

## The Boxer Uprising — II

War and Aftermath (1900-1901)

Essay by Peter C. Perdue & Ellen Sebring

War & Siege

The View from China

Occupation &  
Aftermath

Sources & Credits



"A picture of an ambush at Tianjin city using land mines, and the great victory of Commander-in-chief Dong over the Western forces. The first month of autumn in the Gengzi year of the Guangxu reign [1900]."

Chinese nianhua woodblock print, 1900

[lbx\_na06\_NatArchives010]

*When war broke out with China in 1900, eight foreign armies prepared to invade the capital of Beijing, while Boxer militia forces and Qing troops besieged foreign diplomats and missionaries in their legations. This unit describes the war between the foreigners and the Qing and Boxer forces, the siege of the legations in Beijing, and the occupation, looting, and massacre that followed.*

*These dramatic events attracted the attention of media around the world, including pamphlets and pictures appealing to the Chinese rural population. The New Year's print above celebrates an early victory by Qing forces and Boxer militia over foreign armies outside Tianjin. Images of the Boxer Uprising delivered to the Chinese public differed radically from the versions portrayed in the Western news media, but both sides exaggerated their victories and minimized their defeats. We include twelve of the Chinese prints, with translations and commentary, to show the rarely seen Chinese perspective on the war of the Qing court and Boxers against the foreign powers.*

**Foreign Diplomats in Beijing Before the Siege: 1898**

Before the Boxer war began, foreigners had lived in an uneasy state of coexistence with the Qing court in Beijing for nearly fifty years. The treaty provisions of the Second Opium War had granted them the right to reside in the capital, but the Qing rulers only reluctantly accepted their presence.

The eleven foreign legations in Beijing were located in a single quarter in the southern district of the city, just inside the wall of the Tartar City, or outer wall of the capital. This was the district where—before the 19th century—Mongols, Tibetans, Koreans, Vietnamese, and other tributary vassals had stayed when they presented gifts to the emperor. Each of the new Western powers rented and renovated old palaces, with gardens in the center, courts, pavilions, housing, and other buildings arranged around them. By 1900, many other foreign institutions, including the Hong Kong and Shanghai bank, Imperial Maritime Customs, the Peking hotel, and other foreign stores had joined them. The legation street which ran through the center of the quarter was unpaved, filled with sewage, and crowded with animals, people, and carts.

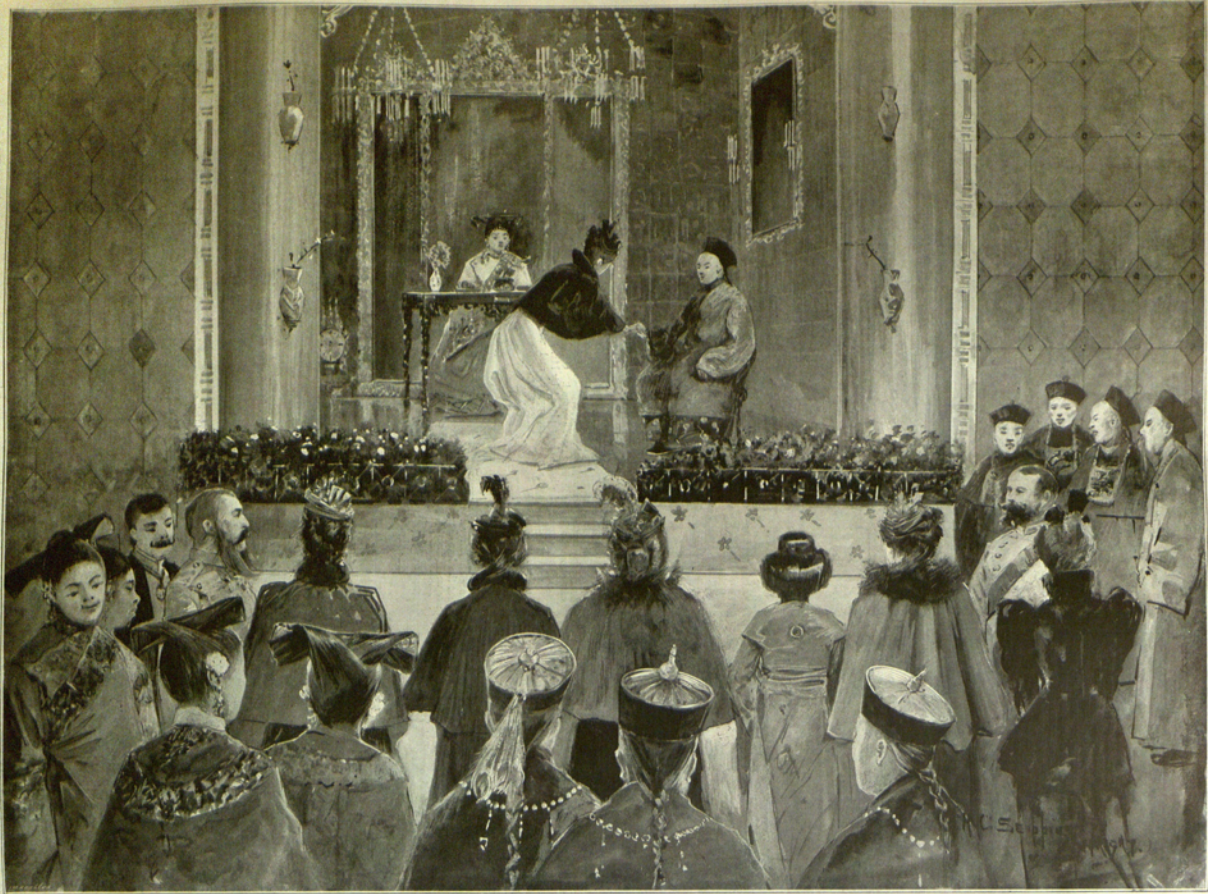
The diplomats and their families spent nearly all their time in the comfortable seclusion of their legations, only sending servants out to get supplies. They could play tennis, hold teas and parties, and attend balls and official dinners among themselves all year round. During the hot summers, they sent their families outside the city to the cool Western Hills, hosted by priests at local Buddhist temples. They very seldom came into contact with Chinese officials. The Zongli Yamen, China's new Foreign Ministry, was located far away in the eastern part of the city, and its suspicious officials held only formal ritualistic meetings with the foreign diplomats.

The Empress Dowager Cixi, grandmother of the emperor, kept herself and the emperor secluded from both foreigners and the Chinese population nearly all the time. Once a year the emperor went in a grand procession to bow down at the Temple of Heaven and Temple of Agriculture, but no foreigners could view the ceremonies inside. Yet, the empress dowager was curious about the customs of foreign women, and she commissioned photographers to record her meetings with several visiting women.

When she received the wives of foreign diplomats on December 19, 1898, the audience was recorded in foreign newspapers. It was almost the last time that Chinese and foreigners in the city could meet together in peaceful circumstances.

Learn more in the VC unit  
"The Garden of Perfect Brightness I"  
by Lilian M. Li





THE AUDIENCE GIVEN BY THE EMPRESS-DOWAGER AND THE EMPEROR OF CHINA TO THE WIVES OF THE FOREIGN MINISTERS AT PEKING, ON DECEMBER 19.

FROM A SKETCH BY CAPTAIN WILSON, H.M.S. "UNDASHTEN."

The Dowager Empress wore yellow silk, with blue and gold embroidery. Lady MacDonald, wife of the British Ambassador, wore an astrakhan cape with large collar, black hat and feathers, light dress, and white gloves. The other ladies were all in furs, the day being very cold. The ladies of the Court were dressed in pink, light green, and light blue, with dark embroidery. They wore flowers and hairpins.

"The Audience given by the Empress-Dowager and the Emperor of China to the Wives of the Foreign Ministers at Peking, on December 19"

The Illustrated London News, March 18, 1899

Artist: Henry Charles Seppings Wright

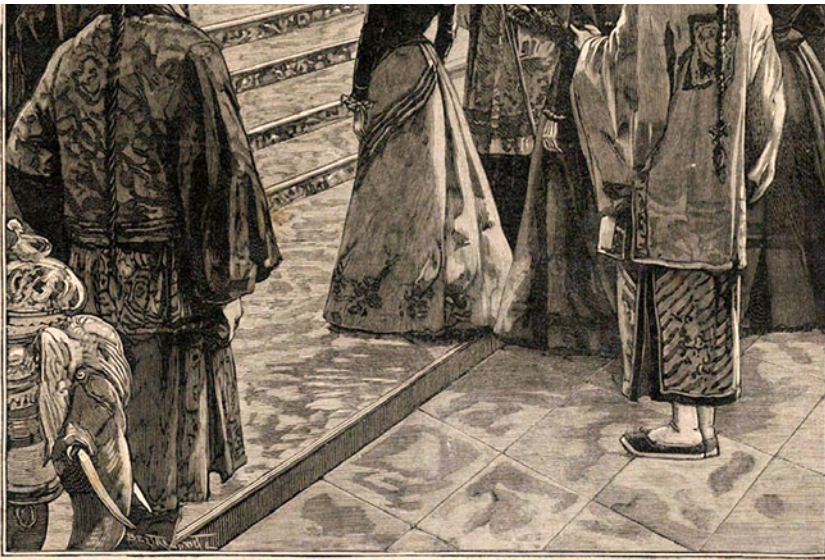
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AU PALAIS IMPÉRIAL DE PÉKIN



"The Boxer Uprising II"  
chap. 1, p. 3





L'IMPÉRATRICE DE CHINE RECEVANT LES DAMES EUROPÉENNES

*"Au Palais Impérial de Pékin.  
L'Impératrice De Chine Recevant Les Dames Européennes"*  
Le Petit Parisien, Supplément Littéraire Illustré  
December 18, 1898 (No. 515)

[lpp\_1898\_12\_18\_cixi]

### **1899: The Court & the Foreigners Come into Conflict**

As the Boxers began their rampage through the countryside, the court in Beijing, dominated by anti-foreign reactionaries, had resolved in 1899 to try to protect Christians, but not to suppress the Boxers with military force. On January 3, 1900, it ordered Yuan Shikai (1859-1916), the new Governor of Shandong, not to use force against the Boxers.

In a decree to the foreign powers, it declared:

*When peaceful and law-abiding people practice their skill in mechanical arts for the self-preservation of themselves and their families, or when they combine in village communities for the mutual protection of the rural population, this is only a matter of mutual help and mutual defense.[1]*

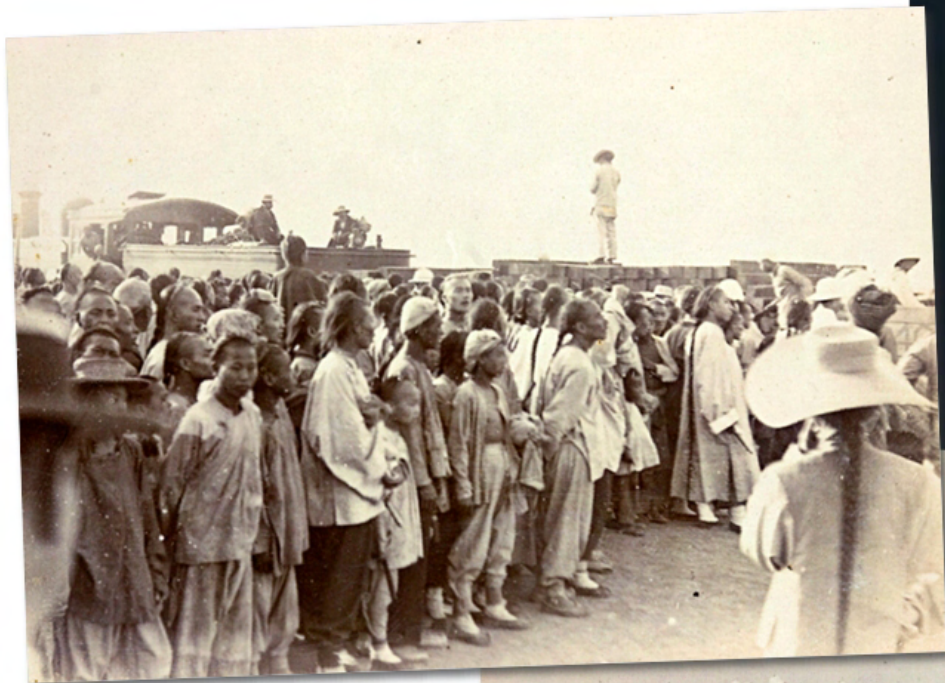
The British, American, French, German, and Italian ministers protested the decree and demanded the immediate suppression of the Boxers. The court considered officially authorizing the Boxers as militia troops, but Yuan Shikai strongly objected that the Boxers had never been a village militia, but were only a heretical sect.

The foreign powers themselves decided to strengthen guards at their legations. The first conflict between Boxers and foreign troops occurred on May 31 near Tianjin when 25 Russian Cossacks rescued a group of European engineers, killing many Boxers.

### **The 1st Intervention: the Seymour Expedition, Defeated (June 10–28, 1900)**

By June 6th the Boxers had cut railway communications between Beijing and Tianjin. The British minister called on Admiral Sir Edward Seymour in Tianjin to send reinforcements to Beijing. His force of 2000 English, French, German, Russian, Japanese, and American troops set out from Tianjin on June 10 on board five trains for Beijing.



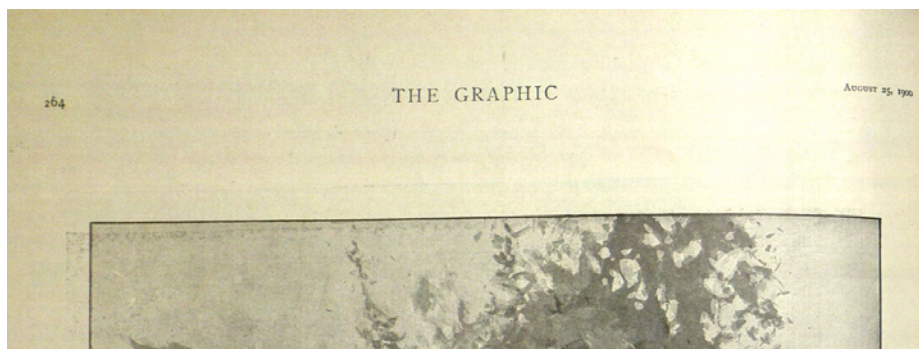


*Troops on board trains can be glimpsed in these photographs captioned  
 "Departure from Tientsin of Admiral Seymour's Column for Beijing"  
 June, 1900*

*Source: Visual Cultures in East Asia  
 (View top image) (View bottom image)*

[vcea\_1900\_NA02-02] [vcea\_1900\_NA02-01]

Chinese troops sabotaged the tracks and fought pitched battles with Seymour's troops. By June 13, the "First Relief Expedition" that had confidently set out for Beijing was forced to turn back, abandoning the trains to find overland routes back to Tianjin. Chinese forces—including Boxer militia, imperial Qing troops, and the Gansu Braves recruited by General Dong Fuxiang—attacked the retreating columns, inflicting heavy casualties. Seymour lost 300 men, and found himself surrounded by large masses of Chinese peasant militiamen. The foreign media at this point first took notice of the large scale of upheaval in China.







*“With Admiral Seymour’s Force:  
The Last Stand of the Chinese at Lang-Fang.*

*Lang-Fang (writes a British naval officer who accompanied Admiral Seymour’s force in its gallant but unsuccessful attempt to reach Peking) was the first place at which we were opposed by Imperial troops, between four and five thousand in number. The German and English train was attacked by them just as we were going down to Yang-Tsung. We numbered roughly 900 men. The fighting lasted two hours, and the sketch represents the scene on the line when the Chinese troops twice tried to save their banner, which eventually fell into our hands.”*

The Graphic, August 25, 1900

[lgraphic\_1900\_031i]

The Boxers blocked the Seymour expedition on June 13, and a large detachment of them entered Beijing, burning churches and foreign houses in the city. *The American Monthly Review of Reviews* recounted the Seymour expedition’s failure to reach Beijing with these words:

*At that time Admiral Seymour’s force of English, Russian, German, American, French, and Japanese troops sent out to the relief of the legations was evidently in trouble somewhere between Tientsin and Peking. On June 26, the expedition returned to Tientsin. It had failed to come within 25 miles of Peking, had lost nearly 300 men in battle with comparatively enormous masses of Chinese insurgents and soldiers, and thought itself lucky to escape annihilation. Seymour’s failure brought to the world the first realization of the overwhelming nature of the trouble.[2]*

This account makes clear that Seymour's expedition was a failure, and implies that the disorganized foreign force greatly underestimated the strength of the Chinese forces they faced. Seymour's troops fought not only against Chinese peasant martial artists and militiamen, but detachments of the Qing army and highly skilled Gansu Braves led

Read the full text in the  
HathiTrust Digital Library



by General Dong Fuxiang. Captions and illustrations in the foreign press, however, give the implication that Seymour nearly won the battle, and turned back voluntarily.



WITH ADMIRAL SEYMOUR'S RELIEF COLUMN: THE WOUNDED ON THE MARCH TO TIENSIN

*“Admiral Seymour’s Relief Column:  
the Wounded on the March to Tientsin.*

*‘After fighting our way through with rebels, who tore up the rails faster than we could lay them again,’ writes a correspondent, ‘we were confronted with Chinese imperial troops to the number of 16,000 or 20,000. A battle ensued, which lasted from noon till 6 p.m. on June 18, and our casualties being very heavy, we were forced to retire to within twenty miles of Tientsin again, where we found it impossible to retire farther by train on account of the bridge over the river being destroyed. The wounded were placed in junks at this point, the train was deserted, each man took provisions for two days, and the march started by river back to Tientsin. We had several ‘Boxer’ prisoners, who were made to tow the junks, and bluejackets used poles on board them.’”*

The Graphic, September 8, 1900  
 Drawn by W. Hatherell, R.I.  
 From a sketch by Robert Carr

[lgraphic\_1900\_031i]

Chinese New Year’s prints, however, like the graphic that begins this unit shown in a close up detail below, celebrated the victory with colorful scenes of banners, smoke, and troops waving swords, driving back the helpless foreign armies. (For more discussion of the New Year’s Prints, see Chapter 2: “The View from China.”)





"A Picture of an Ambush at Tianjin City using Land Mines, and the Great Victory of Commander-in-Chief Dong over the Western Forces. The First Month of Autumn in the Gengzi Year of the Guangxu Reign [1900]," (detail).  
Chinese nianhua woodblock print, 1900.

This close-up detail of a nianhua print shows Chinese forces fighting foreigners in Tianjin. The explosion on the right, depicted as a Buddhist image of hellfire, throws bodies into the air. A Japanese woman appears within the enclave on the bottom right. Beheaded foreign soldiers and a volley of cannon balls, banners, and ships appear in the battle.

[lgraphic\_1900\_031i]

Many types of maps appeared in Western publications that illustrated the embattled area in China, including illustrative, bird's-eye views like the following, "From the Pei-Ho to Peking: A Bird's-eye View of the Disturbed Area in China." The full-page spread in *Leslie's Weekly* depicts and describes the trajectory of the Seymour expedition.

## FROM THE PEI-HO TO PEKIN

*A Bird's-eye View of the Disturbed Area in China.*

"The Boxer Uprising II"  
chap. 1, p. 8





"From the Pei-Ho to Peking:

A Bird's-eye View of the Disturbed Area in China.

On this bird's-eye map all the important points between Taku and Peking are to be seen in their relative positions. The absolute distances are given in the adjoining



table. The route of the unsuccessful relief force lay along the railway from Tientsin to the village of Lang-fang, a party of bluejackets from H.M.S. 'Aurora' pushing as far as Anting. On June 16 the force was compelled to return to Yang-tsun, from which it fought its way back to Tientsin, taking the wounded in boats down the Pei-ho. Only low hills break the surface as far away as the Great Wall, which is seen rising like a rampart in the distance.

*Distances*

- Taku to Tientsin - 27 miles
- Tientsin to Peking - 79 miles
- Tientsin to Yang-tsun bridge - 17 miles
- Tangku to Chung Liang Cheng - 13 1/2 miles
- Pei-ho River to bar at mouth - 6 miles"

Leslie's Weekly, 1900 (vol. 90, p. 24)

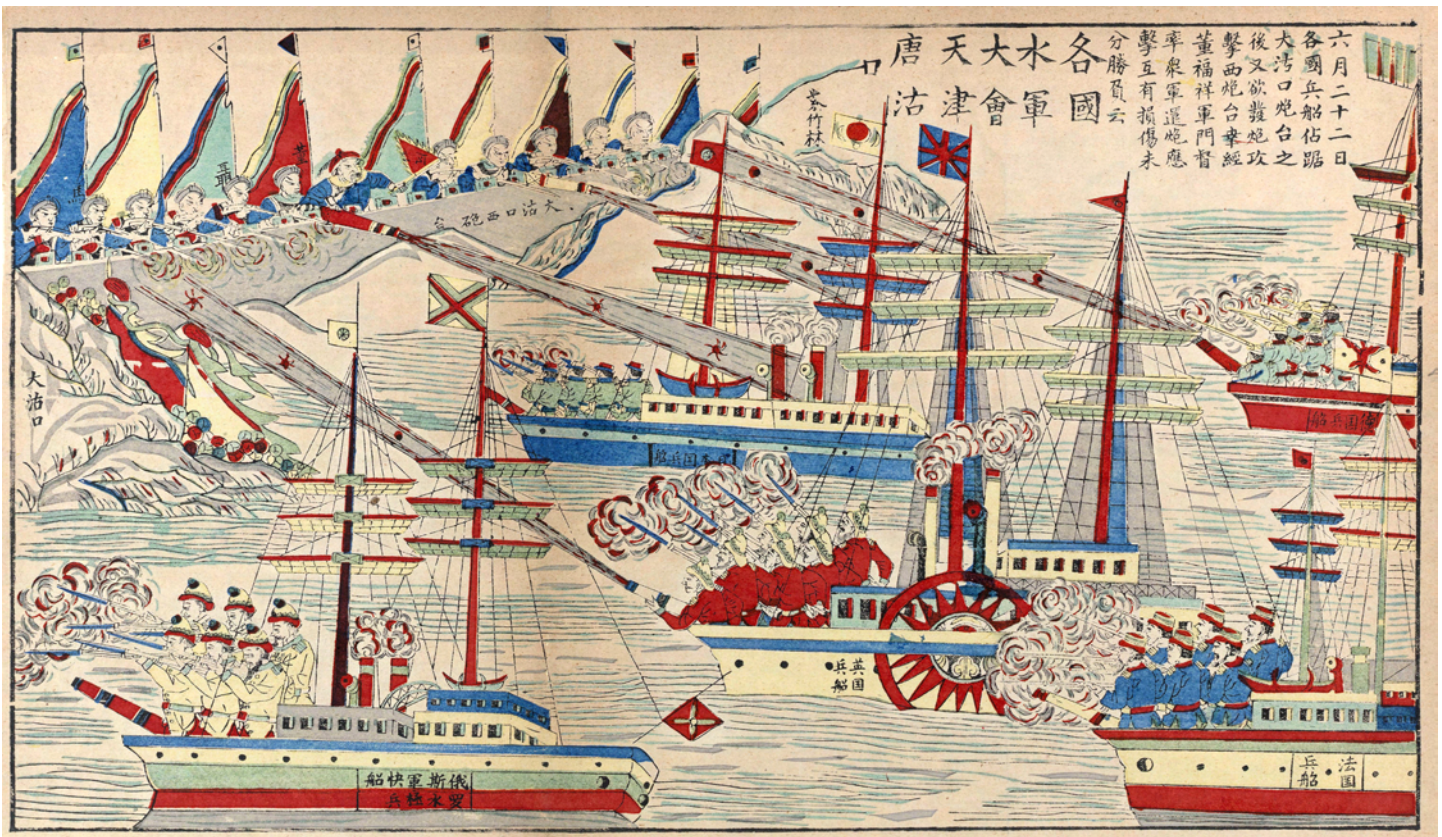
[leslies\_1900\_v90\_2\_024]

[Click here to view a rollover map with enlargements](#)

**Foreign Powers Attack the Forts at Dagu (June 16–17, 1900)**

While Seymour was still on the way to Beijing, the Allied navies decided to attack the Dagu forts guarding the mouth of the Hai River that led from Tianjin to Beijing. On June 17, after weak Chinese resistance, the Allies assaulted the forts and captured them quickly. Even though the Chinese had modern destroyers, they were unable to use them. The news of the loss pushed the Qing government to support the Boxers unequivocally and to ally with them to expel foreign armies from Chinese soil.

