

Lesson 7

Question for the Lesson/What you need to know in this lesson:

What were the reasons for/causes of Late Qing Reforms?

What were the Late Qing Reforms?

What were the effects of the Late Qing Reforms?

IB Questions

Effectiveness of reforms from 1901-1911

1. "The reforms introduced by China's Qing (Ch'ing) dynasty between 1901 and 1911 hastened its end instead of saving it." How far do you agree with this statement? (M03, Q8)
 2. Analyse the reasons for, and the consequences of, the late Qing reforms (1902-1911) in China (M14)
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1. Overview of Late Qing Reforms, 1901-1911

In a struggle for survival, the Manchu court instituted some constitutional government **as it becomes convinced of the need to introduce the institutional reforms proposed during Hundred Day Reform, which was then seen as radical.**

On the other hand, many Chinese witnessing the hopelessness of the Manchu leadership turned to revolutions as the only hope for their country (**get more details from later lessons**) Dr Sun Yat-sen's advocacy of a forceful overthrow of the Qing dynasty, regarded by respectable Chinese as an unlawful movement to eschew, now received increasing sympathy and support. The image of Dr Sun Yat-sen reversed from that of a disloyal rebel to that of a high-minded, patriotic revolutionary. **As a result, the pulse of revolution quickened, precipitating the ultimate down fall – another direction towards which China was moving.**

Will late Qing Reforms save the dynasty from a complete overthrow?

2. Causes/Reasons for the Late Qing Reforms

Refer to the Repercussions/Consequences of Boxer Rebellion (Lesson 6)

Following the Japanese defeat of Russia in the Russo-Japanese War, to the many Chinese the defeat of the large autocratic victory by a tiny Oriental constitutional monarchy was proof the effectiveness of constitutionalism: they were impressed by the fact that all western powers operated on the basic principles of constitutional government. The idea of constitutionalism suddenly caught fire and spread quickly among intellectuals, social leaders and the forward-looking governor-generals and governor in the country as constitutionalism was seen as the formula for survival

3. The Late Qing Reforms

A.

Political Reforms	Achievements	Limitations/Failures
1. Abolition of Old Offices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Termination of Sale of Offices Dismissal of useless clerks and attendants in governments Abolition of the governorships of Yunnan and Hupeh and Kwangtung 		
2. Creation of new offices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Superintendency of Political Affairs The Ministry of Foreign Affairs to replace the Tsungli Yamen The Ministry of Commerce that absorbed the old Bureau of Railways and Mining The Ministry of Police The Ministry of Education 		<p>The Superintendency of Political Affairs was controlled by Jung-lu, a Manchu and the newly formed Ministry of Foreign Affairs was placed under Prince Ch'ing who controlled the Bureau of Military Training</p> <p>Implications: the reforms led to further Manchu dominance of the government and anti-Chinese discrimination – Important appointments were given to Manchus -one-sided distribution of offices became even more evidence with the death of elder Chinese statesmen like Li Hung-chang – prospect for successful reforms became even more remote</p>
3. Constitutional Reforms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A small study group was sent to visit Japan, Britain, France, Belgium as well as US, Germany, Austria and Italy It was concluded that Japanese constitution was more suitable to China because of greater similarity between the two countries Manchu leader of the mission personally proposed adoption of a constitution within 5 years and he indicated that a well- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of a Bureau of Constitutional Compilation, 1907 The despatch of 3 officials in Sept 1907 to Japan, Britain and Germany to study constitutionalism The appointment of one Chinese and one Manchu to inaugurate a National Assembly The order to establish provincial, prefectural and district assemblies 	<p>Dowager shrewdly omitted to specify the date of the promulgation of the constitution when she endorsed the recommendation for a constitution</p> <p>Divergent views with regard to the constitution was held by different factions in the government. The Manchus saw in it a chance to centralize government control and</p>

