as the **Opium War**. China was helpless against British military technology and in 1842, Britain won the war.

After their defeat, the Chinese had no choice but to sign a peace treaty. A “*treaty*” is an agreement made by two or more nations. Usually both sides “get something” out of the treaty which is why they agree to sign it. A treaty is usually not considered valid (legal) if one side is forced to sign it. The Treaty of Nanking is known as the first of many “Unfair Treaties” according to the Chinese viewpoint.

DIRECTIONS: Read each part of the Treaty and explain if it is a fair or unfair agreement.

(Fill in only one side)

<p>THE TREATY OF NANKING, August 29, 1842 (Signed between the British and Chinese)</p>	<p>FAIR? <u>Explain</u></p>	<p>UNFAIR? <u>Explain</u></p>
<p>Article II. The Emperor of China agrees, that British subjects, with their families and establishments, shall be allowed to stay in China, for the purposes of carrying on their business pursuits, without any limitations, at the cities and towns of Canton, Amoy, Foochowfoo, Ningpo, and Shanghai</p>		
<p>Article III. The British must have a port to dock and store their ships; therefore, the Emperor of China must give over to great Britain the Island of Hong Kong.</p>		
<p>Article IV. The emperor of China agrees to pay the six million dollars (the amount of opium lost during the war of 1839) as a ransom for the lives of the British who have been imprisoned and threatened with death by Chinese High officers.</p>		
<p>Article VI. The emperor of China agrees to pay two million dollars to the British for the expenses of the Opium war.</p>		
<p>Article X. The emperor of China agrees that China may trade only with the British. In addition, the British government will determine the taxes on all imports and exports on China.</p>		
<p>Another result of the war was that Europeans gained the right of extraterritoriality. Extraterritoriality meant that a foreigner could not be tried by a Chinese court. A foreigner could not even be tried for crimes they committed in China. This essentially meant that foreigners did not have to obey Chinese laws.</p>		

Method used to destroy opium

The trenches were filled with water, and the first chests of opium were broken open and thrown in to soak. Next, large quantities of salt and lime were dumped into the mixture. The ensuing chemical reaction heated and liquefied the opium, releasing clouds of nauseating gas. A team of five hundred closely guarded laborers with shovels and hoes stirred the slowly decomposing material and ran it off into a stream that led to the sea. The first worker who was caught trying to steal some opium was immediately beheaded as a warning to the rest.

<http://www.opioids.com/opium/opiumwar.html>