This Chinese New Year's print shows the Chinese defenders firing cannon in a duel with the foreign warships. The New Year's prints, like the foreign media, quickly broadcast simple accounts of the battle to a broad engaged public.



Foreign powers launch a naval attack on the forts at Taku (Dagu)  
Chinese nianhua woodblock print, 1900

各國水軍大會天津唐沽口

Translation: "All countries' navies gather at Tianjin's Tanggu Kou."

率眾軍還炮應擊，互有損傷，未分勝負云

Translation: "[Our armies] responded with cannon attacks. Each side has amassed



casualties, but the winner has not yet been determined.”

Image, left: 大沽口西炮台；大沽口；俄羅斯水軍極快兵船

Translation: “The Western cannon battery at Dagu Kou; Dagu Kou; The Russian Navy’s extremely fast vessel”

Image, right: 紫竹林；英國兵船 俄羅斯軍極快兵船；法國兵船

Translation: “Purple bamboo forest [Place name];  
English warship; Russian fast warship; French warship”

[na12\_NatArchives004]



清國太沽砲台列國陸海軍砲擊之圖

Translation: “The Allied Army and Navy Forces  
Attacking the Taku Forts”

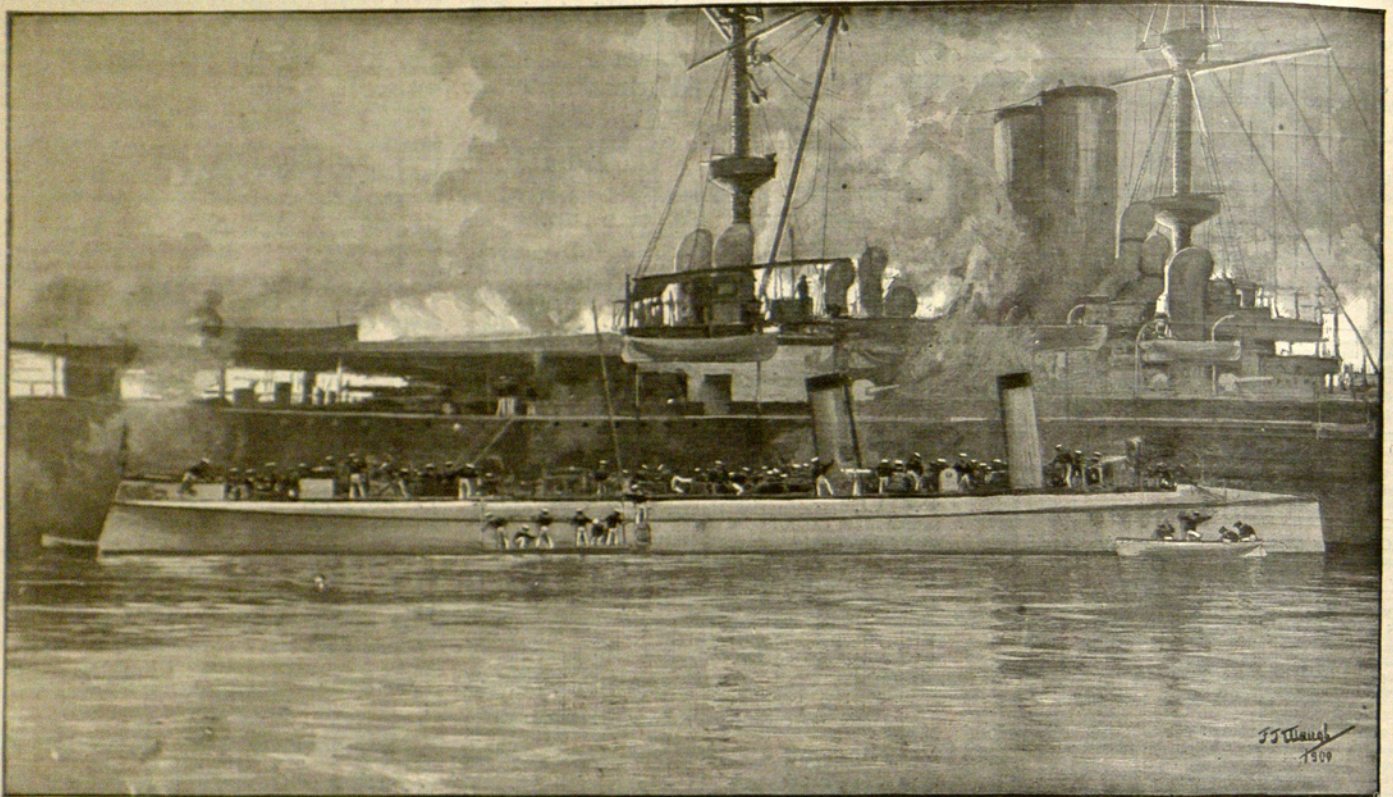
June 24, 1900

Japanese print

Source: Sharf Collection, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

[mfa\_1900\_June24\_AlliedAttKT]





DRAWN BY F. J. WAUGH

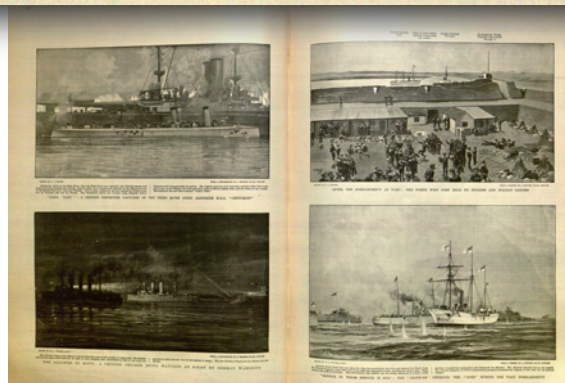
FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY A BRITISH NAVAL OFFICER

During the action in the Peiho River, when the Taku Forts were captured, four Chinese torpedo-boat destroyers lying alongside the Chinese torpedo depot were boarded and captured by the officers and men of the British destroyers *Fame* and *Waiting*. Two of these destroyers are now manned by British crews, one by Germans and one by French. Our illustration shows one of them lying alongside H.M.S.

*Centurion* and being got ready for service. Her engines were in a very bad state, and her boiler tubes were full of mud, as the Chinese crew had used river water to fill the boilers with, and the Peiho is very muddy. This destroyer has now been renamed "H.M.S. Taku"

"H.M.S. 'TAKU'": A CHINESE DESTROYER CAPTURED ON THE PEIHO RIVER LYING ALONGSIDE H.M.S. "CENTURION"

"H.M.S. 'Taku': A Chinese Destroyer Captured on the Peiho River Lying Alongside H.M.S. 'Centurion.'" Detail (above) from 2-page spread (right) The Graphic, August 11, 1900 [graphic\_1900\_026\_11Aug]



### Murder of Foreign Diplomats (June 11 & June 20, 1900)

By June 1900, the Boxers, supported by Qing troops, had killed the chancellor of the Japanese mission and the German ambassador, burned the British summer legation west of Beijing, and cut off telegraph contact of the city. The legation quarter in the southeast district of the city came under siege. Foreign troops shot Chinese civilians who were suspected of being Boxers, and the German minister, Baron von Ketteler, was killed in the street on June 20 by Muslim Gansu Braves after he killed a Chinese boy.

For a while, the court made conciliatory moves, offering to feed the foreigners in the legations and escort them safely out of Beijing, but it was too late. Now the court openly supported the Boxers, and the siege of the legations began.

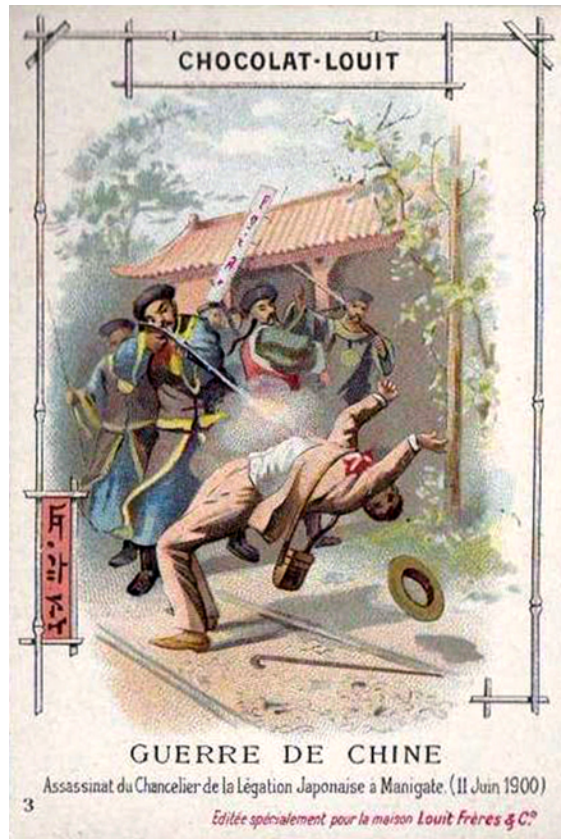
The assassinations of foreign diplomats stimulated further agitation in Western media against Chinese savagery. The images spread not only through news media, but commercial products, even including chocolate cards. French chocolate cards contain an incongruous mixture of pictures of martyrs, close-up battles, and gruesome executions



embedded in advertisements. But these pictures give accurate dates and locations of battles, published in a series, so that the French consumer could keep up with the news from far away while enjoying his chocolate safely at home.

Shooting of M. Sougiyama  
"Assassinat du Chancelier de la  
Légation Japonaise à Manigate  
(11 Juin 1900)" Chocolat-Louit  
card

[choc-  
louis03\_1900\_11June\_3]



"The Boxer Uprising II"  
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## ÉVÈNEMENTS DE CHINE

Assassinat du baron de Ketteler, ministre d'Allemagne

*“Événements de Chine.*

*Assassinat du Baron de Ketteler, Ministre d'Allemagne”*

*Le Petit Journal, Supplément Illustré, July 22, 1900*

*Source: Widener Library, Harvard University*

[lpj\_1900\_07\_22\_widener]

### **Declaration of War Against Foreign Powers (June 21, 1900)**

By June 16, the Empress Dowager and her Imperial Council had resolved to resist the entry of foreign troops into the capital. She stated, “The Powers have started the aggression, and the extinction of our nation is imminent... If we must perish, why not fight to the death?”[3]

After the Allied naval forces attacked the Dagu forts that protected the port of Tianjin, the court declared war on June 21.

The court formally supported the Boxers only after the declaration of war, now praising them for their patriotism and wishing them success. Qing officers now collaborated with Boxer militia to enroll more fighters against the foreign menace. Wall posters in cities like Tianjin spread the news of the anti-foreign conflict.





Not only in Peking, but in the villages between the capital and Tientsin, the "Boxers" have posted up placards calling upon the readers to kill all foreigners. They have been exciting ignorant superstition against Europeans in this way for some time now

**"KILL THE FOREIGNERS": NATIVES READING AN ANTI-FOREIGN MANIFESTO IN PEKING**

DRAWN BY FRANK DADD

*"Kill the Foreigners": Natives Reading an Anti-Foreign Manifesto in Peking.*

*Not only in Peking, but in the villages between the capital and Tientsin, the "Boxers" have posted up placards calling upon the readers to kill all foreigners. They have been exciting ignorant superstition against Europeans in this way for some time now."*

The Graphic, June 23, 1900

Artist: Frank Dadd

[graphic\_1900\_004b]





*"Tientsin - Dernières Nouvelles - Latest News"*  
 Translation of Chinese text above wall: "World News for Your Benefit."  
 French postcard, Tianjin.

[1900s\_TientsinCrd\_stmpbds]

As the Boxers rampaged through Beijing, putting up wall posters calling on Chinese to kill foreigners, foreigners retreated to the legation quarter. The court heard of foreign victories in Tianjin and the death of the distinguished general Nie Shicheng, leader of a Western-trained army who had fought in the Sino-Japanese War. The southern provincial leaders, on the other hand, had no interest in fighting the foreign powers, and they pressed the court to negotiate. This period of the war attracted the greatest foreign media attention, but information was scarce and unreliable. The foreign press raised fears with sensationalist, inaccurate reports of massacres, stressing the pitiable condition of foreign women trapped in the legations. Few reports mentioned that large numbers of Chinese Christians had also taken shelter within the legation walls. Photographs from within the legation stress the preparations made for defense and the cooperation among missionaries, diplomats, and soldiers to maintain the community's morale.



T H E C R I S I S I N C H I N A .



BOXERS ENROLLING AT A MILITARY POST.

*Along the roads of China are encountered great numbers of military posts at which small garrisons, about ten or fifteen soldiers in time of peace, are stationed. Close by is a look-out commanding an extensive prospect. The cones of brickwork and plaster are used to fire out a fierce combustible in time of alarm as a signal to the next post. They are also employed on all festive occasions. It is here that the Boxers now enrol themselves and are sworn in to form their semi-military corps. A Government official belonging to the army presides at the table. He is, as the umbrella indicates, a Mandarin of consideration.*

"The Crisis in China.

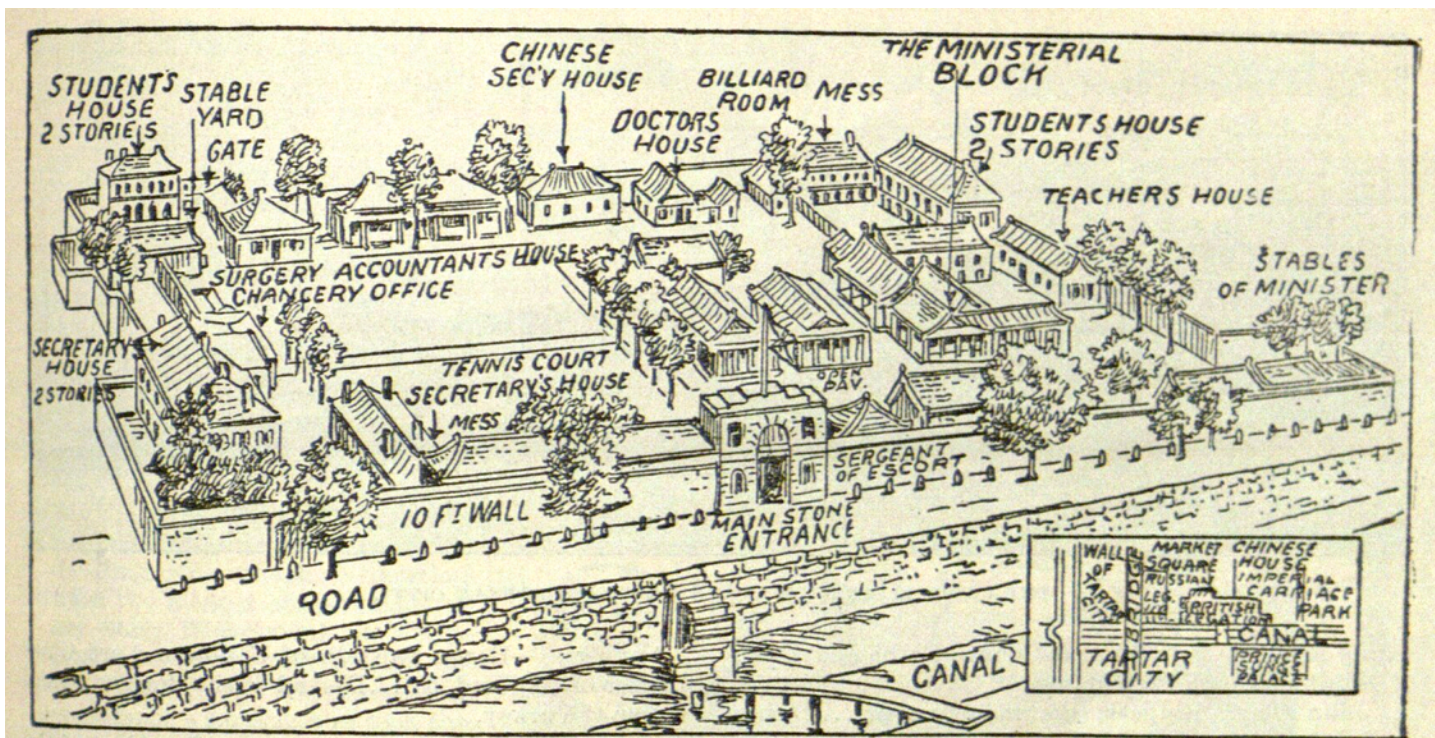
Boxers Enrolling at a Military Post.

*Along the roads of China are encountered great numbers of military posts at which small garrisons, about ten or fifteen soldiers in time of peace, are stationed. Close by is a look-out commanding an extensive prospect. The cones of brickwork and plaster are used to fire out a fierce combustible in time of alarm as a signal to the next post. They are also employed on all festive occasions. It is here that the Boxers now enrol [sic] themselves and are sworn in to form their semi-military corps. A Government official belonging to the army presides at the table. He is, as the umbrella indicates, a Mandarin of consideration."*



### The 55-Day Siege in Beijing (June 20 – August 14/15, 1900)

The siege began on June 20, and lasted until foreign Armies entered Beijing on August 14 and 15. During these 55 days, two sites in Beijing were under siege: The Northern Cathedral and the Foreign Legation Quarter. 900 foreigners and 2,800 Chinese Christians held out in the legation quarter, and 71 priests, nuns, and soldiers, along with 3,400 Chinese Christians in the Northern Cathedral.



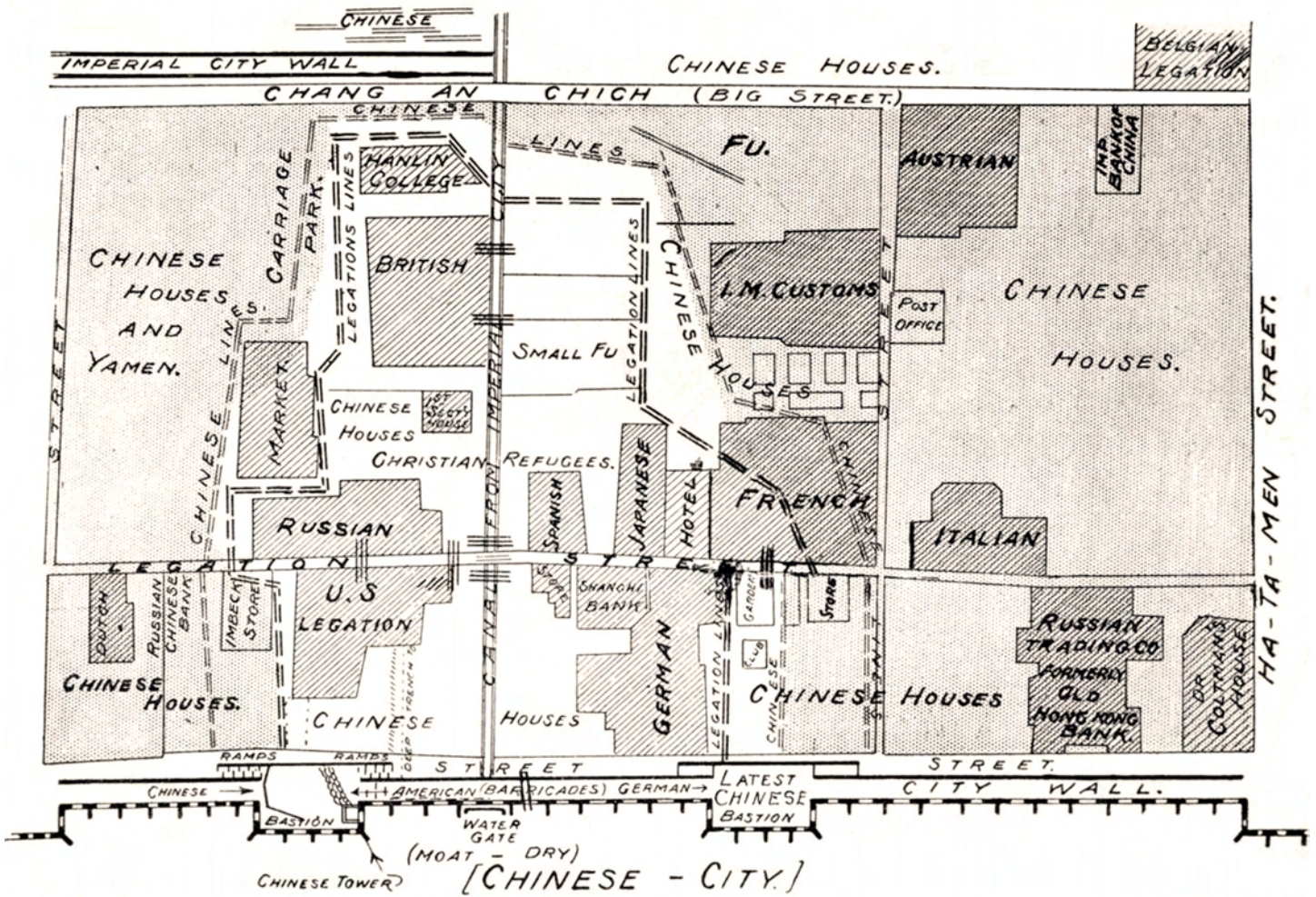
Courtesy of the New York Sun.