<p>designed constitution could become an instrument of executive power, providing concentrated leadership in the central government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recommendation was approved by royal commission and endorsed by the dowager on 1 Sept 1906 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These development heartened reformers of 1898 and dozens of "Constitution-Protection Clubs" sprang up in the provinces and waves of delegates came to Peking to petition for the early promulgation of the constitution Under such pressure, the court on 27 August 1908 issued an "Outline of Constitution", a parliamentary law, and prescribed a nine-year tutelage period before the constitution became effective 	<p>exclude the Chinese from inner circles, thereby wresting power from the provincial governor-generals, who were predominantly Chinese. The Dowager considered it as a convenient device to conciliate the public without actually compromising her own power. On the other hand, to many Chinese constitutionalism provided hope of liberation from unfair, oppressive Manchu discrimination and domination</p> <p>The Dowager never genuinely contemplated introducing constitutional monarchy in China and the "Outline" gave the throne even greater power than the Japanese model. The "Outline" specified that executive, legislative and judiciary power resided in the emperor, who sacred and inviolable would continue to rule the empire in the unbroken line of ten thousand generations. Parliament could consider, but not decide, questions of government and provisions with regard to the rights and duties of the citizens were little more than meaningless formalities. The "Outline of Constitution" was an instrument of imperial procrastination, in the attempt to consolidate dynastic power and prolong the Manchu rule. And Dowager even sought to the delay the introduction of a constitution in China during her lifetime by</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prince Chun who was the regent for the 3 year old P'u-i who succeeded Dowager after her death in 1908, ordered the establishment of provincial assemblies, which were inaugurated in 14 Oct 1909. • With the creation of these popular bodies, the demand for the convocation of parliament gained rapid momentum and 3 times in 1910 representatives of sixteen provinces went to Peking to petition the early convening of parliament 	<p>requiring a 9 year gestation period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prince Chun, in spite of tremendous pressure from the provisional assemblies and private constitutionalists, only announced in 1910 that he would shorten the period of constitution preparation from 9 to 6 years • Prince Chun also furthered his anti-Chinese policy by organizing a "Royal Cabinet" in 1911 – there were 8 Manchus, and one Mongol banner-man and only 4 Chinese in the Cabinet – the Chinese became increasingly convinced that genuine constitutionalism was impossible under Manchu leadership
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B.

Military Reforms	Achievements	Limitations/Failures
<p>1. Creation of the modern provincial based New Armies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organized on European lines which had cavalry, infantry, artillery, engineering, medical and support units • Had modern weapons and trained by Germans • Provincial military academies were created such at Nanjing • 175000 out of 600000 Qing soldiers were now part of the New Armies and they were the best trained and equipped • The new soldiers who were recruited were far more literate and politically active and they 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • However, being keenly aware of the defeat and being politically active, the new soldiers were resentful towards the Qing court • These new armies were set up as provincial based armies and thus only strengthened the power of the provincial governors VS national army • Hence, the new armies served as seedbed for reformist

	<p>were keen aware of the humiliations inflicted by the great powers</p>	<p>and revolutionary movement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a result, there was an effort at centralizing control as the Qing court became concerned that the New Armies were becoming too independent under the Chinese – for instance, Yuan Shi-kai and Chang Chi-tung were transferred to Peking which took them away from their troops and a Manchu Comptroller of the Army was created in an attempt to impose centralized control But effort at centralizing control was not very successful as Yuan was to retain the loyalties of his senior officers who formed the Beiyang clique The New Armies would later support the 1911 Revolution to overthrow the Manchu rule whereas the Reserve Forces which were based on the Green Standard Army backed the Qing government
<p>2. Efforts to create a modern national army</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The traditional units were deployed as reserves Old military examination which tested physical strength and archery skills was terminated New examination focused on weapons, strategy and tactics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> However, to create 36 modern division army with standardized pay, training, weapons and etc were costly and was to be completed in 1922 To pay for the new armies, whereby the military accounted one-third of the annual budget by 1911, the Qing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A major change from the older armies which recruited officers based on relationships but now it is based on merit • Encouraged the cadets to study abroad especially Japan; those who returned home became instructors at new academies such as the Baoding Military Academy • Raised the status of military officials to equal that of the civilian officials and these officials came from landlord, rich peasant or merchant families educated in the new schools (significance: soldiering was no longer despised as the soldiers were relatively well paid and trained) 	<p>raised taxes which affected everyone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • However, the rise of a modern officer class resented the older and corrupt senior officers. • In addition, the new national army was to be dominated by the Manchus which was resented by the Chinese. Hence, the new officers felt frustrated and turned to revolution
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C.

Economic Reforms	Achievements	Limitations/Failures
<p>1. Financial and Commercial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A bank of communications was formed in 1908 • A Ministry of Commerce was established in 1903 • Encouraged the development of chambers of commerce led by businessmen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouragement for the development of private banks • Formation of ministry of commerce led to the introduction of commercial codes (significance?) • The businessmen used the chambers of commerce to reduce governmental interference • These chambers played a vital role in organizing an anti-American goods boycott in 1905 in protest 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The silver tael was made the standard coin in 1905 	<p>on the American ban on Asian immigrants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This was significant as it reflected the growth of a new type of popular mass movement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Controversy over adopting the silver tael or dollar - silver tael was supported by provincial governor while the central officials and merchants preferred the latter In 1909, after the death of the key provincial governors the currency was switched to the silver dollar Led to serious confusion as the previously issued currency was not withdrawn Further confusion as provincial mints producing copper cash and paper currency was also being printed
<p>2. Industries</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited efforts to promote modern industries to relieve the agricultural crisis Still plagued by the lack of capital and entrepreneurial spirit Chinese capital was 7% of what was invested in agriculture In 1911 China had 600 enterprises with modern machinery The foreign industries continued to undermine native industries The government began nationalizing the self-strengthening industries

		like mining and shipping to reverse the long trend of decentralization and regain control of the provincial revenue
3. Increases in taxes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cost of the reforms worsened government finances – 25% of the revenue was being spent on the reforms • Increased taxation to pay for the reforms led to resentment and revolts

d.

