CHAPTER TWO

THE ORIGINS OF NATIONAL HUMILIATION AND SOURCES OF THE REVOLUTION

1. Political, Social, and Cultural Decline in the Ch'ing [Manchu] Dynasty and Fundamental Errors of Its Domestic Policy

The deterioration of China’s national position and the low morale of the people during the last hundred years can be largely attributed to the unequal treaties. The implementation of the unequal treaties constitutes a complete record of China’s national humiliation. To find the cause of this national humiliation, one must go back to the political decay, and especially the academic and social decline in the Manchu dynasty.

As the Manchus were originally a small clan, how could they conquer the Central Plains? It was because at the end of the Ming dynasty politics was corrupt, opinions were divided, political parties were at loggerheads, and banditry was rampant. In addition, the eunuchs\(^1\) usurped power and the generals were disobedient, with the result that domestic disorder and foreign encroachments steadily increased. Thus the three-century regime of the Ming was overthrown by the concurrent blows of the roving bandits of Li Tzech'eng and the “Banner Soldiers” of the Manchus. [The Manchu troops were divided into groups, each designated by the color of its banner.] After the entry of the Manchus,

\(^1\) Eunuchs were frequently the most powerful section of the bureaucracy in imperial China. Regarded as the most trustworthy advisers for an emperor who maintained a harem, they were favored for positions of power and influence because of their physical inability to create family dynasties.
China's national consciousness received a serious blow. Sun Yat-sen said: “After Emperor Shun Chih [of Manchu] overthrew the Ming dynasty and became China's sovereign, the Ming’s loyal officials and heroic citizens rose in various parts of the country and offered resistance until the beginning of the K’ang Hsi reign. Thus up to that time China was not yet conquered by the Manchus.”

He also said: “During the K’ang Hsi and Yung Cheng reigns, anti-Manchu sentiment among the followers of the Ming was still strong. Therefore, during these reigns, many books were published, such as Great Truth to Dispel Illusions, stating that the Han people should not object to the Manchus becoming emperors. Their reasoning was that ‘Shun was a foreigner from the east, Wen Wang was a foreigner from the west; thus the Manchus, though foreigners, could be emperors of China.’ During the reign of Emperor Ch’ien Lung, even mention of the words Han [Chinese] and Man [Manchu] was not permitted. Any part dealing with the historical relation between the Sung and Yuan dynasties, and between the Ming and Ch’ing dynasties in any book was omitted or altered. All books concerning the Manchus, Hsiung Nu, and Tartars were forbidden. They were all destroyed, not permitted to be read or even kept in any home.”

The rule of the Manchus was certainly oppressive. But its severity fell far short of the cruel rule of the Japanese in Chosen [Korea]. Chosen has been conquered for only thirty years, but its people are already poisoned by the slave-like education instituted by the Japanese. All the original history and culture of Korea have been completely destroyed. Not a trace of national consciousness has been permitted to be retained by its people. Therefore, the people of Chosen nowadays, on hearing the term Han-Kuo [the name for Korea], do not understand its meaning. [In the revised edition, this sentence reads: “Therefore very few Korean people nowadays, on hearing the term Korea, would understand its meaning.”] The speed and severity with which contem-