THE BRITISH LEGATION AT PEKING, WHERE THE FOREIGN MINISTERS WERE BESIEGED FROM JUNE 20 TO AUGUST 15.

*"The British Legation at Peking,  
where the foreign ministers were besieged from June 20 to August 15."  
American Review of Reviews (vol. i, p. 285), 1900*

[AmRofR\_1900\_v1\_015\_detail]





THE LEGATIONS AT PEKING, 1900.

[To face p. 550.]

From a sketch by Capt. John T. Myers, U.S. Marine Corps.

(By permission of the Board of Control, U.S. Naval Institute.)

"The Legations at Peking, 1900"

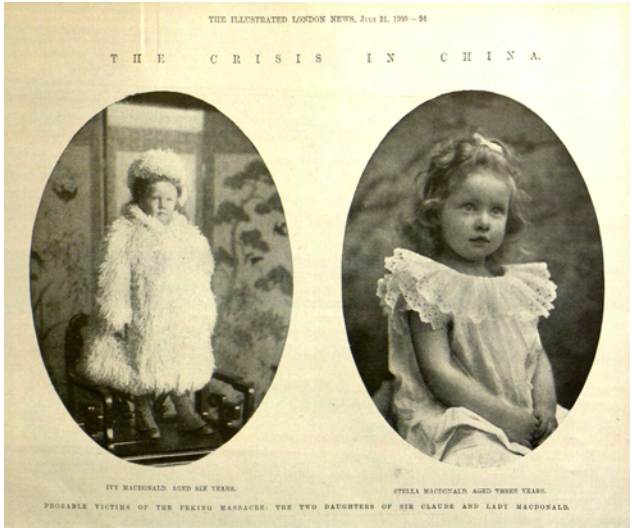
From a sketch by Capt. John T. Myers

[Western\_Legations\_Peking\_19]

The press raised fears with sensationalized inaccurate reports. For example, the "Probable Victims of the Massacre at Peking" in the July 21, 1900 *Illustrated London News* featured portraits of diplomats, missionaries, and children who were the supposed victims of a massacre that never took place.







“Probable Victims of the Massacre at Peking,”  
 The Illustrated London News, July 21, 1900  
 (above, and detail left)

[iln\_1900\_v2\_021]  
 [iln\_1900\_v2\_027b]

Photographs taken inside the legations reveal siege life, including the internal communication centers, overcrowded makeshift sleeping quarters, food preparation that in time meant butchering the ponies for food, defense of the legations from fire and gunfire, executed and dead bodies on the streets, and the graves honoring those killed in the attacks. The photographs offer a rare view of the many Chinese Christians who escaped Boxer attacks by taking refuge in the legations. Despite receiving inadequate shares of provisions, these Chinese refugees contributed heavily to the survival of the residents.





**No. 51. The Siege in Peking.**

In the British Legation. Fighting a fire started in the Mongol Market by the Boxers, who had hoped to thus burn the Legation buildings also. Although they repeatedly attempted this, their plans never succeeded.



**No. 38. The Siege in Peking.**

In the Methodist Compound. Improvised Stand for the Guard of American Marines. Private Turner, who was on guard when the photograph was taken, was afterwards killed. He was the crack shot of the Guard and a general favorite.

*Reverend Charles A. Killie photographs from the series "The Siege in Peking"*

*Left: No. 51. Killie's captions explain that Chinese Christians help combat a "fire started in the Mongol Market by the Boxers."*

*Right: No. 38, the lone sentry at the wall, an American Marine "on guard when the photograph was taken, was afterwards killed."*

[killie51\_46860\_yale\_36] [killie38\_46853\_yale\_29]



**No. 62. The Siege in Peking.**

In the British Legation. The only messengers (out of a score or more sent) who succeeded in getting to Tientsin and return. Although they went in all sorts of disguises, all but these three were understood to have been either killed or captured.



**No. 36. The Siege in Peking.**

In the Methodist Compound. Group just within the big gate, listening to alarming rumors.

*Isolation and poor communication heightened the fears of the foreigners both overseas and inside the siege.*

*Left: "No. 62. In the British Legation. The only messengers (out of a score or more sent) who succeeded in getting to Tientsin and return. Although they went in all sorts of disguises, all but those three were understood to have been either killed or captured."*



Right: "No. 36. In the Methodist Compound. Group just within the big gate, listening to alarming rumors."

Photographs from the series "The Siege in Peking"  
 by Reverend Charles A. Killie  
 Source: Yale University

[killie62\_46869\_yale\_45] [killie36\_46869\_yale\_28]

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Copyright, 1900, by HARPER & BROTHERS (Morton Trust Co., Trustee)



Miss Mary Pierce. Miss Laura Conger.

THE PRISONERS OF PEKING.

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN BY THE CORRESPONDENT OF "HARPER'S WEEKLY," JUNE 1, 1900, IN THE COMPOUND OF THE UNITED STATES LEGATION.

Images of women in captivity had always been surefire means to arouse public sympathy. The repeated images of women carried in cages portrayed during the Opium War now echoed in portraits of dignified women confined behind the walls of the legations.

"The Prisoners of Peking. Miss Mary Pierce. Miss Laura Conger.

"The Boxer Uprising II"  
 chap. 1, p. 22



*From a photograph taken by the correspondent of 'Harper's Weekly,' June 1, 1900,  
in the Compound of the United States Legation."*

Harper's Weekly, August 25, 1900

[harpers1900\_07b\_v2b\_019]

### Battle of Tianjin (July 13–14, 1900)

Tianjin, a large city of one million Chinese on the coast southeast of Beijing, contained a substantial foreign settlement of about 700 people along the banks of the Hai River. On June 15 and 16, Boxers from the countryside destroyed Christian churches in the city, killed Chinese Christians, and attempted to attack the foreign settlement. At this point, the Qing government decided to support the Boxers, besieging and bombarding the foreigners. After the failure of Admiral Seymour's efforts, the Allies prepared a large force to assault the city and raise the siege. Japanese soldiers broke through the south gate while Russians broke through the east gate, and the Chinese soldiers withdrew. The Allied forces, however, had no unified command, so they quickly turned to looting, rape, and acts of vengeance against Chinese civilians. The very able general Nie Shicheng was killed, leaving only Dong Fuxiang and his Muslim Braves to resist the march of the foreign armies on Beijing. The impressive resistance of Chinese troops at Tianjin, however, forced the allied armies to delay their final advance until August. The images shown here portray Chinese Christian refugees, Allied troops, and dramatic—though imaginary—battle pictures by Japanese and Chinese artists.

Learn more in the VC unit  
"The Opium War In Japanese Eyes"  
by John W. Dower  
*The Captivity of Anne Noble*



Handwritten title: "South Gate of Tientsin"

Japanese print from series, 1900

Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University

[1900\_6\_SouthGateTientsin\_An]





陸軍與團民鏖戰圖

Translation: "A Battle Picture of the Bitter Fight Between the [Western] Land Army and the Boxers"

六月廿八日，團民傾巢出隊，經英法陸軍暨各國之兵與團民開仗，我國轟軍門標下統帶從中夾攻，鏖戰多時，未分勝負云。

Translation: "On the 28th day of the 6th lunar month (July 24), the boxers turned out in full force and moved out as an army. They encountered the armies of England, France and other countries, which began to fight with them. A legion of our army under the command of General Nie attacked from the middle. They bitterly fought for a long time but neither side won the battle."

Image, upper left: 華兵從中夾攻；義和童子軍；後隊大砲兵埋伏

Translation: "The Chinese army attacking from their midst; The Yihe [righteous and harmonious] child army; An ambush by the rear army's large artillery troops"

Image, center: 守望相助 義和；兩軍對陣大戰

Translation: "Mutual help and protection; Yihe [righteous/harmonious]; Two armies poised for a large scale clash"

Image, right: 英法各國大兵

Translation: "England and France's great army"

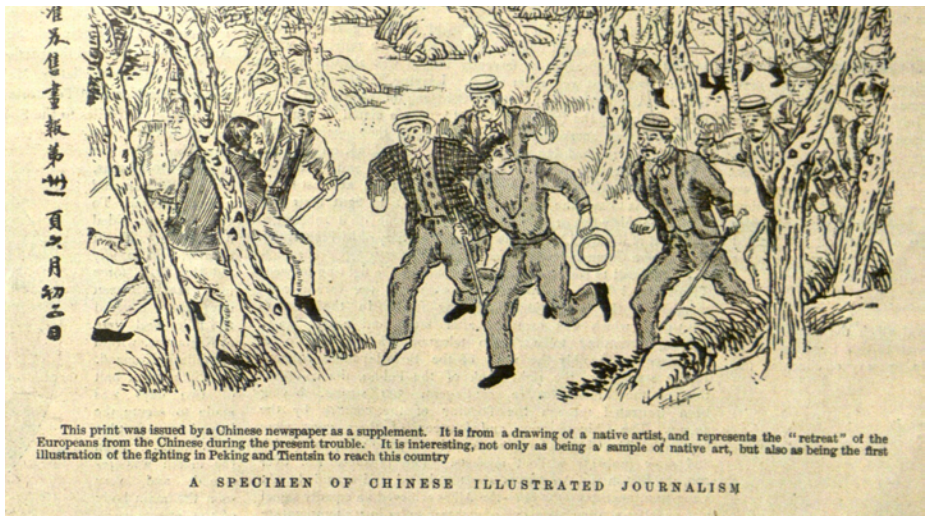
Chinese nianhua New Year's print, 1900

Source: National Archives

[na05\_NatArchives002]







This print was issued by a Chinese newspaper as a supplement. It is from a drawing of a native artist, and represents the "retreat" of the Europeans from the Chinese during the present trouble. It is interesting, not only as being a sample of native art, but also as being the first illustration of the fighting in Peking and Tientsin to reach this country

A SPECIMEN OF CHINESE ILLUSTRATED JOURNALISM

Translation: "Image of the Westerners Fleeing Disaster"

English text: "A Specimen of Chinese Illustrated Journalism.

This print was issued by a Chinese newspaper as a supplement. It is from a drawing of a native artist, and represents the 'retreat' of the Europeans from the Chinese during the present trouble. It is interesting, now only as being a sample of native art, but also as being the first illustration of the fighting in Peking and Tientsin to reach this country."

Cartoon from the Chinese newspaper of Tientsin, "Tung-Wen-Hu-Pao"  
 Reproduced in The Graphic, August 18, 1900

[graphic\_1900\_030]



Chinese Christian Refugees gathered by Father Quilloux into the Apostolic Mission during bombardment of Tientsin, China. Copyright 1901 by Underwood & Underwood.

"Chinese Christian Refugees Gathered by Father Quilloux into the Apostolic Mission During Bombardment of Tientsin, China."

Detail from stereograph

Source: Library of Congress





天津城廂保甲全圖

Translation: "Complete Map of the Community Self-Defense System  
of the Walled City of Tianjin and its Environs," 1899

Artist: Feng Qihuang

Source: Library of Congress

[1899\_tianjin\_ct002306\_map\_L]





*"Allied Infantry, Tientsin [Tianjin], 1900"*

Source: *Visual Cultures in East Asia*

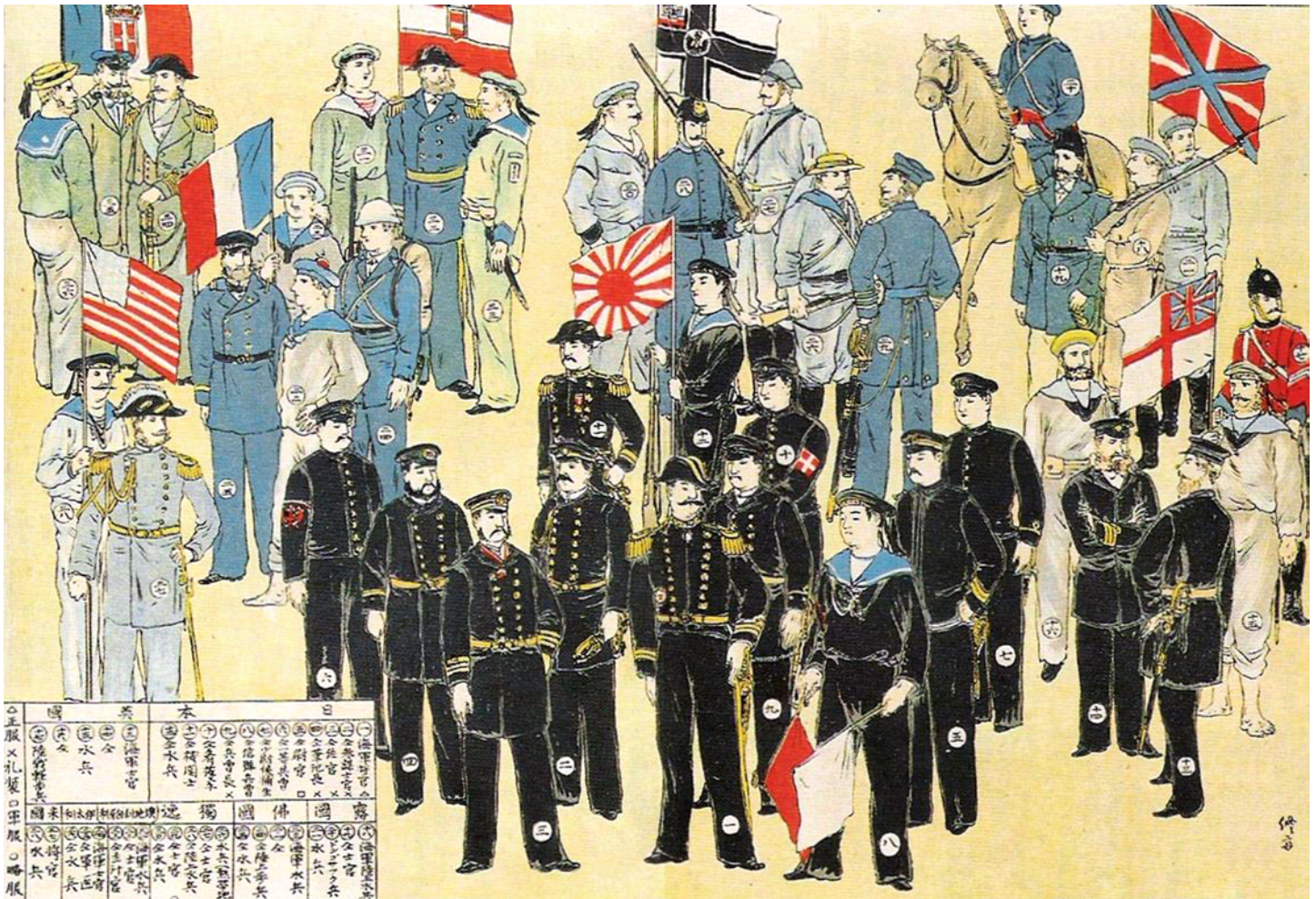
[vcea\_1900\_NA04-33]

### **The 2nd Intervention: March on Beijing (August 4–14, 1900)**

Foreign armies gathered in Tianjin to join in an unprecedented international alliance of rivals, having chosen a commander, Alfred von Waldersee, who was still far away in Germany. The troops departed under command of British General Gaselee.

The main force of the "Eight-Power Expeditionary Army" in fact included soldiers from only five nations (Germany sent a small force that turned back after the first battle, and Austria-Hungary and Italy sent only small forces). Most of the British forces were Indian troops. The total size was about 18,000 men, consisting of 8,000 Japanese; 4,300 Russian infantry, Cossacks, and artillery; 3,000 British infantry, cavalry, and artillery; 2,500 U.S. soldiers; and an 800-man French brigade from Indochina.



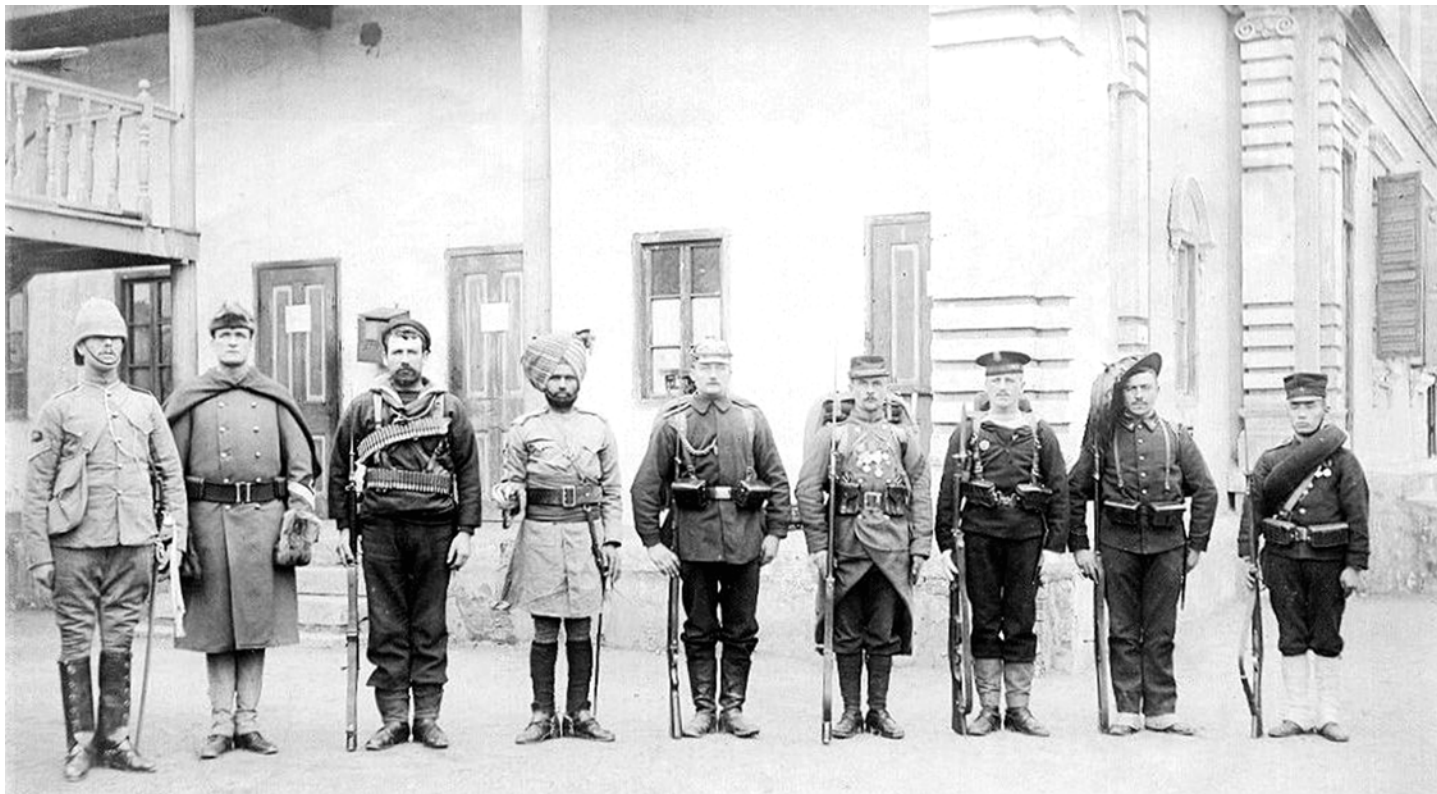


“Eight-Nation Alliance with their Naval Ensigns,” 1900  
 “Allied International Forces by order of troop size: Japan, Russia, United Kingdom, France, United States, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy.”  
 Japanese print  
 Source: Wikipedia

[dh7110\_BoxerTroops\_wikipedi]

Images of the imperial forces who relieved the siege display openly the common assumptions and practices of the major world powers. The military forces themselves took advantage of the expedition to show their discipline, weaponry, and modern leadership. In photos of the expedition, each of the countries has an equal visual rank, with their generals lined up alongside each other. Imperial internationalism promoted a picture of united modern forces faced by mysterious but undisciplined Asian hordes. On the other hand, the powers also used the war to reinforce national loyalties, stressing that different classes of the population all held a common patriotic interest in the protection of empire and the defeat of the Chinese. The armies of the French and British included large contingents from the colonies. Sikhs and Pathans from India and the French Zouaves conscripted from the French settlers in Algeria and Tunisia stand out because of their colorful uniforms. A French image of Japanese army troops also portrays them as similar to the French, in colorful uniforms, with mustaches, sitting in stately form on horses. Japan has clearly joined the ranks of imperial military forces. Frequent pictures of large warships and guns indicated the high level of technology and destructive power of the imperial forces.





*"Troops of the Eight-Nations Alliance," ca. 1900  
Left to right: Britain, United States, Australia, India, Germany,  
France, Austria-Hungary, Italy, Japan.  
Source: Wikipedia*

[soldiers\_of\_the\_eight\_nation]





*"No. 2 Company, Bombay Sappers and Miners, China, 1900"*

*Tianjin, 1900*

*Source: Wikipedia*

*From National Army Museum website: "No. 2 Company was the last of the sapper and miner units to land in China, reaching Tianjin on 11 August 1900. The company was employed for a time on the Tianjin defenses and on 19 August took part in an engagement to disperse the Boxer forces threatening the city from the south west. Towards the end of 1900 the unit was occupied in the bridging and preparing winter quarters, as well as, during the following spring, in demolishing wrecks in the Pei-Ho River."*

[1900\_84115\_Bombay\_Sappers]

The forces left Tianjin on August 4 and reached Beijing on August 14, facing very little military resistance, but suffering heavily from heat exhaustion. The foreign armies suffered very few casualties. In the next two days, they occupied and liberated the legation quarter and Northern Cathedral, and on August 28 they staged a march through the city to display their completed occupation. The empress dowager and her court had fled on August 15 to take refuge in Shanxi.