Social Reforms	Achievements	Limitations/Failures
1. Educational Reforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of modern schools at all levels • The Confucianist examination system was ended in 1905 • Changes were made in the contents of the civil service examinations to include questions on both Chinese and Western subjects • Orders to provincial authorities to select students to study abroad. Attracted the traditional elite groups who had the money and ambition. In 1904, there were around 92000 students and by 1909 there were over 1.5 million • Many students were sent abroad especially and they were inspired by Japanese patriotism and national success • Recruitment of Chinese students abroad for service at home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sudden end to the Confucianist examination system destroyed the hopes of many involved in the system and the Qing dynasty lost a major source of support (although in reality many of the elite families had already started sending their children to western style schools) •

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These changes indicated the need for educational reform to cultivate native talents and rise of a modern intelligentsia was being favoured • These students would play a growing revolutionary role – Anti-Qing feeling spread especially among the students studying in Japan • In 1907 the government began supporting female education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These students were concentrated in the Yangzi region where they formed political associations which were short-lived and poorly coordinated – an example would be Huang Xing’s Society for China’s Revival in 1903 • But by 1909 there were only 13000 girls in education
2. Legal Reforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efforts were made to revise the laws on Western model • A new criminal code based on Japan was adopted – new commercial codes were being introduced • In 1905 collective responsibility, torture and cruel penalties were abolished while corporal punishments as replaced by fines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • But was done in a hasty manner • But the Qing dynasty fell before they could be implemented
3. Social Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowed inter-marriages between Hans and Manchus • The ban that prohibited the Manchus from being engaged in agriculture and commerce was lifted in 1907 • Liberation of women from foot-binding – 1902 • There was a big drive against opium smoking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would lead to the Manchu race to be overwhelmed in the next few decades – in 1912 there were 600000 Manchus in Beijing but it dropped to 31000 in 1949 • But it was opposed by poppy farmers who were losing income and there was a need to work with the British to reduce opium imports and it was finally banned in 1917

To what extent do you agree that the Late Qing Reforms served to hasten the end of the Qing dynasty rather than saving it?

4. Effects of the Late Qing Reforms

Jack Gray:

(i) Inflamed the feeling of constitutionalism

The most striking feature of this new reform movement, however, was the immense voluntary, non-government effort which was touched off by the commitment of the central government to change. The Court could not stem the floods which it had released. For examples, while the new official schools were established only slowly, private foundations multiplied apace and with a modern curriculum proved far more popular than those of the Government. Control of education, the first principle of Confucian government, was thus lost.

A new generation sceptical of the old values, trained in Western ideas, impatient for results and indifferent, if not hostile to the Manchu court, began to appear.

In the area of projected political reform symbolized by Youwei had advocated in 1898, organized pressure groups and voluntary associations multiplied; Chinese popular opinion became a reality and the press discussed issues of constitutionalism which the Manchu government was most reluctant to raise. The 9 year tutelage period was implemented before a parliament was created.

In 1909, the Regent created elected provincial assemblies. He had no intention of promoting decentralization. On the contrary, he hoped that these merely consultative assemblies, by acting as sounding boards, would increase the effectiveness of central government. The result was dramatically different. Decentralization of authority had already gone too far, while the new economic interests that were developing rapidly were provincial rather than national, in their markets, their organizations and their relations to government. For a gentry no longer linked to the centre by the examination system, which had been finally abolished, the effective source of the benefits which political action could gain was no longer the national but the provincial capital. It was also unwise to create provincial assemblies while postponing the establishment of a national parliament. In the absence of an elected assembly at the national level the provincial assemblies gained all the moral authority of their position as elected bodies. Unable to operate at a national level, China's new political leaders acted with all the more vigour at the level of the province, and so far from being content with a consultative role they immediately set about the task of governing their provinces in virtual autonomy. In addition, delegates from the assemblies came together one petition after another demanding the immediate establishment of a national parliament. Their efforts won only a reduction of the period of tutelage from 9 to 6 years, which satisfied no one.