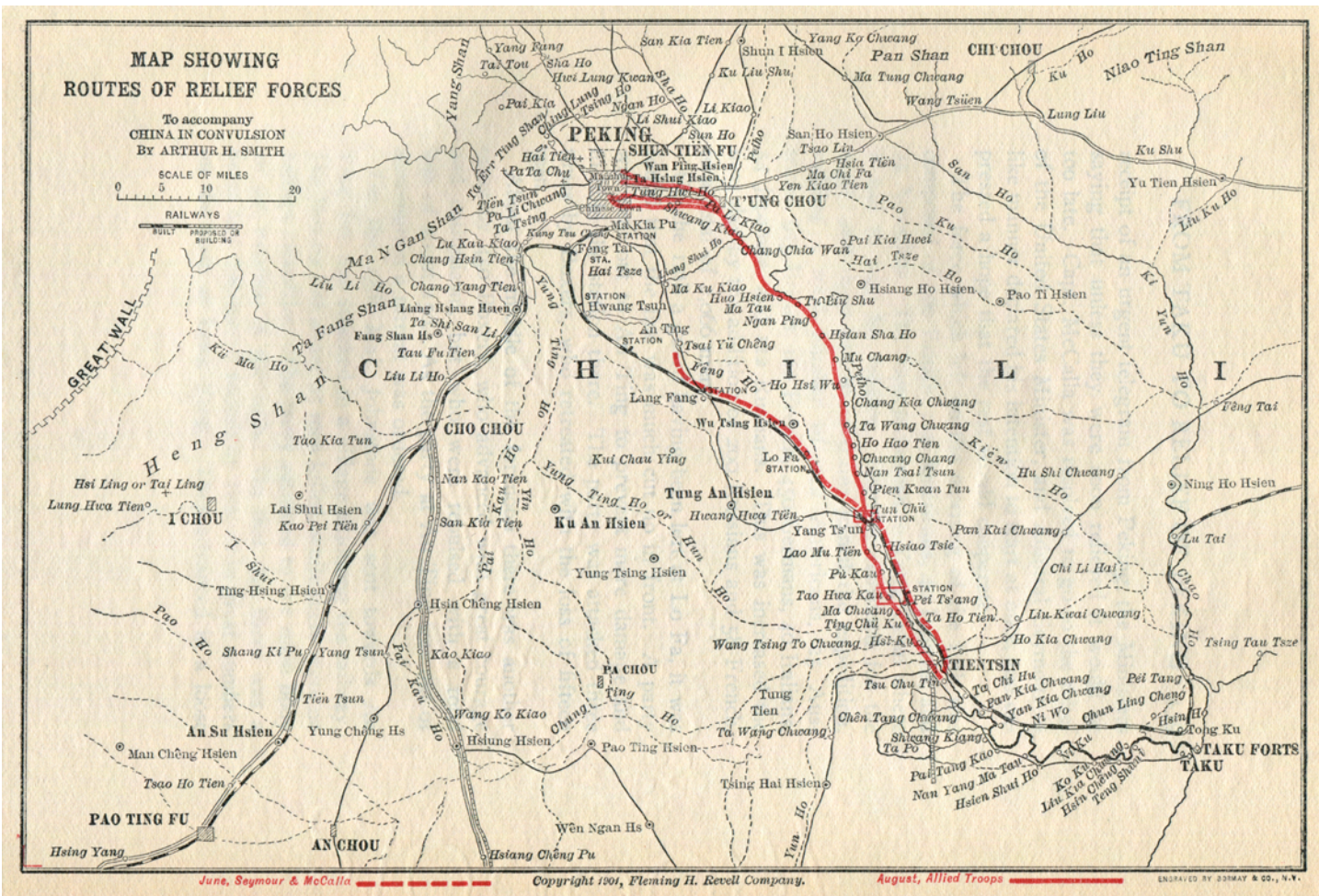




*"Royal Marine 'Bluejackets' leave Tientsin for Peking, August 4, 1900"*  
Source: *Visual Cultures in East Asia*

[vcea\_NA03-25\_Blue]





Two routes followed by Allied expeditions from Tianjin to Beijing.

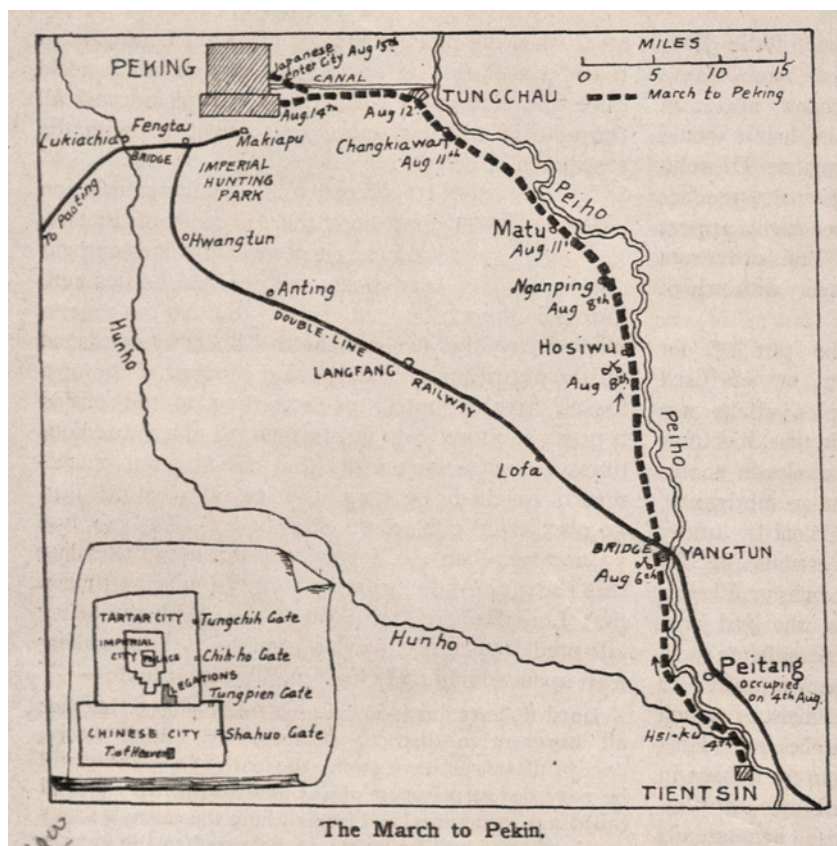
The Seymour expedition traveled by train, until defeat, returning over land and by boat. The second expedition marched overland adjacent to supply boats on the Hai (Peiho) River.

(Above) "Map Showing Routes of Relief Forces. To accompany China in Convulsion by Arthur H. Smith," 1901

[smith438a\_MapRelief\_1901]

(Right) "The March to Peking"

[RevOfRev\_1900\_v22\_014]



At the same time, the Russians sent warships down the river into Manchuria, attacking and occupying the three provinces of Heilongjiang, Jilin, and Fengtian.



All the foreign journals produced dramatic pictures of the battle for Beijing, each featuring the actions of the troops of their own nation. The battle portraits contain pictures of masses of men fighting in great confusion, and views of disciplined armies charging toward the massive walls of Beijing.

They vary greatly in degrees of realism and fantasy. Many images reinforced existing stereotypes of China as a huge country, with an ancient, but degenerate civilization, taken over by barbarian hordes. Others showed specific events, demonstrating Western forces triumphing over Chinese soldiers and Boxer militiamen. An amazing array of modern mass media, ranging from newspapers, to leaflets, to advertising cards contained in consumer products like chocolate and soap, distributed the battle pictures widely.

The French magazine *Le Petit Journal* featured colored pictures of crowded masses of people, with very little depiction of military gore. The French had very few troops in the Eight-Power Army, so they could not display their own military contributions, but the French three-color flag flies prominently among the large military forces.

[Click here to view a rollover map with enlargements](#)

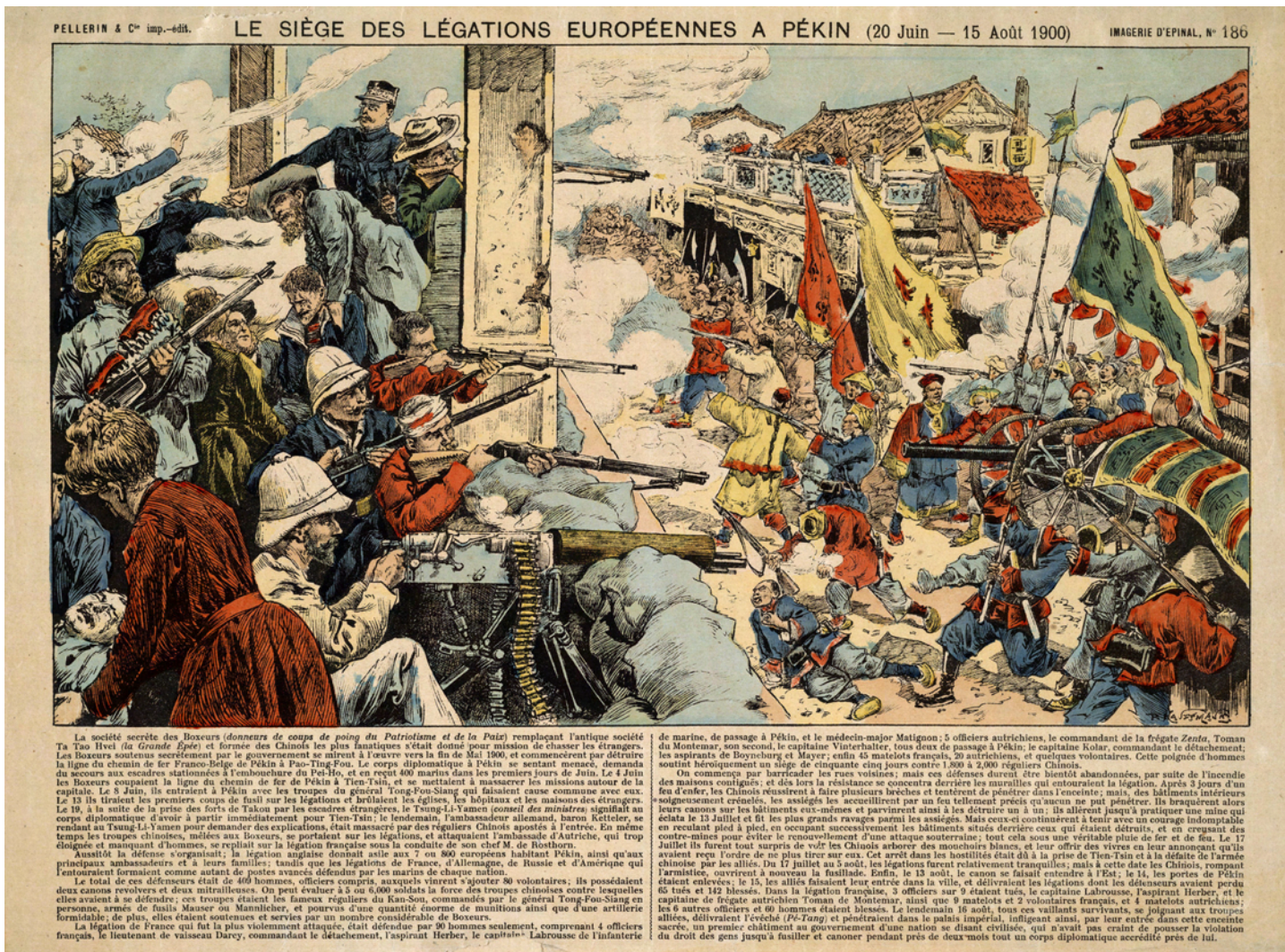


*"Événements de Chine.  
Une Victoire Française"*



[lpji\_1901\_01\_13th\_2]

The most dramatic of all the siege pictures is a French illustration showing close combat between foreigners firing machine guns and Chinese storming the wall. (Note that in this picture the Chinese troops use artillery as well, and the image features militarily trained forces instead of Boxer peasants.)



“Le Siège des Légations Européennes à Pékin (20 Juin – 15 Août 1900)”

Artist: P. Kauffmann

Source: Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University

[1900\_5-Pellerin\_Siege\_AnneS]

Not to be outdone, a dramatic Japanese print celebrates the charge of Japanese troops on the walls of Beijing. Atmospheric views of Beijing seen through clouds of smoke echo the fanciful illustrations of the Sino-Japanese War by artists who had never seen the front.





THE FALL OF THE PEKIN CASTLE THE HOSTILE ARMY BEING BEATEN AWAY FROM THE IMPERIAL CASTLE BY THE ALLIED ARMIES.

English caption on Japanese print: "The fall of the Peking Castle, the Hostile Army Being Beaten Away From the Imperial Castle by the Allied Armies."

September, 1900

Artist: Kasai Torajirō

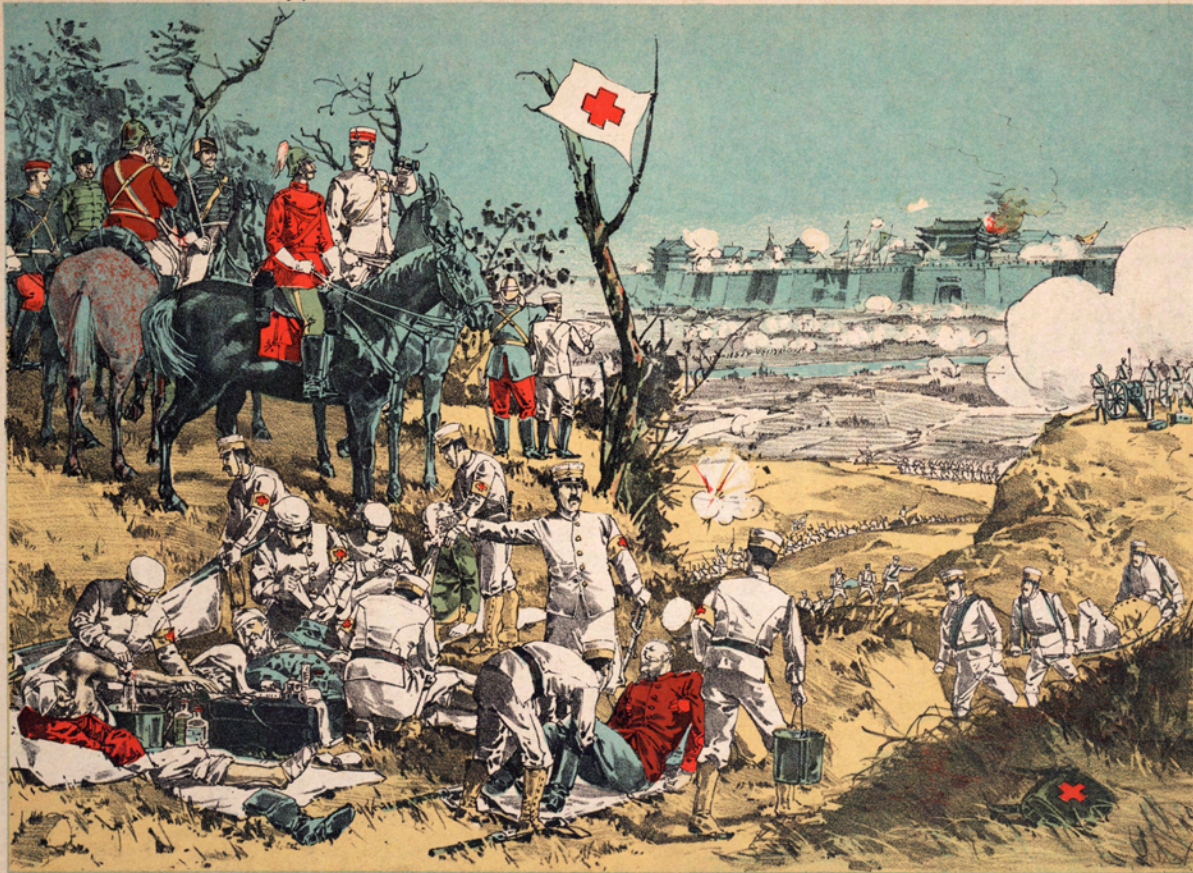
Source: Library of Congress

[j\_1900\_BeijingCastleBoxerR]

Another print depicts Japanese Red Cross representatives tending to wounded Western soldiers while Japanese officers mingle with the Allied commanders. Japan asserts its equality with the imperial armies while clouds of smoke billow over the walls of Beijing in the distance.



况實隊主衛我擊攻城京北軍合聯



日清戦争 北京圍城 五月九日 第三十三號  
 大日本陸軍省 印刷 第三十三號

*Japanese Red Cross tending to the wounded.*

*"Japanese Field Station at the Siege of Peking, May–August 1900"*

*Handwritten title: "Peking"*

*Japanese print from series*

*Source: Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University*

[1900\_3\_JapanesePrint\_Peking]

Japanese imagery did not stress religious themes, and it represented both the coercive and the restorative functions of the expedition. In Western imagery, however, drawings of attacks on missionaries aroused the most popular sentiments. Descriptions of Boxer attacks drew explicitly on stories of martyrdom in the Christian tradition dating back to the Elizabethan writer John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. Even though details of the events were scanty, it was all too easy to fit the Boxer attacks into a narrative that followed closely the 16th-century hagiographic text, in which all Christians, foreigners and Chinese alike, were innocent, heroic victims of savage brutality.

Depictions of Boxers massacring Western missionaries appeared alongside Western retaliation with looting and destruction of government buildings, giving viewers a sense of righteous revenge. But in this narrative, order soon returned, with the troops marching into the Forbidden City and the besieged missionaries gratefully receiving their liberators.







ÉVÈNEMENTS DE CHINE  
 Massacre dans l'église de Moukden en Mandchourie

*Massacre of the Russian missionaries.*

*"Événements de Chine.*

*Massacre dans l'Église de Moukden en Mandchourie" [sic]*

*Translation: "Massacre in the Mukden Church in Manchuria"*

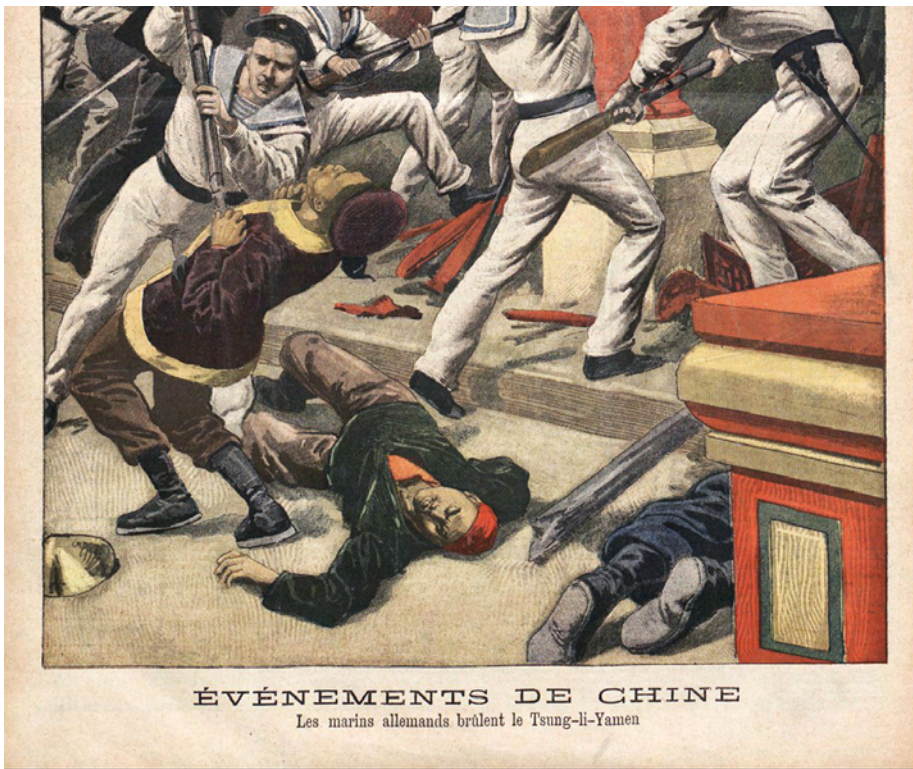
*Le Petit Journal, Supplément Illustré, August 5, 1900*

[lpji\_1900\_08\_05th\_9]



"The Boxer Uprising II"  
 chap. 1, p. 37





*“Événements de Chine.  
Les Marins Allemands Brulent le Tsung-li-Yamen.”  
Translation: “German Sailors Burn Tsung-li-Yamen”  
Le Petit Journal, Supplément Illustré, July 22, 1900*

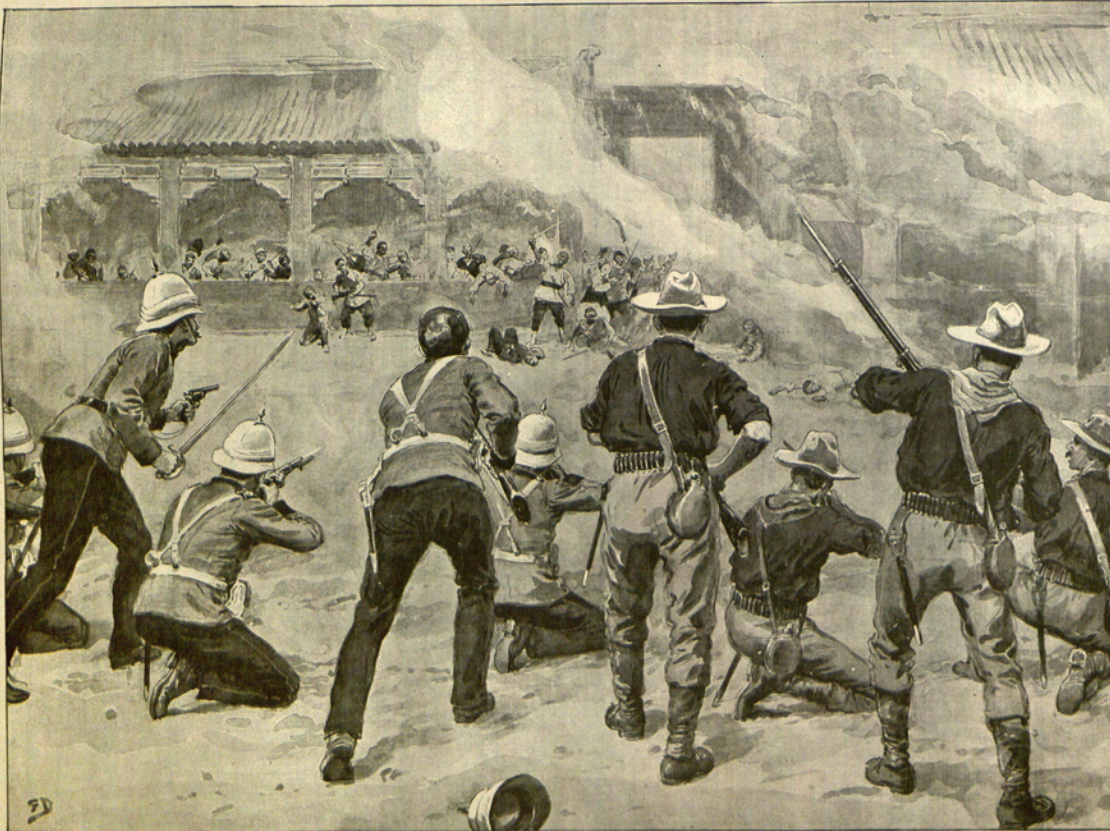
[lpji\_1900\_07\_22nd\_9]



*Water gate through which British forces walked, the first to reach the legations.  
Source: Library of Congress*

[libc\_1900\_3a49563u]





THE SIEGE OF THE BRITISH LEGATION AT PEKING: DRIVING THE TROOPS OF FUNG FU HSIANG FROM THE HANLIN YUAN

*"The Site of the British Legation at Peking; Driving the Troops of Fung Fu Hsiang [Dong Fuxiang] From the Hanlin Yuan.*

*The Imperial troops were driven from the Hall of Hanlin Yuan, or National Academy, by a sortie made by a small party of defenders of the British Legation—British and American. The Hanlin Yuan had the night before been reconnoitred by the British. The officer in command of the reconnoitring party was probably the first European to enter this home of Chinese learning, which is a century old, and contains a priceless library, and is as sacred to Chinese as probably Mecca is to Muslims. All this tradition had no weight with the Imperial troops, who even fired the library in order to enter the British Legation to massacre women, children and native Christians. This made it absolutely necessary that they should be driven out. The fire was got under [control], and a portion of the Hanlin was occupied by the defending force."*

The Graphic, October 13, 1900

[graphic\_1900\_049]





DRAWN BY W. HATHERELL, R.I., AND FRANK CRAIG  
All the buildings near the Legation bear witness to the severity of the fire of the Chinese. In the houses adjoining the Legation, several tiers of loopholes had been pierced, and through these a continuous fire was poured during the siege. Three thousand shells were fired by the Chinese. Fortunately, most of them were fired too high and the aim was wild. The meeting of the besieged with the relieving troops gave rise to a scene of wild enthusiasm, men and women cheering and shaking hands with officers, soldiers, and camp followers—with anyone, in fact, who came along. The first to arrive of the relieving column were Major Scott and four men of the 1st Sikhs.  
FROM A SKETCH BY CAPTAIN F. G. POOLE  
The first to arrive of the relieving column were Major Scott and four men of the 1st Sikhs.

THE SIEGE OF THE PEKING LEGATION: THE ARRIVAL OF THE HEAD OF THE RELIEF COLUMN

*“The Siege of the Peking Legation:  
the Arrival of the Head of the Relief Column.*

*All the buildings near the Legation bear witness to the severity of the fire of the Chinese. In the houses adjoining the Legation, several tiers of loopholes had been pierced, and through these a continuous fire was poured during the siege. Three thousand shells were fired by the Chinese. Fortunately, most of them were fired too high and the aim was wild. The meeting of the besieged with the relieving troops gave rise to a scene of wild enthusiasm, men and women cheering and shaking hands with officers, soldiers, and camp followers—with anyone, in fact, who came along. The first to arrive of the relieving column were Major Scott and four men of the 1st Sikhs.”*

The Graphic, October 13, 1900  
Artists: W. Hatherell, R.I., & Frank Craig,  
from a sketch by Captain F. G. Poole

[graphic\_1900\_048]



# The Boxer Uprising — II

War and Aftermath (1900-1901)

Essay by Peter C. Perdue & Ellen Sebring

War & Siege

The View from China

Occupation &  
Aftermath

Sources & Credits



*A grid of the Chinese nianhua—"New Years" prints—depicting events during the Boxer Uprising that will be examined in this chapter.*

*Woodblock prints, ca. 1900*

[nianhua\_grid]

*Transcriptions and translations of these Nianhua from the National Archives are by Prof. Peter C. Perdue and his graduate students at Yale University for MIT Visualizing Cultures, Sept. 19, 2011.*

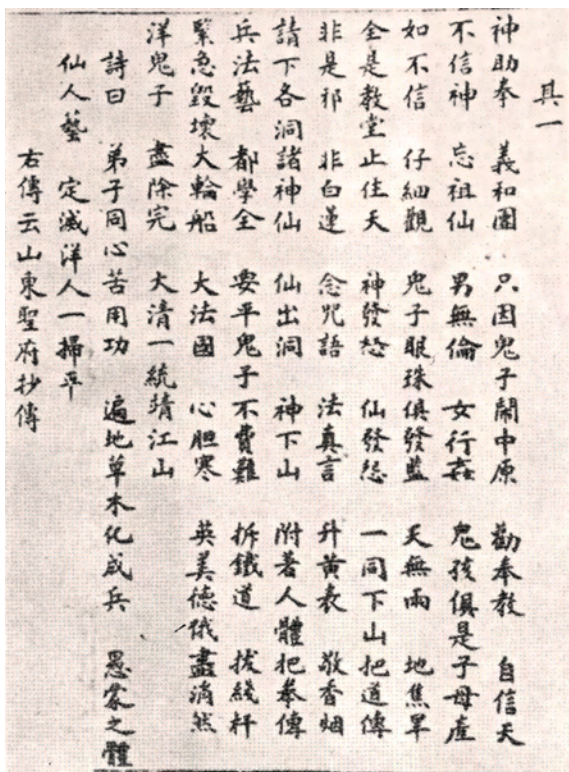
**THE VIEW FROM CHINA**

Printer-friendly PDF



A media explosion also occurred on the Chinese side during the Boxer Uprising. While the Western media had a global reach, images produced by Chinese circulated only within China, except when they were copied by Western observers. The Boxers themselves used wall posters, placards, and flags to spread their message. Since most of their audience was illiterate, the printed word was not their main method of mobilization. The great reverence for amulets invoked by the spirit cults, however, meant that many Boxers carried small pieces of paper with them into battle. From these amulets came the common Western belief that the Boxers believed themselves to be invulnerable to bullets.

The relatively scarce imagery from the Boxers themselves, and the rarity of texts written by Boxers, shows how difficult it was for a mass peasant movement, subjected to official repression and foreign attack, to coordinate its followers and make an impact on the wider Chinese public. This pamphlet, however, used simple imagery and rhyming phrases to spread the Boxer message among large masses of the peasant population. The language continued the tradition of anti-Christian proclamations from several decades earlier. It could have been read out to the Boxer troops to rouse their indignation against foreign missionaries and Chinese followers.



Chinese pamphlet, ca. 1899  
Source: Wikimedia Commons

[1899\_201601\_Boxerspamphlet]

Translation of pamphlet text:

“The gods aided the rise of the Boxers, just because the foreign devils had disturbed China. They promoted their alien religion, believed only in one God and rejected belief in our gods, destroying the teachings of ancestors and sages. Men had no morals, women became whores. Their demon children were a product of incest. If you do not believe me, just look closely. The devils’ children flash blue from their eyes. No rain fell, the earth became barren, all because their churches only worship one God. The local gods became angry, the sages held resentment, they all came down from the mountains and went to hidden places. The Boxers are not the heterodox sects, and not the White Lotus; they chant incantations, and follow the True Words. They wore yellow clothing, worshipped with incense, begging for the gods and sages of the caves to come out. The sages came out of the caves, the gods descended from the mountains, and aided men to learn the martial arts. They studied the military techniques thoroughly, making it easy to put down the foreign devils. They destroyed the railroads, pulled up the rails, attacked and destroyed the big steamships. The great French nation has a cruel heart. England, America, Germany, Russia, all are the same. When we completely drive out the foreign devils, the great Qing empire will be united and at peace.”

The poem states:

“When disciples unify all their efforts, everywhere grasses and forests sprout soldiers. We shall study the arts of the sages, and completely destroy the



In the countryside, they took advantage of existing popular media, like New Years' pictures. These pictures, or *nianhua*, were distributed widely through China by local printing houses. Many of them celebrated local festivals and illustrated well-known themes from traditional Chinese operas and folk tales. At certain times, however, the prints depicted current events, like the Sino-French War of 1884 and the Boxer Uprising, using the inherited patterns of the folk tradition. They celebrated victories by Chinese generals, portraying them as heroes of village operas complete with flags, spears, and swaggering bravado. The walled cities and masses of soldiers combined with confused scenes of military conflict to give a sense of exhilaration in combat. In 1884 these prints celebrated the exploits of General Liu Yongfu, whose Black Flag Army had successfully fought the French in northern Vietnam. The prints about the Boxers likewise depict the famous General Dong Fuxiang leading his troops against foreign armies. They also show foreign captives being brought before the general's court for judgment.

This collection of *nianhua* prints dedicated to the events of the Boxer period portrays the major battles with the Western powers—particularly the battle of Yangcun village, the struggle in Tianjin and at the Dagu forts, and Russian incursions in Manchuria. The printmakers either describe these confrontations as victories for the Chinese forces, or they show Chinese soldiers valiantly holding off the fire of the Western attackers. They praise the heroic Chinese generals, while showing the Westerners in postures of humiliation and captivity. Captions on the pictures label the leading generals, their battle flags, and the locations of forts. The caption at the top describes the date and course of the battle briefly.

The pictorial style combines elements of traditional Chinese woodblock printing with Western features. Since the flourishing of illustrated newspapers like the *Dianshizhai Huabao*, Chinese artists had learned how to depict Western faces, Western ships and weaponry, and Western buildings. But they often inserted these features as motifs in a background framed by Chinese landscape painting. The styles of rocks, trees, waves, and building roofs asserted the native Chinese pictorial style as the foundation. The use of bright colors followed the *nianhua* tradition featuring colorful flowers, fruits, and children who celebrated the abundance of the New Year. But the poses of figures, the flags, and other elements came from illustrations of popular village operas taken from the folk tradition. The curious mixture of elements in these prints shows how such a variegated collection of cultural elements—military, landscape, personal, and decorative—had penetrated the popular mentality during this critical year.

The *nianhua* prints give us valuable insights into efforts to arouse the patriotic sentiment of the Chinese people against the foreign invasion. They did not try to represent the real military situation—they celebrated China's sporadic victories to raise morale, and they denounced the cruelty inflicted by the imperialists. Using a graphic idiom familiar to the Chinese public, they promoted a message of heroic resistance. The Qing court's defeat by the foreign powers left it vulnerable to accusations that it had betrayed the popular will. This popular mobilization would continue to develop in new forms until the end of the dynasty.

---

### **A Picture of Commander-in-Chief Dong's Plan to Attack the Western Forces at Yang Village**

This print gives a close-up of the battle at Yangcun. While the Chinese commanders, led by Dong Fuxiang and his Gansu Braves, gathered in their encampment, the Western forces built a bridge to cross the river for their attack. The Chinese had, however, planted mines, which blew up the bridge and forced the foreigners to retreat.

The print shows the Chinese forces, waving the banners of their commanders, close in from three sides as the foreign soldiers try to flee back across the bridge. Desperate Western soldiers jump off the bridge, and several heads of drowning soldiers pop up in the river. The floating mines and the burning bridge issue billowing clouds of smoke, tinged with fiery red. The color red indicates at the same time fire, blood, and decorative foreign uniforms. The Chinese peasant soldiers, with cloths wrapped around their heads, drive the foreigners back with pikes and swords, while artillery pieces lie unused in the foreground. At the left, the bearded commander charges forward on his horse. Although this picture is clearly not intended to give a realistic picture of the



battle, it provides details that ring true with descriptions of the battle.



董軍門楊村設計敵西兵圖

"A Picture of Commander-in-Chief Dong's Plan to Attack the Western Forces at Yang Village"

七月十四日，各西兵至楊村，西官命兵士搭橋過河攻營，被董軍門李鑑帥暗設地雷，分兵殺出，西兵大敗，十死其半。嵩山道人塗

"On the 14th day of the 7th month, the Western armies arrived at Yang village. Western officers ordered the foot soldiers to build a footbridge across the river to attack the encampment. They were hit by Commander-in-Chief Dong and General Li's secretly placed mines. Our armies attacked from different directions. The Western army was decisively defeated, and half of them were killed. A picture by the Daoist of Mount Song."

Image, left: 團軍左營；團軍右營

"Assembled boxers at the left encampment, Assembled boxers at the right encampment"

[na13\_NatArchives011]

## The Battle at Yang Village

This print celebrates the victory at Yangcun by showing hogtied Western captives being brought before General Dong for judgment. Burning ships in the background, sunk by Chinese artillery fire, signify the Western defeat. The banners of Generals Ma, Song, and Dong frame the front scene, where the foreign soldiers are forced to kneel before "Great General Dong." The Boxer militia presented the soldiers to General Dong and asked for rewards for their achievements. The print shows the close cooperation between the peasant militia and the Qing military, implying that a united front of court and battle against the alien invaders will bring about their humiliation.





楊村大戰  
 "The Battle at Yang Village"

宋董李三軍鎮守楊村，令五千拳民為前隊，西兵將倭軍作先行。相見之下，兩軍渾戰，各有損傷，拳民捉得西弁進見，請功行賞。  
 "Song, Dong, and Li's three armies were garrisoned at Yang village, and ordered 5000 Boxers to form a front line. The Western armies ordered Japanese troops to be the front line. After they met, the two armies engaged and each side sustained casualties. The Boxers captured several Western soldiers, brought them to their leaders and asked for rewards for these deeds."

[na03\_NatArchives006]

### Drawing Depicting the Decapitation of Russian & Japanese Spies

Like the previous one, this print from 1900 depicts a tribunal where foreign military officers were brought before General Dong Fuxiang and condemned to execution. The foreigners, carried in cages or bound with ropes, are led through the gate of the garrison along a path lined with Qing soldiers. Boxer militiamen in the center drag the foreigners before the judgement platform on the right. Two soldiers prepare to decapitate two foreigners below the steps on the right. The scene is imaginary, but it expresses popular sentiment, including the alliance between Boxer militia and Qing soldiers, the humiliation and condemnation of foreign troops by Chinese forces, and the claim that the Boxers were loyal to the Qing and shared its goal of driving out foreign imperialists.





拿俄倭審問正法

"Drawing Depicting the Decapitation of Russian & Japanese Spies"

Image, left: 营門  
"Garrison Gate"

Poster: 義和拳民典刑解審  
"The Righteous Fists' Tribunal"

Flag: 拳民頭目  
"Leader of the Righteous Fists"

Image, upper right: 端君王  
"Prince Duan"

General Dong [Fuxiang]: 喧嘩禁止  
"Disturbances prohibited"

[na02\_HC1-49304874\_2011\_001]

### Imperial Envoy Li, the Commander, & Song Gongbao Defeat the Foreign Troops

This print probably also portrays the battle of Yangcun in a more confused manner. The bridge is clearly shown on the left, and the banners of Generals Li and Song stand up from the fighting troops. The Qing encampment on the right is marked by a large banner with a tiger. On the right, Chinese soldiers present severed heads to an official. The Boxers fight the foreigners with fists, pikes, swords, and guns. The retreating foreigners, in a huddled mass, try to make their way back to the bridge, as smoke and fire surround them. The bottom caption states "the foreign soldiers died in large numbers."





李欽差督陣 宋宮保大破外兵  
*"Imperial Envoy Li, the Commander, and Song Gongbao  
 Defeat the Foreign Troops"*

Image, left: 內山；野（？）伏兵；新竹；浮橋；張軍門埋伏；外兵死亡相繼  
*"Inner mountains; guerrilla troops wait in ambush; New Bamboo [Place name];  
 Pontoon bridge; Commander in Chief Zhang's ambush; Foreign troops die one  
 after another"*

Image, right: 大元帥李；賞銀；拳民獻首；拳民接仗  
*"Supreme Marshall Li; Monetary reward; The boxers present a head; Boxers  
 engaged in battle"*

[na07\_NatArchives008]

### The Battles of Tianjin & the Dagu Forts

Many of the prints dramatize the battles in Tianjin, when the Seymour expedition turned back in the face of superior forces.

### General Nie & the Boxers vs. England & France

This print shows the two armies in close confrontation, firing directly at each other. Both sides have artillery pieces, and both have firearms. The Qing forces include both regular army troops, with colored jackets and guns, and peasant militia, in simpler clothes, wielding pikes and swords. A banner labeled "Righteous" (Yihe) waves over the troops, and a caption indicates the "Righteous Children's Army." General Dong, in the background, urges his troops forward.





陸軍與團民鏖戰圖

"A Battle Picture of the Bitter Fight Between the [Western] Land Army and the Boxers"

六月廿八日，團民傾巢出隊，經英法陸軍暨各國之兵與團民開仗，我國聶軍門標下統帶從中夾攻，鏖戰多時，未分勝負云。

"On the 28th day of the 6th month, the Boxers turned out in full force and moved out as an army. They encountered the armies of England, France, and other countries, which began to fight with them. A legion of our army under the command of General Nie attacked from the middle. They bitterly fought for a long time but neither side won the battle."

Image, upper left: 華兵從中夾攻；義和童子軍；後隊大砲兵埋伏  
"The Chinese army attacking from their midst; The Yihe [righteous and harmonious] child army; An ambush by the rear army's large artillery troops"

Image, center: 守望相助 義和；兩軍對陣大戰  
"Mutual help and protection; Yihe [righteous/harmonious]; Two armies poised for a large scale clash"

Image, right: 英法各國大兵  
"England and France's great army"

[na05\_NatArchives002.jpg]

### The Boxers Crush the Foreign Troops at Tianjin's Northern Storehouse

The battle in the preceding print was a standoff, but this one shows a great victory of the Qing troops over the foreigners. The Chinese, moving out from their fortress at the upper right, drive the foreign troops to skulk away in defeat at the lower left. There is a bloody picture of a foreigner with a severed head, but no Chinese casualties. General Dong's troops fire with cannon and guns, while the peasant braves attack vigorously with swords.





天津北倉義和團民大破洋兵  
“The Boxers Crush the Foreign Troops at Tianjin’s Northern Storehouse”

Middle flag: 守望相助  
“Give mutual help and protection”

[na14\_NatArchives012]

### Ambush at Tianjin City

In this print, also portrayed as a great victory, Chinese troops rush in from all sides, firing cannon directly at the foreign commander on his horse, who leads his troops in retreat. The Dagu forts are labeled on the river in the background. Land mines explode and drive foreign troops out of the city of Tianjin.





天津城埋伏地雷, 董軍門大勝西兵圖 光緒庚子孟秋  
 "A picture of an ambush at Tianjin city using landmines, and the great victory of  
 Commander-in-Chief Dong over the Western forces. The first month of autumn in  
 the Gengzi year of the Guangxu reign [1900]"

Image, left: 大沽口; 左哨  
 "Da Gu Kou; Left Sentry"

Image, center: 紫竹林  
 "Purple Bamboo Forest"

[na06\_NatArchives010]

### Commander-in-Chief Dong & Grand Secretary Gang Jointly Training Three Amphibious Armies

This print shows General Dong and Grand Secretary Gang drilling three amphibious armies as they prepare to confront the foreigners on the river. The soldiers, wearing colorful shields, practice maneuvers to the sound of drums and flutes as the general looks on. Two ships at the upper right are the only hint of the foreign presence.





天津董軍門會同剛中堂校習三軍水陸操演圖

*"A picture of Tianjin's Commander-in-Chief Dong & Grand Secretary Gang  
Jointly Training Three Amphibious Armies"*

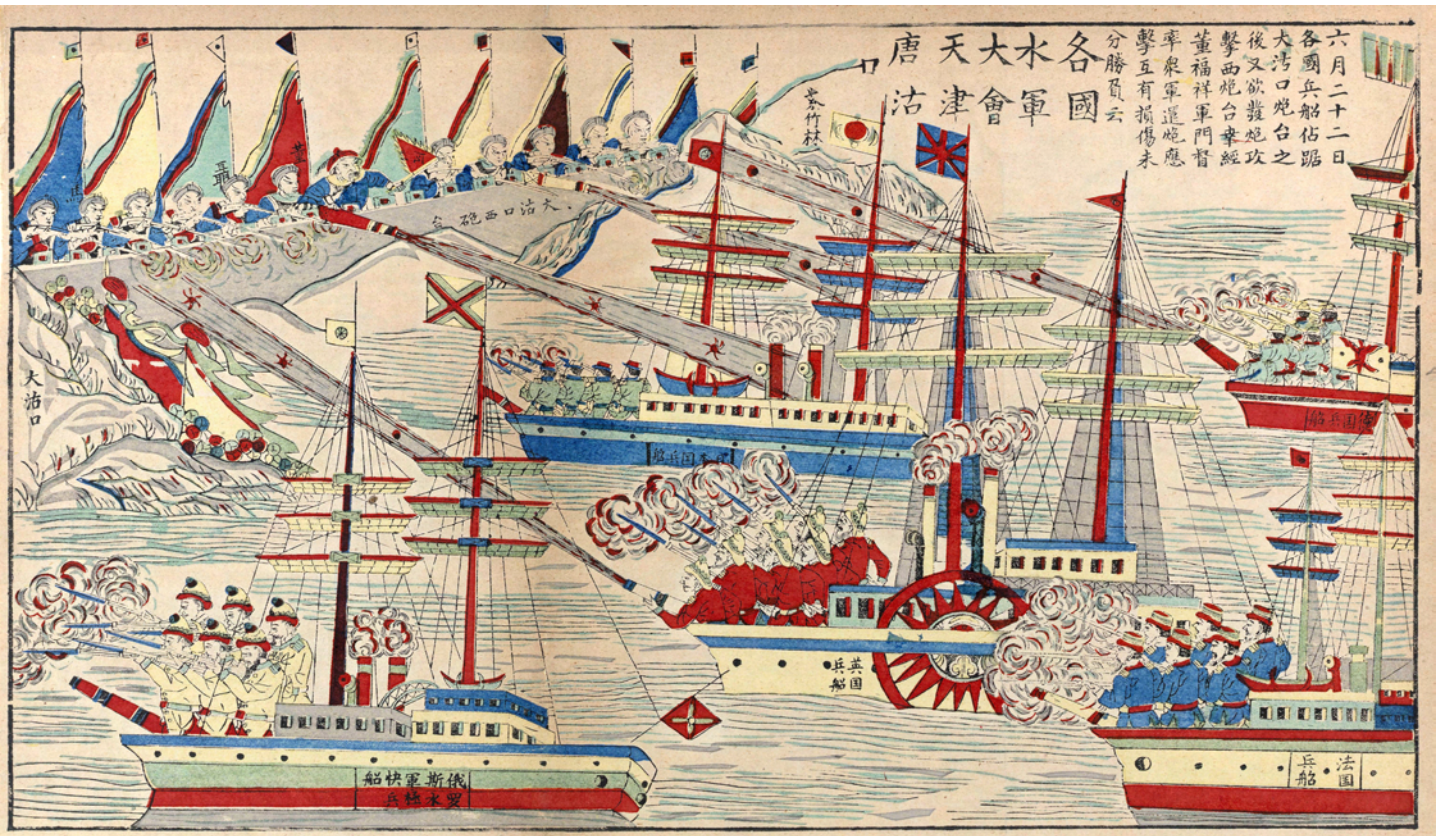
[na11\_NatArchives007]

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### All National Navies Gather at Tianjin's Tanggu Kou

This print portrays the full scale attack of the foreign navies on the Dagu forts protecting the river route to Beijing. A British steamboat, Japanese and Russian sailing ships, and other ships fire directly at the forts, while the Chinese return with cannon fire. According to the caption, the winner was unclear, but in fact the foreign ships easily captured and destroyed the forts.