(ii) Anti-Chinese Discrimination

The Cabinet which was formed with seven Manchus, one Mongolian and only four Chinese, inflamed the feeling of the constitutionalists. The domination of the new cabinet by Manchus and their Mongol allies seriously damaged the already weakening links between the Chinese and their foreign rulers. The Manchu nobles sending their sons for military training in Germany and holding command of the armies of the capital and the metropolitan province, monopolizing the 12 new ministries and now the new cabinet, had broken all the rules of the balance of appointments between Chinese and Manchus.

At the same time the Court sought to weaken the provincial Governors-General, the greatest of whom were Chinese. In this they were aided by the death of Li Hung chang and Liu K'un-i. The two most powerful political figures remaining Chang Chi-tung and Yuan Shi-kai were kicked upstairs as Presidents of the Grand Council and so deprived of their provincial power.

When the revolution of 1911 happened, the Manchus could no longer depend on any loyalty of the ruling class as power throughout China was in the hands of the provincial assemblies. They were disappointed by the delay of constitutional changes. They were disgusted by the manipulation of recent changes in favour of the Manchu nobles. When the news of the Wuhan uprising spread, one by one the provinces of China declared their independence. In almost every case this was decided by an alliance of provincial assembly men and low-ranking soldiers.

(iii) Revolutionary Movement

The constitutional movement was quite separate from the revolutionary movement. The revolutionary movement was first confined to far south. The inhabitants of Kwangtung and Guangxi had never been wholly reconciled to Manchu rule. In Southeast Asia, on the west-coast of America and Canada, and elsewhere there were Chinese populations who, being most entirely southern in origin, had carried with them their southern hostility to the Manchus, while their experience of life under Western rule had left them prepared for more radical solutions to China's problems and they still identified themselves with their brethren at home and with the fate of China. It is not surprising therefore that the revolutionary nationalist movement was founded among overseas Chinese. For instance, Sun Yat-sen, its founder, had turned to revolution when his first political attempt to persuade Li Hung-chang to support moderate reforms was refused a hearing. He also made headway in persuading the overseas Chinese to support him when the hope of peaceful changes began to fade.

Meanwhile, other groups of revolutionaries were being formed among Chinese students in Japan. Most of them were from the Yangzi provinces. They were mainly from higher social classes than Sun, they had received a formal Chinese education and they were exposed in Japan to more radical ideas than were generally influential among the Chinese communities abroad. On their return to China they began, often under cover of working as teachers to organize revolution.

5. Reasons for Failure of the Late Qing Reforms

(i) Insincerity of Dowager in implementing the reforms

The Late Qing reforms was a shrewd effort on the part of the **Dowager** to disguise her shame over her role in the Boxer catastrophe. Her **insincerity** was revealed in the fact that while she openly asked for suggestion from officials in the central and provincial, she secretly intimated her profound distaste for things foreign. The Grand Council therefore tactfully advised officials not to speak freely of adopting Western ways – as such the institutional reforms have not yet hit the proper target and it was still useless

The Dowager's reform movement was essentially a noisy demonstration without much substance or promise of accomplishment. Only three concrete improvements were actually made, namely

- a. the abolition of the civil service examination
- b. the establishment of modern schools
- c. the sending of student abroad

(ii) Failure to Implement Constitutional Monarchy

The Dowager also **never genuinely contemplated introducing constitutional monarchy in China**. The Qing “Outline” actually gave the throne even greater power than the Japanese model. It specified that the executive, legislative and judiciary power resided in the emperor, who, sacred and inviolable, would continue to rule the empire in the unbroken line of ten thousand generations. Parliament could consider, but not decide, questions of government; the laws and regulations passed by it would not become effective without the approval of the sovereign. Furthermore, provisions with regard to the rights and duties of the citizens were little more than meaningless formalities. The “Outline of Constitution” was an instrument of imperial procrastination, in the attempt to consolidate dynastic power and prolong the Manchu rule. Dowager was even reluctant to put the “Outline of Constitution” into practice and sought to delay the introduction of the a constitution in China during her lifetime by requiring the nine-year gestation period, following the Japanese pattern

(iii) Anti-Chinese Discrimination

In addition to Dowager’s insincerity, **anti-Chinese discrimination and inept Manchu leadership also contributed to the ineffectiveness of the program**. Important appointment were given to Manchus to an increasing extent. The Superintendency of Political Affairs, for instance, was controlled by Jung-lu, a Manchu, and the newly formed Ministry of Foreign Affairs was placed under Prince Ch’ing, who controlled the Bureau of Military Training as well. This one-sided distribution of offices became even more evident after the deaths of the elder Chinese statesmen like Li Hung-chang in 1901. The prospect for successful reform became even more remote.