各國水軍大會天津唐沽口

"All National Navies Gather at Tianjin's Tanggu Kou"

率眾軍還炮應擊，互有損傷，未分勝負云

"[Our armies] responded with cannon attacks. Each side has amassed casualties, but the winner has not yet been determined"

Image, left: 大沽口西炮台；大沽口；俄羅斯水軍極快兵船

"The Western cannon battery at Dagou Kou; Dagou Kou; The Russian Navy's extremely fast vessel"

Image, right: 紫竹林；英國兵船

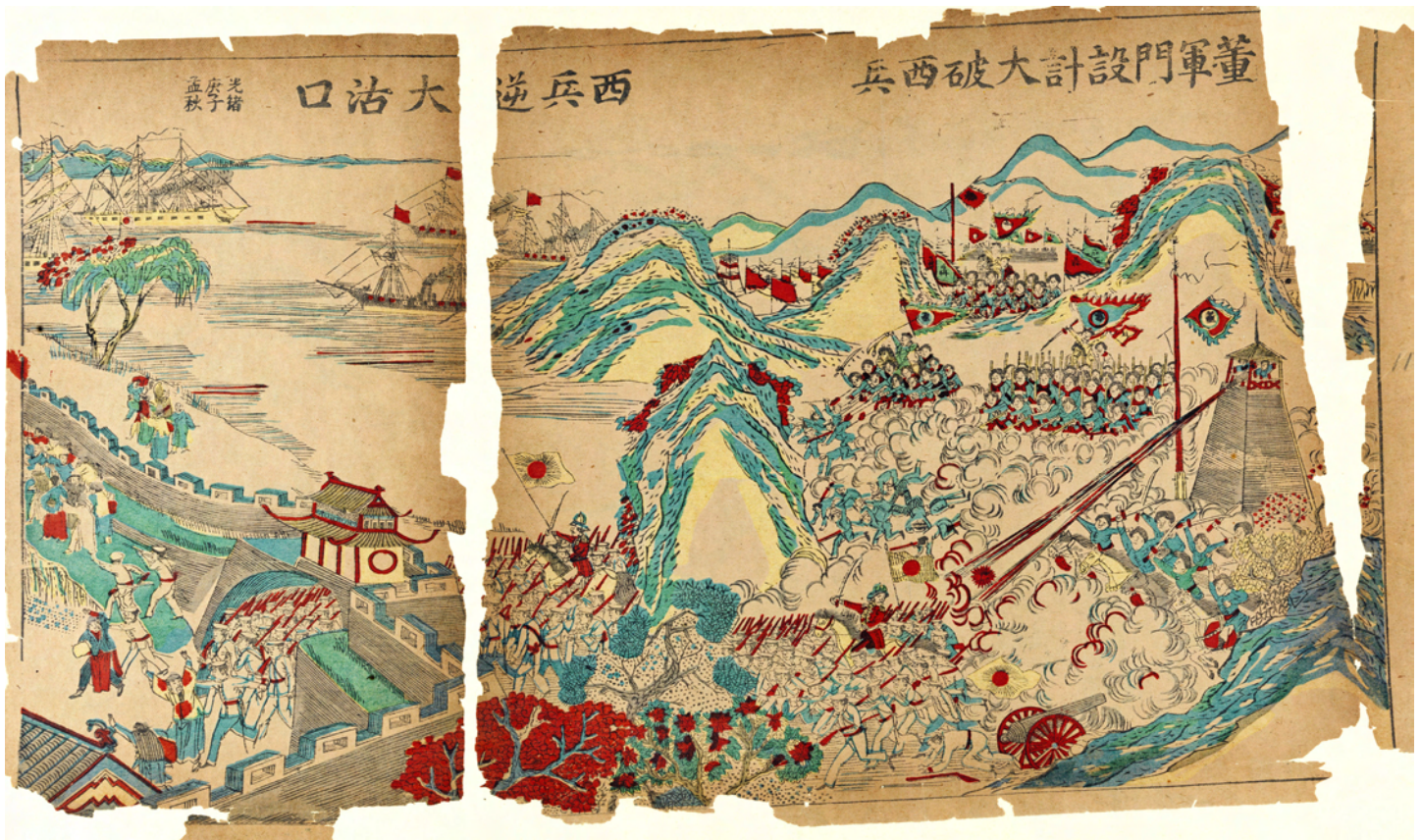
"Purple Bamboo Forest; English Naval Ship"

[na07\_NatArchives008]

### Commander Dong Devises a Plan to Defeat the Western Army

This print takes a wider-scale perspective, showing Qing troops pouring out of the mountain passes, driving the foreign troops away from Dagou. Although the foreign ships are still sailing on the river, the troops seek refuge in the walled city on the lower left. Three Japanese flags wave conspicuously among the retreating troops.





軍門設計大破西兵 西兵逆大沽口 光緒庚子孟秋  
 "Commander Dong devises a plan to defeat the Western army; Western army  
 attacks Dagu Kou; First month of autumn in the Gengzi year of the Guangxu year  
 [1900]"

[na08\_NatArchives009]

**Manchuria**

Two of the prints protest against Russian military conscription in Manchuria and celebrate a Chinese military victory in Heilongjiang.

**Forced recruitment in Siberia**

In the first print Russian army officers drag young men away as recruits, while the women in their families cry in despair. The caption denounces the tragic loss of Chinese civilians for military service.





俄人西卑里亞抽丁圖  
 "Forced Recruitment in Siberia"

按俄人僭保公使之名，請襲我奉天。卒帥徑遭困，抽民為兵，通國皆怨噫，黷武窮兵，故無益哉。

"Using the pretext of [actions by] Emissary Bao, the Russians carried out a sudden attack on our southern Manchurian district of Fengtian. They finally encountered problems, and their civilians were pressed into the army. The whole country was filled with enmity. It is of no benefit to be militaristic and bellicose, or to exhaust people with the burden of supporting the military."

Image, left: 總理衙門  
 "The Yamen of Foreign Affairs"

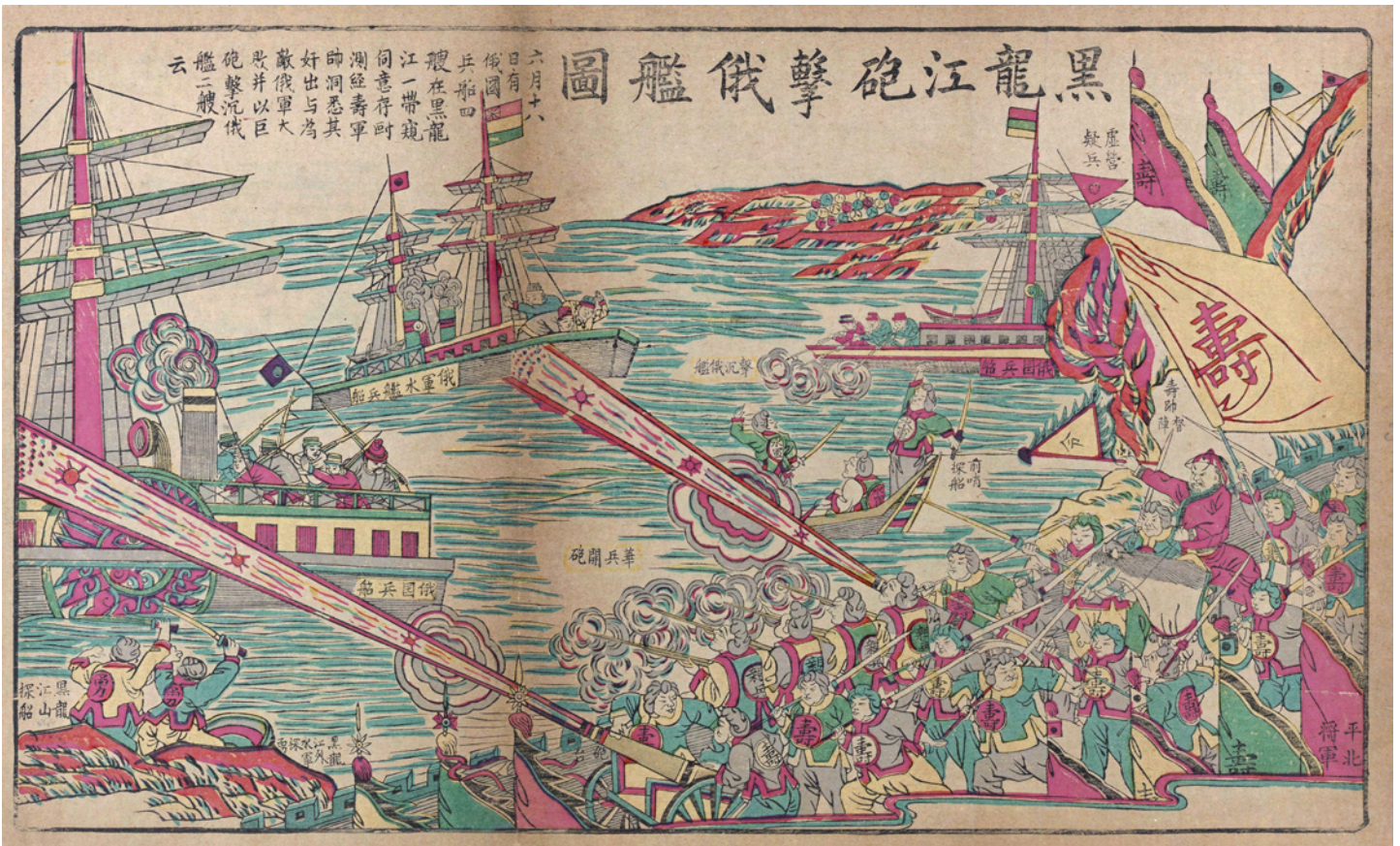
Image, right: 長橋  
 "Long Bridge"

[na10\_NatArchives005]

### Cannons Pummeling a Russian Warship in Heilongjiang, Manchuria

This print shows Chinese troops successfully repelling attacks by Russian steamships in Heilongjiang. It claims that two Russian ships were sunk by Chinese cannon fire. The print may reflect news of Chinese bombardment of the Russian town of Blagoveshchensk on the Amur in June 1900. But in fact, the Russians responded to Chinese attacks by occupying all of Manchuria by September 1900.





黑龍江砲擊俄艦圖

"Cannons Pummeling a Russian Warship in Heilongjiang, Manchuria"

六月十八日，有俄國兵船四艘在黑龍江一帶窺伺，意存耐測。

經壽軍帥洞悉其奸，出與為敵。俄軍大敗，并以巨砲擊沉俄艦二艘云。

"On the 18th of the 6th month there were four Russian warships lying in wait somewhere in Heilongjiang, harboring unpredictable intentions. Commander Shou thoroughly understood their treachery, and went out and engaged them in fighting. The Russian army suffered a great defeat while being pummeled by a huge cannon, which sank two of the Russian warships."

Image, left: 俄軍木艦兵船；俄國兵船；黑龍江（山）探船；黑龍江外水軍探勇；華兵開砲

"The Russian army's wooden warships; A Russian warship; Spy boat in Heilongjiang; A navy spy on the Heilongjiang; Chinese people setting off a cannon"

Image, right: 虛營疑兵；俄國兵船；擊沉俄艦；壽帥督陣；前哨探船

"A decoy force at an empty encampment; Russian naval ships; Sinking Russian boats; Commander Shou commanding on the battlefield; A frontier sentry boat"

[na09\_NatArchives001]



# The Boxer Uprising — II

War and Aftermath (1900-1901)

Essay by Peter C. Perdue & Ellen Sebring

War & Siege

The View from China

Occupation &  
Aftermath

Sources & Credits



*"Senior Eight-Nation Alliance Officers"*

*Beijing, ca. 1901*

*Source: Visual Cultures in East Asia*

[vcea\_1901\_NA06-01\_AllianceStaff]

## OCCUPATION & AFTERMATH

Printer-friendly PDF

### Wars for Civilization

The Hague Convention of 1899, signed by the United States, Britain, Russia, France, China, Persia, and Germany, was the first international treaty establishing laws of civilized warfare, but its provisions were completely ignored during the Boxer expedition. Looting, summary executions, destruction of civilian housing, and violent reprisals spread from Beijing into the countryside. Foreign troops determined to punish the Boxers ravaged the region relentlessly.

Of course, the Hague conventions also failed to protect Western populations from each other. The use of indiscriminate violence against a civilian population in 1900, like the scorched earth tactics used against Boers and Filipinos, anticipated



the savagery of the total war the Western powers would inflict on each other in World War I.

But the popular imagery contained deep contradictions inherent in the character of highly unequal imperial wars. The foreign armies, with vastly superior military technology, found themselves embedded in a huge civilian population where it was difficult to distinguish the innocent and the guilty. They had to justify their actions to the public at home as an act of a civilizing mission designed to rescue the Chinese people from backwardness, yet they endorsed vicious revenge against the unknown Boxer hordes. At the same time, popular media tried to spare the home population from a realistic picture of military confusion and brutality, and often depicted warfare as an innocent game, similar to outdoor sports and hunting, but hardly involving death and destruction. The positive pictures included both humorous individual portraits and jokes alongside impressive photographs of disciplined military formations, to show that war was a normal occupation under rational control by seasoned commanders.

On the other hand, the vigorous debate over looting, in which each of the foreign countries accused the other of the worst offenses, revealed a small segment of the destruction inflicted on the Chinese population. Clearly, all forces plundered the cities that they occupied, taking items ranging from precious artifacts in the Imperial collection to the ordinary possessions of civilians. Open markets sold loot to foreign and Chinese buyers. The captured relics, often labeled as "imperial treasures," have turned up in regimental mess halls, local museums, art galleries, and private dealers throughout the Western world and Japan.

While committing atrocities, looting the capital, and denouncing the majority of Chinese as Oriental hordes, Western governments and publics still had to maintain that there was a civilized element in Chinese society with whom they could negotiate and do business. Only then could they remove their troops and promote peaceful commercial relations with the country.

#### **Li Hongzhang & Wu Tingfang Praised as Chinese Peacemakers**

In the midst of racist fears and rampant looting, certain Chinese officials garnered praise from Western diplomats. Li Hongzhang (1823-1901) had led Chinese troops to resist Japan in the Sino-Japanese War, but he also negotiated the treaty settlement that ended the war. In 1896 he traveled to Europe to attend the coronation of Emperor Nicholas II of Russia. After he toured Britain in the same year, Queen Victoria made him a Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian order. Reluctantly, he had to support the court's decision for war, but in 1901 Li negotiated the protocol ending the Boxer intervention, earning compliments from foreigners for bringing peace, but denunciations from Chinese for accepting the payment of huge indemnities. He died two months later, and received the title of Marquis from the Guangxu emperor. Li was the only Chinese person to gain titles of nobility from both foreign and Chinese governments.







ÉVÉNEMENTS DE CHINE  
Li-Hung-Chang escorté par les troupes russes et japonaises

Caption: "Li-Hung Chang Escorté par les Troupes Russes et Japonaises"  
Le Petit Journal, Supplément Illustré, October 14, 1900  
Source: Widener Library, Harvard University

[lpj\_1900\_10\_14\_widener]





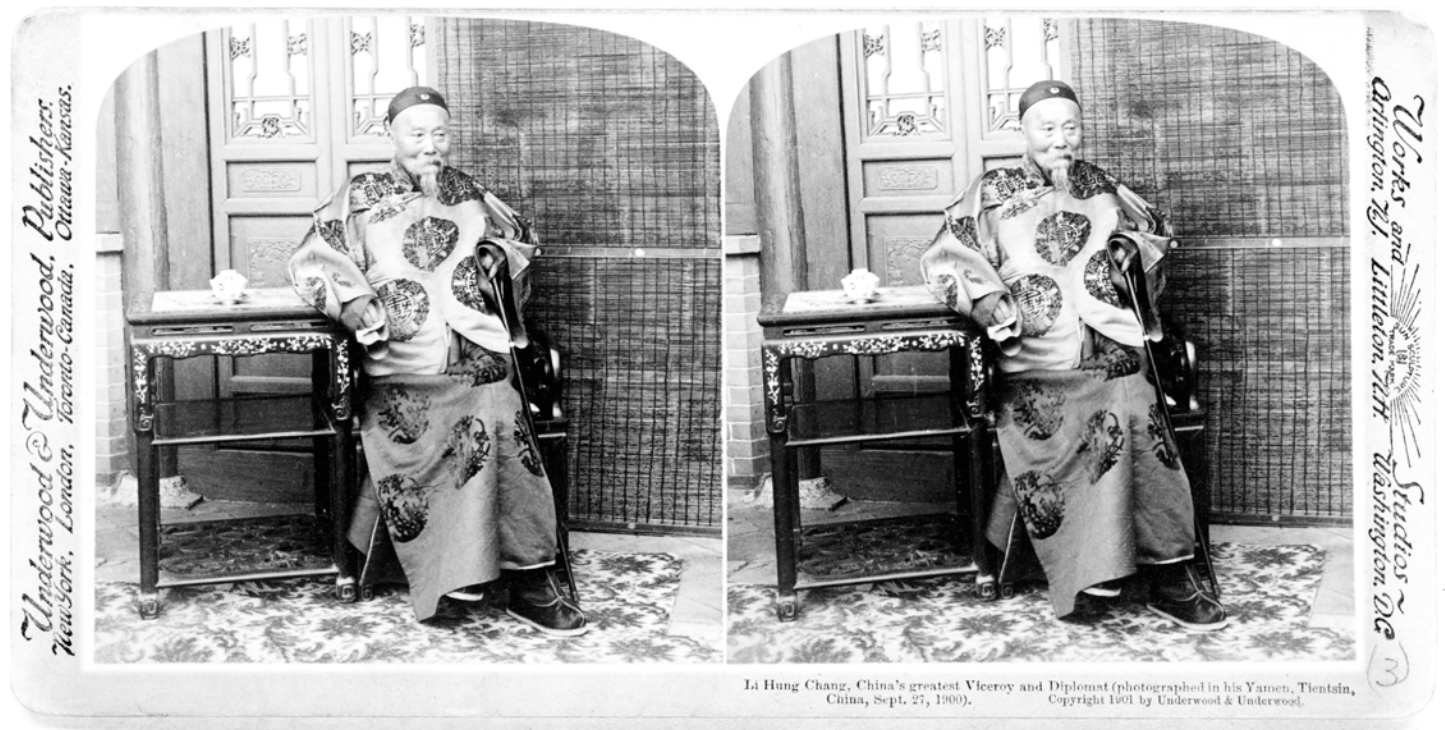


*“Forgeant dans son cerveau mille projets sinistres,  
 Li-Hung-Chang souriait, aimable, à nos ministres,  
 Qui disaient, au dessert, heureux et constipés:  
 ‘Cher Li-Hung, tout en vous s’exprime en bruits de paix.’  
 Comme tout change, hélas? Bruits de paix de naguere  
 Vous etes devenus de tristes bruits de guerre!  
 Et voici qu’aujourd’hui en tourmente il se chang’  
 Le bon vent qui soufflait, venant de Li-Hung-Shang.”*

*Translation: “Forging in his brain one-thousand sinister projects,  
 Li Hongzhang smiled kindly at our ministers,  
 Who said, at dessert time, sated and constipated,  
 ‘Dear Li Hong, you have always spoken with the voice of peace.’  
 How things change, Alas! The voice of peace of times gone by  
 has become the sad voice of war!  
 Just see how his gentle breath, in torment, has changed.”*

Le Rire, August 18, 1900  
 Artist: Charles Léandre

[dh7067\_e1380\_fr\_Hogge]



*“Li Hung Chang, China’s Greatest Viceroy and Diplomat  
 (photographed in his Yamen, Tientsin, China, Sept. 27, 1900).”  
 Stereograph, 1901*

[libc\_1901\_3c10736u]

One other notable cosmopolitan Chinese official deeply impressed the foreign audiences. Wu Tingfang (1842-1922) served as minister to the U.S., Spain, and Peru, and ably defended the Qing government position. Born in the Straits Settlements, the British colony in Malaya, he studied in Hong Kong, learning fluent English. He studied law in London, becoming the first Chinese barrister to practice law when he returned to Hong Kong. As an unofficial member of the Legislative Council of Hong Kong, he promoted the rights of the Chinese population, but hostility from British colonialists forced him to leave the colony for Beijing. He joined Li Hongzhang’s service and



traveled widely, lecturing to Western audiences about the glories of Chinese civilization, the injustices inflicted on Chinese immigrants, and the need to support the reform party in the Qing court. At New York dinner parties, attended by the business and cultural elite, Wu became a popular after-dinner speaker.



*"One of the Season's Most Popular After-Dinner Speakers.  
Chinese minister Wu Ting-Fang addressing a  
gathering of New York merchants"*

Harper's Weekly, 1900

[harpers1900\_01\_030]

### **Penetrating the Forbidden City**

Under the terms of the treaty, foreign powers would have the right to special Legation Quarters in Beijing, the right to station troops in China, and occupation of parts of many other cities. They inflicted complete "disenchantment" on the once secluded and sacred Forbidden City, opening it to ambassadors, tourists, and photographers. From the first efforts of the British to open ports to trade in the early-19th century to the complete invasion and destruction of the capital city, the imperialists seemed to have succeeded in opening all of China to view, in a spectacle that guaranteed them complete visual domination.

The British had first penetrated the massive city walls of Beijing on August 18 in order to run a railway to the Temple of Heaven and deliberately defile a Chinese cemetery. Then the Americans blasted open the gates leading to the Hall of Supreme Harmony within the palace. The armies marched straight through doorways formerly restricted to the emperor himself, to reinforce open access to all forbidden areas.





A Correspondent writes:—"Whatever may be the jealousies felt in Diplomatic quarters and fostered by the Press of rival Powers, the officers of the International troops are on the best of terms, fraternising together most amicably."  
 EAST AND WEST: A GROUP OF OFFICERS AT THE GATE OF THE FORBIDDEN CITY, PEKING  
 DRAWN BY GORDON BROWNE, R.I.

*"East and West: A Group of Officers at the Gate of the Forbidden City, Peking. A correspondent writes:—'Whatever may be the jealousies felt in Diplomatic quarters and fostered by the Press of rival Powers, the officers of the International troops are on the best of terms, fraternising together most amicably.'"*

The Graphic, December 8, 1900

Artist: Gordon Browne, R.I.

[graphic\_1900\_065]





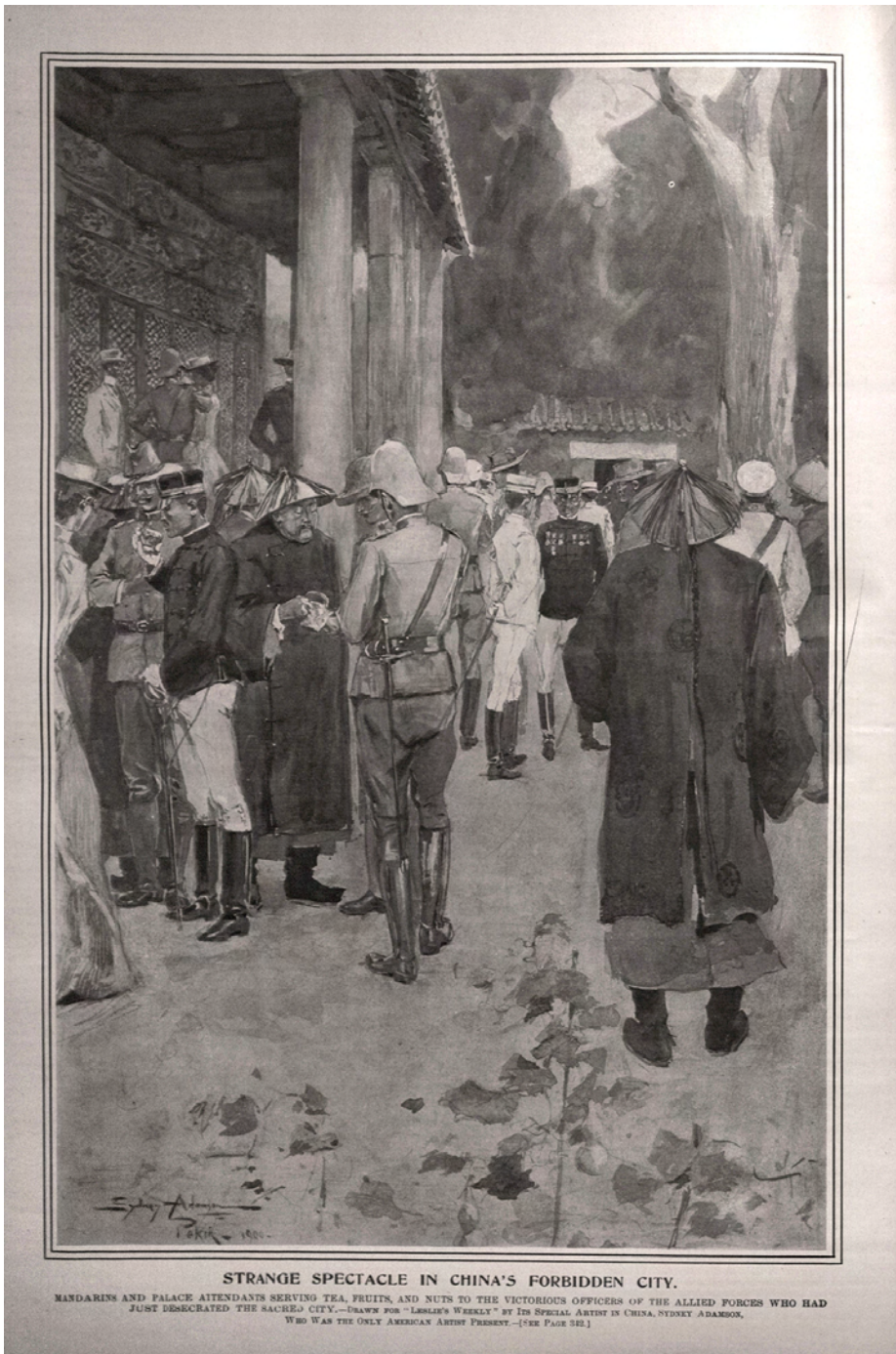


*"Honoring the Commander of the expedition, Count Waldersee, the 9th U.S. infantry regiment lines up before the Meridian Gate of the Forbidden City. In the foreground are American minister to China Edwin Hurd Conger, his wife Sarah Pike Conger, and his family, who were rescued by the Boxer expedition."*

*Stereograph (detail), ca. 1901*

*Source: Wikimedia*

[us\_1901\_9thUSRegtSacredGat]



**STRANGE SPECTACLE IN CHINA'S FORBIDDEN CITY.**

MANDARINS AND PALACE ATTENDANTS SERVING TEA, FRUITS, AND NUTS TO THE VICTORIOUS OFFICERS OF THE ALLIED FORCES WHO HAD JUST DEBECRATED THE SACRED CITY.—DRAWN FOR "LESLIE'S WEEKLY" BY ITS SPECIAL ARTIST IN CHINA, SYDNEY ADAMSON, WHO WAS THE ONLY AMERICAN ARTIST PRESENT.—(SEE PAGE 312.)



*"Strange Spectacle in China's Forbidden City.*

*Mandarins and palace attendants serving tea, fruits, and nuts to the victorious officers of the Allied forces who had just desecrated the sacred city.— Drawn for 'Leslie's Weekly' by Its Special Artist in China, Sydney Adamson, Who Was the Only American Artist Present."*

Leslie's Weekly, 1900

[leslies\_1900\_v91\_4\_011]

On August 28, 1900, the foreign armies staged a triumphal march into the heart of the Imperial city. Photographs recorded the victory, and a 21-gun salute emphasized this final phase of the punishment of the Qing court. The goal of the imperial powers was to desecrate the central space of the Qing rulers and to humiliate its pretensions to occupy the cosmic center. The Qing government protested the invasion, but had to give in when the foreign armies threatened to destroy the Forbidden City. The foreigners, however, promised not to occupy the Forbidden City permanently and to allow the Qing court to return.



*"A Memorable March Through the Gates of the Forbidden City at Peking. The Allied forces, by this act, emphasized the utter humiliation and defeat of the Chinese Boxers. This was the first time that a hostile army had ever entered the inclosure."*

Leslie's Weekly, 1900

Artist: Gordon H. Grant

[leslies\_1900\_v91\_3\_014]





The Russians, at the Head of the Allied Forces, entering the Palace Grounds.

one had ever penetrated those sacred walls, it is somewhat reasonable if one felt somewhat proud to be the first of one's race to set foot inside this Forbidden Palace. It was a memorable event in the history of China, and never did I realize so much its moral weight as just when General Lieberich and I stepped together into the Forbidden City. The British army fired the first salute of one-and-twenty guns to announce the memorable event. The spell was broken. The deed was done. What Colonel had kept secret for five hundred years foreign devils demonstrated in two seconds.

"Entrez dans le Palais de l'Empereur" (Enter the Emperor's Palace), said to the general, the Chinese official, who spoke the most perfect French, and having shown us the way with his extended arm and a white flag, he issued his commands about us. They marched quickly, evidently in a hurry to get us through in all speed, and by their side, as can be seen in the photograph here reproduced, played a pretty fencer dog, who seemed to enjoy the experience as much as any of his human fellow-creatures. Behind us we had General Lieberich's staff, including the brave Norman Munnah and Yashchewsky, who had rendered such excellent service as scouts, guides, and interpreters. Then came the third Chehman, who kept with the diplomatic body—an extraordinary-looking lot to look at, dressed up in the quaintest of costumes—most of them hardly adapted to so grand an occasion. Why, indeed, they only have to look at one of the map-oles to see what they were like. In front stood prominent the hunching hump figure of the Chinese Magistrate, in a simple gray suit of broad cloth and a black Panama slouch hat, which he wore at a dangerous angle. He walked jauntily and with gigantic strides, moving his arms about as if preparing for a boxing match. To his right the Russian minister seemed quite repelled by contrast. He was clad in dark velvet, and bore himself with dignity. Next to him the representative of the French Republic, in a garb which combined the conservatism of tropical climates with a week-day Mr. Coper, the American minister, stood behind, portly, dressed in white cotton and military gaiters, while a host of secretaries, students, and interpreters in various heavy gowns made part of the dispersion.

The march through the palace being a military affair, it seemed as if the ministers were not to be permitted to enter. The remarkably striking band could be seen among this crowd. The great buildings and the Emperor's audience-halls that fringe the central part of the palace-grounds, through-balls, or other buildings, but we considered them to the right, through various courts of more or less magnitude, along buildings of great age and of repair, through pretty rock gardens, quiet to a degree, until we came to a continuation line of figures for preparation. The Chinese professed that it was five centuries old, and we all exclaimed Ah! and Oh! to express our admiration. Its branches have to be supported by heavy beams, so heavy are they. Beyond that, through delightfully artistic grounds, a hill with various grottoes is to be found. In the grottoes and statues of Buddha, a number of silver and gold cups, vases, incense, candlesticks, and bowls. Each of the courts or passages we went through had massive gates that were opened by attendants as we approached. These attendants, that had been hidden in the palace, seemed flustered and worn. Although

apparently submissive, even servile, any observant person could notice on their stolid faces an expression of hatred and contempt for us as we went by. We reached the last and most northern court of the palace, and here came the grandest and most impressive part of the procession. The Russian general with his staff, the diplomatic body, Lady McMichael, and one or two other ladies stood under the northern gate leading out of the palace—the *Ya-koo-poo*. The Russian band, an excellent one, took a position in the courtyard, while a strong force of Cossacks and Russian infantry stood under the gate and round the wall of the court. Presently the *dehfil* before the part of the Russian national anthem in marched the Russian marine, infantry, and a contingent from each of their regiments in Peking. They marched like men across the court among the "horra's" and wild excitement of all present. Some marched out of the palace, but a number of them were ordered by the general to remain inside the court and line the sides. The object of this, a most exquisite and charming thought on the part of the Russian general, was to give the soldiers were ordered to cheer themselves hoarse as the contingent of each nation went by. Next in the Russian band marched through the Japanese, those wonderful and absolutely perfect little soldiers and officers that have astounded the world with their bravery and strategical skill. In their white and black and black and yellow caps, perfectly equipped with all the requirements of a campaign, they marched slowly and solemnly—a delightful sight of precision and discipline. Behind them, their commander-in-chief, General Fukuhara, and staff marched proudly at their head, taking a place next to the Russian general as they marched. The soldiers of the Russian band, excellent as it was, looks down when it came to play a Japanese air! The lack of what might have turned out as our reading performance was, however, not thus compensated by the enthusiastic and prolonged cheering of the Russians, that was much appreciated by the Japanese, and which lasted until the last of them was out of sight.

And now for the British. Here they come. One cannot help being struck by the better clothes they wear than any other nation—everything made of the best material instead of the shoddy. They looked so smart and quick and open as if they had come out of a bandbox—the officers especially. They had a dash, free and easy, but, mind you, extremely manly and businesslike, way of marching, along, keeping good step, and with a graceful unaffected swing that one cannot help liking and admiring. You could see as they came along that they were men who belonged to a great nation. They knew it, and were proud of it.

As General Gause and his staff appeared in the courtyard, the Russian band played "God Save the Queen," and the most frantic hurrahs and waving of hats and caps took place on the terraces and within the palace walls. Hardly ever have I witnessed a more of such wild and hearty enthusiasm. It was indeed pleasant to think that so warm a feeling of affection and respect existed between the two greatest empires in the world.

In front came the Sikhs with their bagpipes, which, little as I knew about bagpipes, they seemed to play as well as any Scotchman. They created a fever, and joy all such a regiment. The pipes continued in the court-yard, playing as delightfully as Scotch in some point, until the First Bengal Lancers, the Seventh

Rajpote, the Patana, and at last the Wei-hai-wei regiment all passed through, all received with thundering cheers, moderated slightly towards the Chinese regiment, for it seemed to go against the grain of people that Chinese should have been sent to fight against Chinese. One felt rather sorry at their present position for as a regiment they are a wonderful body of men. The Americans were included in with the "Star-spangled Banner," blown through the brass instruments by powerful Russian lungs. And did not the boys look smart as they came through the gate? Officers and men were all in khaki, except General Chaffee, who wore his blue uniform. They, too, like the British, were most enthusiastically cheered, and they deserved it, for indeed they had done excellent work in the campaign. On this particular occasion, when one would contrast and compare them with other nationalities, one was particularly struck by the individual intelligent appearance of each man and by the national face lines of the line nation. The boys appeared with very other than their flag as they were raised for them. tall, heavy, manly, and all so perfectly able in height, build, and shape that they seemed made in the same mould. The contrast between them and the German contingent was great. It was so great that when they came in with their extraordinary parade march—a measured way of locomotion as was ever invented—there was a general semi-suppressed laughter, caused at once by "harrals." One had to admire the way they were equipped and drilled, their training being absolutely perfect. If a soldier that is a machine is to be taken as a model soldier.

If one had a mental shock at the contrast of the American and German warriors, we had none so greater still when the French marched in. The poor fellows seemed, so done up that they could hardly walk. Their clothes were in a dreadful state. They hardly showed the French army at its best, but here could they? These men had been for several years in the malarial climate of Saigon, and from there despatched to Peking, where they had just arrived. It is to be regretted that France was not better represented for all knew she could do better than that.

A curious incident noticed by few happened. The Russian band had been playing tall horns the "Marseillaise" the republican march of France, but a forbidden air in the monarchic neighboring country of Italy. As the French were madly represented, the Italian came immediately behind them, just as the "Marseillaise" that was in full swing was being played. The Russian general discovered at once the fault, and tried in vain to signal the bandmaster to stop. They were going on in their baritone when the general's side-de-mony was despatched across the line to the musicians. Just in time. In a hurry worthy fashion the republican march ceased abruptly, and the "San Eusebio" of Italy was struck, much to the reassurance and relief of the Italians, who seemed prepared to march under an air foreign and sacrilegious to their race.

They looked very manly and most, well drilled, and they carried themselves splendidly. They were much admired and cheered. So was the small and last contingent—the Austrian marine—which marched through the Forbidden City and Imperial palace of Peking.



The Americans coming out at the Northern Gate.



The Sikh Pipers playing for the Bengal Lancers coming out of the Palace.

THE PARADE THROUGH PEKING'S IMPERIAL PALACE.

"The Parade Through Peking's Imperial Palace"

Harper's Weekly, 1900

[harpers1900\_12\_002]





The Italian Sailors.



The Russian Infantry.



The British Indian Troops.

FOREIGN TROOPS PASSING OUT OF THE FORBIDDEN CITY.



The Allies before entering the Palace.



The Emperor's Reception-Hall.



The Chen-ou-Men Gate.



The Officials who observed the Way.



The first Troops to enter.



The First Court-Yard.



The Russian General and Staff.



The Japanese Generals.

INSIDE THE FORBIDDEN CITY.

Headline, left: "Foreign Troops Passing Out of the Forbidden City."

Headline, right: "Inside the Forbidden City."

Harper's Weekly, 1900

[harpers1900\_12\_003]

Loot

Looting of the treasures of the palace followed soon after. All the foreign armies were gripped by "loot fever," according to contemporary descriptions. Foreigners had already looted China's Summer Palace after the Second Opium War of 1860, but this second round was more extensive and unrestrained. Soldiers had looted everything they could along the march from Tianjin to Beijing, and now they extended their sweep to include shopkeepers in Beijing. Commanders intervened to make the looting more systematic by establishing prize committees to hand out the spoil in proportion to rank and race. Public auctions redistributed many of the goods to willing buyers, Chinese and Western. Missionaries, too, moved through villages confiscating bullion for the benefit of Christian converts. The ultimate destination of this treasure is unclear, but much of it ended up in British regimental halls and the major museums of the Western countries and Japan.



"The Boxer Uprising II" chap. 3, p. 10





MAJOR QUINTON SITTING ON THE EMPEROR'S CHAIR AND CAPT. MARTIN

*"Major Quinton Sitting on the Emperor's Chair and Capt. Martin"*  
 Photograph from China and the Allies (1901)  
 by Henry Savage Landor

[1901\_ChAllies\_2267]



WHEN THE INTERNATIONAL TROOPS ENTERED PEKING, THE CITY WAS LOOTED BY THE MEN, BUT THE BRITISH SOLDIERS WERE NOT ALLOWED TO LOOT INDIVIDUALLY. ALL INSTALLED HOUSES WERE RESPECTED, AND SO TOO WAS THE PROPERTY OF ALL CHINESE KNOWN TO BE FRIENDLY. THE LOOT WAS PUT UP TO AUCTION AND THE PROCEEDS WERE GIVEN TO THE PRIZE FUND FOR SOLDIERS. THE AUCTION SALES ARE ALWAYS CROWDED, PEOPLE OF ALL NATIONALITIES BEING PRESENT. BRITISH OFFICERS ARE AMONG THE PRINCIPAL BUYERS. THOUGH PRICES ARE FAIRLY HIGH, GREAT LARGES ARE MADE SOMETIMES.

THE ALLIED TROOPS IN PEKING: AN AUCTION SALE OF LOOT

DECEMBER 15, 1900

THE GRAPHIC

885

*"The Allied Troops in Peking:  
 an Auction Sale of Loot*

*When the International troops entered Peking, the city was looted by the men, but the British soldiers*





we were not allowed to loot indiscriminately. All inhabited houses were respected, and so too was the property of all Chinese known to be friendly. The loot was put up to auction and the proceeds were given to the prize fund for soldiers. The auction sales are always crowded, people of all nationalities being present. British officers are among the principal buyers. Though prices are fairly high, grand bargains are made sometimes."



The Graphic, December 15, 1900  
(detail, right)

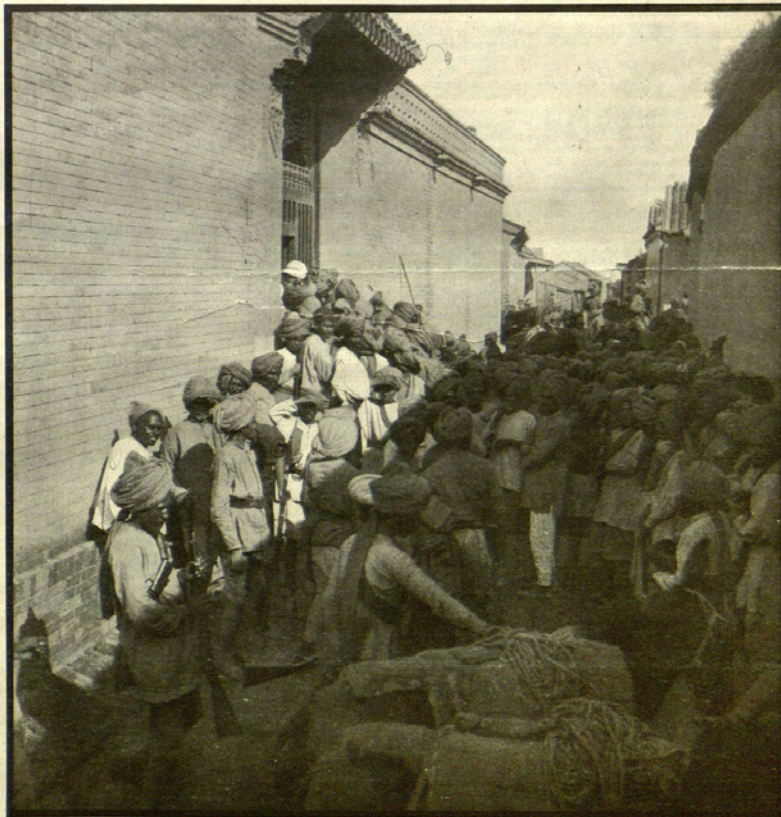
[graphic\_1900\_072b]

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**THE DIVISION OF LOOT AT TU-LIU, SEPTEMBER 11, 1900.**

The Building on the Left is the Pawn-Shop. In the Inner Court, under the Superintendence of General Dorward, Loot was divided among the British Officers. The Hindoo Soldiers and Servants are waiting outside to carry away the Booty of their Masters.

"The Division of Loot at Tu-Liu, September 11, 1900.

The Building on the Left is the Pawn-Shop. In the Inner Court, under the Superintendence of General Dorward, Loot was divided among the British Officers.



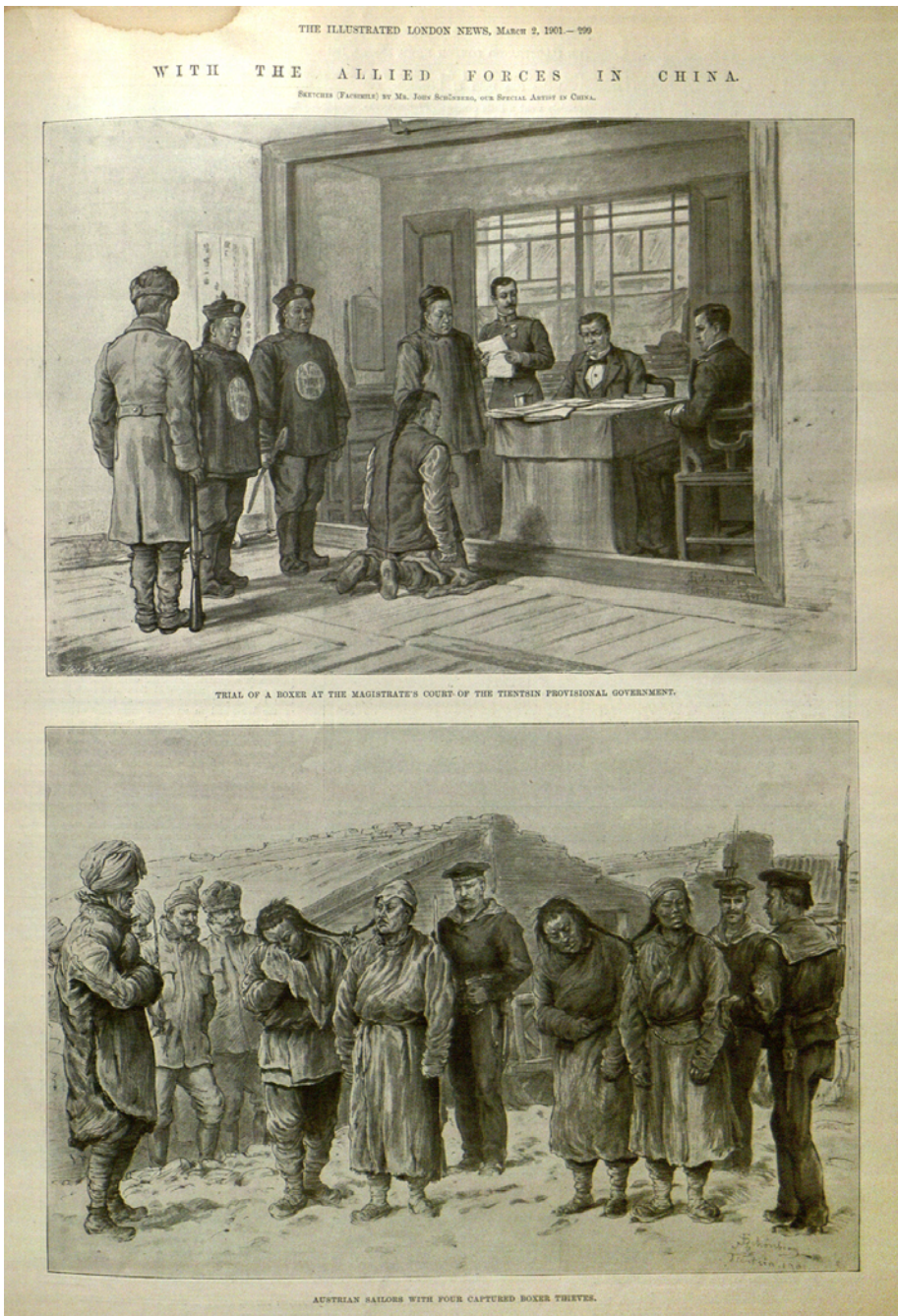
*The Hindoo Soldiers and Servants are waiting outside to carry away the Booty of their Masters."*

Harper's Weekly, November 10, 1900

[harpers1900\_09-12\_023]

### Occupation: Trials, Executions and Punitive Expeditions

The expeditionary force itself committed much random slaughter of innocent Chinese civilians, making no distinction between Boxers and ordinary peasants. Torture and immediate execution by firing squads continued months after the occupation of Beijing. Punitive expeditions all through Zhili province continued into the next year. The soldiers razed temples, ransacked tombs, and destroyed thousands of homes. In Baoding city, where 15 Americans and British missionary adults and children had been killed, the armies insisted on the beheading of the Qing officials in command of the local garrison, and they destroyed the city wall and temple. The executions created a public spectacle, intended to inflict retribution on the Chinese state and people for the killings of Westerners by the Boxers. The Western imperialist code of justice supported a violent civilizing mission designed to force the Chinese to abandon their savage ways and recognize the virtue of their conquerors.





*"With the Allied Forces in China. Sketches (Facsimile) by Mr. John Schoenberg, our Special Artist in China."*

*Caption (image, top): "Trial of a Boxer at the Magistrate's Court of the Tientsin Provisional Government."*

*Caption (image, bottom): "Austrian Sailors with Four Captured Boxer Thieves."*  
The Illustrated London News, March 2, 1901

[iln\_1901\_v1\_012]



*"The Allies in China: A French Court-Martial in Peking.*

*On the arrival of the allied troops in Peking, the city was divided into sections to be policed by the different European nationalities. Prisoners suspected of complicity with the Boxer movement were brought in and tried by court-martial."*

The Graphic, March 1, 1901

[graphic\_1901v1\_023]

The following two graphics show the shift from the use of firing squads by Allied troops to the use of Chinese executioners under Allied supervision. The Allied powers, fearing that their own soldiers would become brutalized by enacting executions, decided to delegate this role to Chinese swordsmen, as they believed, falsely, that beheading was a common form of punishment in China.





DRAWN BY F. DE BARRON

A Correspondent writes:—"The Provisional Government of Tientsin sentenced four Chinamen to death, the penalty being executed the first week in September. Two were arrested by French guards in the part of the city allotted to them to patrol, and the other two were arrested by Japanese soldiers. The two former were guilty of looting from other Chinese with violence. The two latter were Boxer captains. The latter were beheaded by the Japanese, the other two shot by the French soldiers. Mr. Emmons, resident of Tientsin, and Mr. Denby, son of Colonel Charles B. Denby, are the judges for the Provisional Government."

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY J. HASTIE MILLER

THE CRISIS IN CHINA: THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN TIENTSIN

*"The Crisis in China: The Administration of Justice in Tientsin*

*A Correspondent writes:— "The Provisional Government of Tientsin sentenced four Chinamen to death, the penalty being executed the first week in September. Two were arrested by French guards in the part of the city allotted to them to patrol, and the other two were arrested by Japanese soldiers. The two former were guilty of looting from other Chinese with violence. The two latter were Boxer captains.*

*The latter were beheaded by the Japanese, the other two shot by the French soldiers. Mr. Emmons, resident of Tientsin, and Mr. Denby, son of Colonel Charles B. Denby, are the judges for the Provisional Government"*

The Graphic, 1900

[graphic\_1900\_058]





THE ALLIES IN CHINA: THE EXECUTION OF THREE ANTI-FOREIGN OFFICIALS IN PAOTING-FU

*“The Crisis in China: The Execution of Three Anti-Foreign Officials in Paoting-Fu*

*The International Commission, which was given full powers of life and death as regards the rebels at Paoting-fu, sentenced three principal offenders to death. These were Fentai, who did nothing to protect the Europeans and Christians, or to prevent the massacre of missionaries; the Tartar Governor who encouraged and organised the Boxer movement; and the Colonel of Cavalry, Wang Chen Quan, who allowed the missionary Bagnall, his wife, and little girl to be massacred when they sought protection in his camp.”*

The Graphic, January 5, 1901

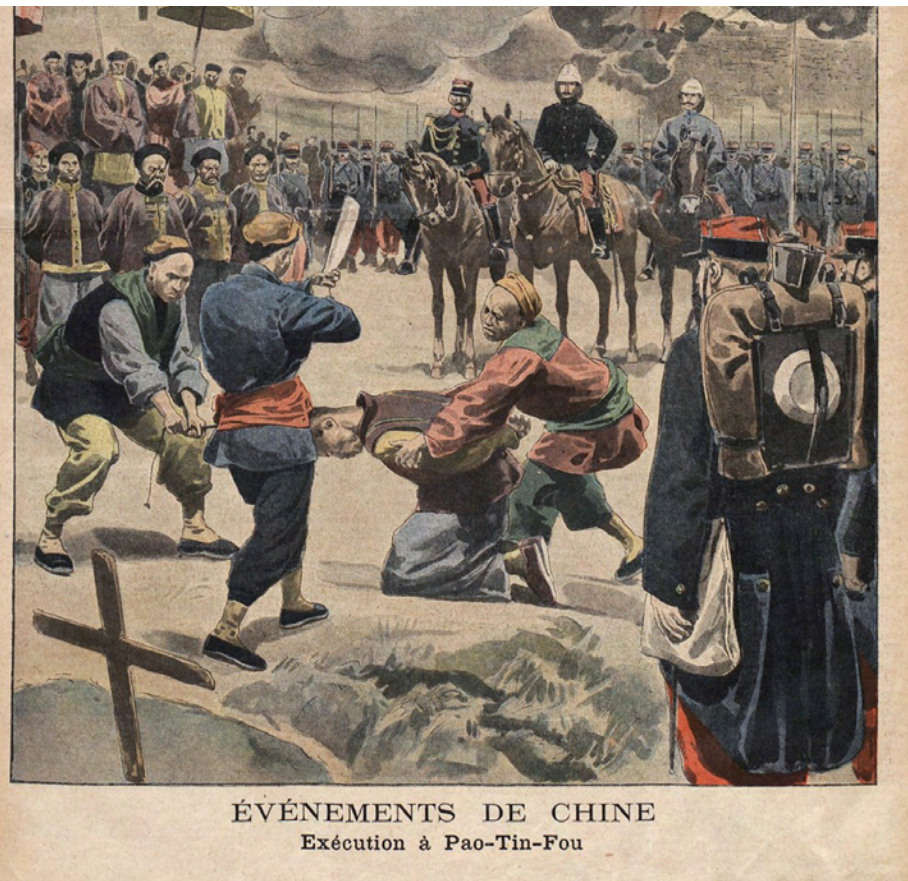
Artist: F. De Haenen, “from a sketch by a British officer”

[graphic\_1901v1\_004]



“The Boxer Uprising II”  
chap. 3, p. 16





ÉVÉNEMENTS DE CHINE  
Exécution à Pao-Tin-Fou

*“Événements de Chine.*

*Exécution à Pao-Tin-Fou”*

Le Petit Journal Supplément Illustré No. 531, January 20, 1901

Source: *Widener Library, Harvard University*

[lpji\_1901\_01\_20th\_2]

### **Occupation Troops**

Most descriptions of the activities of Western troops in Beijing, however, did not stress executions, but treated the experience as a time of exotic travel and entertainment. They repeated earlier descriptions of China as a bustling, crowded commercial society; but now Westerners dominated the city, free of restrictions from the imperial officials. Troops could ride and riot around the city at will.





FROM A SKETCH BY OUR SPECIAL ARTIST, FRED WHITING.

Our Special Artist writes:—The road leading out of the south entrance to the Tartar City is always one of the most crowded in Peking. Street merchants, donkey boys, camel trains, rickshaws, and a continuous stream of Peking carts, following one another like omnibuses in the Strand, jostle each other all day. A favourite amusement of the soldiers and sailors of the Allied troops is to have donkey rides. The troops in their varied uniforms, Western and Oriental, add greatly to the picturesqueness of the scene, but also rather aggravate the congested state of the traffic.

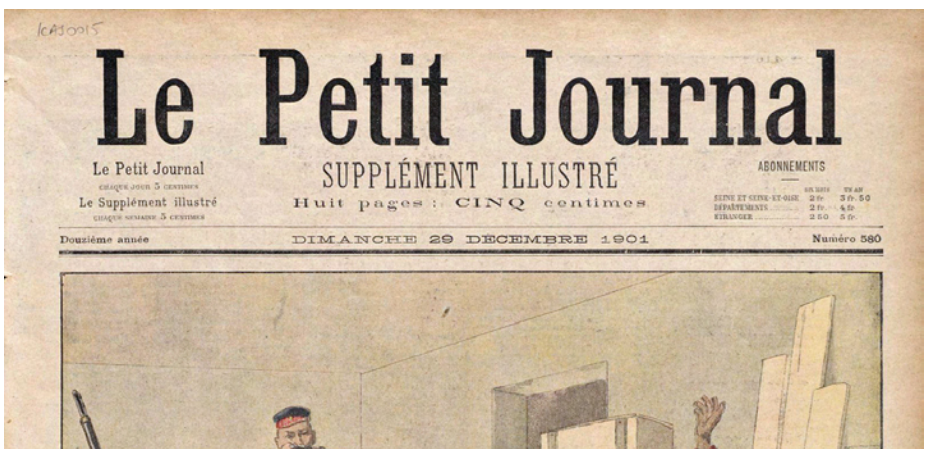
WITH THE ALLIES IN CHINA: SOLDIERS AND SAILORS AMUSING THEMSELVES IN A CROWDED THOROUGHFARE IN PEKING

*“With the Allies in China: Soldiers and Sailors Amusing Themselves in a Crowded Thoroughfare in Peking*

*Our Special Artist writes:—The road leading out of the south entrance to the Tartar City is always one of the most crowded in Peking. Street merchants, donkey-boys, camel trains, rickshaws, and a continuous stream of Peking carts, following one another like omnibuses in the Strand, jostle each other all day. A favourite amusement of the soldiers and sailors of the Allied troops is to have donkey rides. The troops in their varied uniforms, Western and Oriental, add greatly to the picturesqueness of the scene, but also rather aggravate the congested state of the traffic.”*

The Graphic, April 27, 1901

[graphic\_1901v1\_030]



"The Boxer Uprising II"  
chap. 3, p. 18





A TIEN-TSIN  
Rixe entre Allemands et auxiliaires anglais

*"A Tien-tsin.*

*Rixe entre Allemands et Auxiliaires Anglais"*

*Translation: "In Tianjin. Brawl between German and English Auxiliary"*

*Le Petit Journal Supplément Illustré No. 580, December 29, 1901*

[lpj\_1901\_12\_29\_widener\_bra]

### **Signing of Protocol & Reparations**

The Final Protocol of September 7, 1901 delivered the demands of the Western powers to the Qing government. They demanded the execution of Qing officials who supported the Boxers, apology missions to the foreign powers, and a new form of foreign relations in which foreigners stood at an equal level to the court. The protocol required payment of an indemnity of 450 million taels of silver over a period of 39 years to the eight invading nations. By 1927, most of the payments had been revoked or channeled back into education and other programs in China.





*Photo composite of the signing of the Boxer Protocol, September 7, 1901*

[graphic\_1901v1\_004]

The following image shows the poor Chinese farmer weighted down with heavy indemnities, while the "rising tide of extinction" threatens his life. Some Westerners who supported the expedition criticized the high price of the indemnities, and they feared for the survival of the Qing dynasty under this burden. They did not know that the Qing would collapse in only ten years under the assault of domestic nationalism.



# Judge

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## CHINA—"IS THIS CHRISTIANITY?"

"China—'Is this Christianity?'"  
Judge, May 4, 1901

"The Boxer Uprising II"  
chap. 3, p. 21

WPAID:ID:4050916



### The Beginning of the End: The Last Decade of the Qing Dynasty

After submitting to the humiliation of the Boxer treaties, and formally apologizing to Kaiser Wilhelm for the murder of Baron von Ketteler, the Qing court was allowed to return to Beijing. The Western powers, fearing the mutual conflict between imperialists that could break out at any time, had an interest in keeping the Qing dynasty alive. But a rapid series of events, including the death of many of the major world actors, undermined the stability both of the Qing dynasty and the global world order. Less than a decade after the Boxer intervention, four of the world leaders involved in the events of 1900 passed away. Queen Victoria, Li Hongzhang, President McKinley (assassinated in September 1901), and the Empress Dowager Cixi had directed this global clash from their positions at the top of their governments, often facing little opposition. When they were gone, more turbulent popular forces arose challenging the legitimacy of the negotiated settlements and setting the stage for more violent popular uprisings.

Prince Chun, the 18-year-old brother of the Qing emperor, was appointed special ambassador by the Qing court to Germany to offer the government's regrets for the murder of Baron von Ketteler in 1900. He met Kaiser Wilhelm and toured Europe afterwards, becoming the first member of the imperial clan to travel abroad. The empress dowager was suspicious of him because of his ties to foreign powers, but his son, Puyi, born in 1906, inherited the throne as the last emperor of the Qing in 1908.



*“The Chinese Expiatory Mission to Germany: The Kaiser Receiving Prince Tchun in the New Palace at Potsdam, September 4.”*

*Caption (left to right): “Count Wedel. Ying-Chang (New Chinese Minister to Berlin. Prince Tchun. General von Moltke. General von Ende.”*

*The Illustrated London News, September 14, 1901*



### Death of Queen Victoria (January 22, 1901)

The death of Queen Victoria, in January 1901, marked the end of the reign of Britain's longest reigning monarch. The Queen had made few public appearances since the death of her husband in 1861, but the celebration of her Golden Jubilee, in the 50th year of her reign, and the Diamond Jubilee, in 1897, supported British confidence in the unending supremacy of the empire and its monarchical tradition. At her death, British forces were still at war in China and South Africa, and faced rivalries from many other imperial powers.

Britain soon had to diverge from its foreign policy of "splendid isolation" from continental politics and sought alliances with Japan in 1902, and France and Russia shortly after. The end of the Victorian era seemed to mark a retreat from arrogance and puritanical restraint, and new uncertainty about the future.

### Death of Li Hongzhang (November 7, 1901)

Li Hongzhang's death in the same year also marked a time of transition in China from forward-looking reform to anxious defensiveness. Li had been one of the most dynamic provincial officials since the 1860s, when he had organized an army to fight the Taiping rebellion, and he had always collaborated fruitfully with foreigners. When he rose to become Governor-General of Zhili, the province that included Beijing, he worked to dampen anti-foreign sentiment, and he became the most powerful person directing Qing foreign policy.

He had negotiated major treaties with the British, the French, and the Japanese, and he vigorously promoted the strengthening of China's military forces as well as education of Chinese abroad. Foreigners praised him as their most reliable counterpart, but he constantly faced opposition both within the court and from nationalists arguing that he had sold out China's interests for personal gain. His death initiated a period of rising nationalist mobilization which soon turned against the Qing court itself, leading to the downfall of the Qing dynasty in 1911.

### Return of the Empress Dowager (January 1902)

The empress dowager and her court returned to Beijing in 1902. The remaining years of her reign, until she died in 1908, showed a new openness to foreign eyes. She held an unprecedented number of audiences with foreign ministers: nearly 200 of them from 1902 to 1911.

She expanded her contacts to include not only the male envoys, but their wives and even their children. She had many photographs taken of herself with her court ladies and with visiting Western women, to demonstrate that she and her court had become a "modern" monarchy, just like that of Queen Victoria, her British counterpart. Yet many visitors still regarded the Qing as the archetypical example of "Oriental Despotism," now completely accessible for visitors and tourists alike.



Learn more in the VC unit  
"The Garden of Perfect Brightness III"  
by Lilian M. Li





TRIUMPHAL RETURN OF THE EMPEROR AND EMPRESS DOWAGER TO PEKING.  
SPECTACULAR SCENE AT THE CHIEN-MEN GATE WHEN THEY ENTERED THE TEMPLES TO OFFER THANKS—THE WALL  
CROWDED WITH FOREIGNERS.—drawn for Leslie's Weekly by Sydney Adamson.

*"Triumphal Return of the Emperor and Empress Dowager to Peking. Spectacular scene at the Chien-Men Gate when they entered the temples to offer thanks—the wall crowded with foreigners"*

Leslie's Weekly, January 23, 1902

[1902\_23Jan\_LesliesWeekly\_Re]

### **End of the Boer & Filipino Wars (1900–1902)**

The Boer War in South Africa (1899–1902) featured prominently in illustrated magazines alongside stories of the Boxer expedition. Both the Boers, descendants of Dutch settler farmers called Boers by the British, and the Chinese peasantry appeared as savages resisting benevolent British imperial rule. In its final stages, the Boer war petered out into a sporadic guerrilla war by the Afrikaner farmers against increasingly well-organized British forces. Officially, the U.S. war in the Philippines ended in 1902, but guerrilla resistance continued in some regions for another decade. In both places, the imperial powers enacted new repressive policies of counterrevolutionary warfare. The British created a linked system of blockhouses to protect their supply lines, garrisoned by large numbers of troops. At the same time, they stretched barbed wire across the countryside to block Boer movements of humans and cattle. They enacted a scorched earth policy to deprive all the inhabitants of the guerrilla region of means of survival. They created internment camps, or "concentration camps," to cut off access of Afrikaner fighters to the civilian population. All these tactics mirrored those used by the United States in its war against the Filipino resistance. Popular media celebrating British and American victories often depicted the Boers as savage peasants comparable to the Boxers and Filipinos. The three major resistance movements still remained linked in the popular imagination.

### **Conclusion**

The Boxer intervention marked a decisive turning point in the politics of imperialism and in the relations between colonial and semi-colonial countries and the dominant powers of the West and Japan. The image below shows that the eight nations had achieved temporary unity in their alliance against China, but soon after their victory over the Qing, they fell into rivalry with each other.





*"The Real Trouble Will Come with the 'Wake'"*

*Puck, August 15, 1900*

*Artist: Joseph Ferdinand Keppler*

[puck\_1900\_740\_yale]

The growing tensions between Britain, France, Germany, and Russia over influence in the Balkans, along with the decline of the Ottoman empire and further conflict in Africa, generated the series of competitive alliances which would soon break out in World War I. Soon the Western powers would turn the military technologies tested in the colonial periphery against each other, and each nations' popular media would portray Western enemies with the same racial imagery of savagery that they had applied to non-Western peoples. Japan continued to rise in strength in the first decade of the 20th century, defeating Russia in 1905 in a shocking victory that demonstrated its right to premier imperial status. China, despite a last ditch reform effort by the Manchu regime, fell into further weakness, and the Qing empire finally collapsed after the outbreak of a military revolt in October 1911. This first decade of the 20th century initiated processes of war, racial mobilization, media popularization, and economic advance that continue to shape our times.

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# The Boxer Uprising — II

War and Aftermath (1900-1901)

Essay by Peter C. Perdue & Ellen Sebring

War & Siege

The View from China

Occupation &  
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<https://archive.org/details/chinaallies01landuoft>

View the *nianhua* pictures in the National Archives Catalog.

[Click here.](#)

Visual Cultures in East Asia

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### Notes

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2. "The Progress of the World," *The American Monthly Review of Reviews*, vol. 22. Albert Shaw, editor (New York: The Review of Reviews Co., 1900). Read the full text in the HathiTrust Digital Library.

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.hn46b1;view=1up;seq=161>

3. Tan, p.73

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