

# China in post-WWII Global History

## 1. The context

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Europe in a Global World (Global history)

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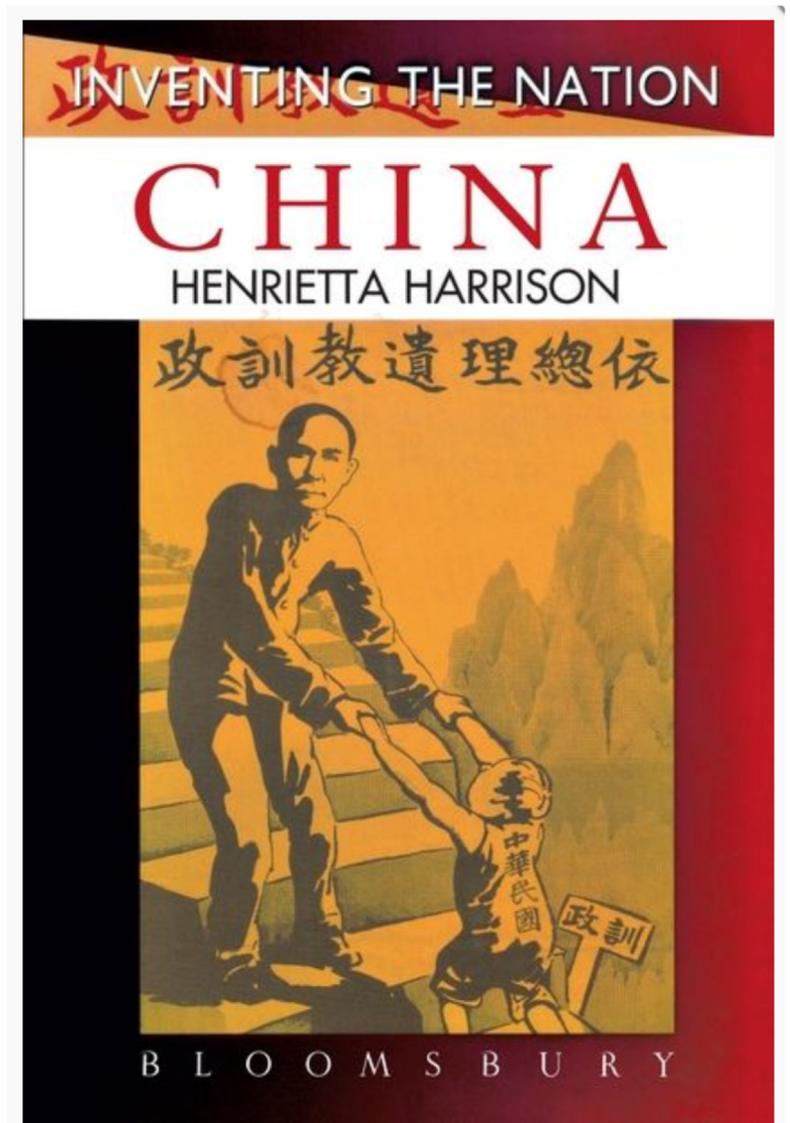
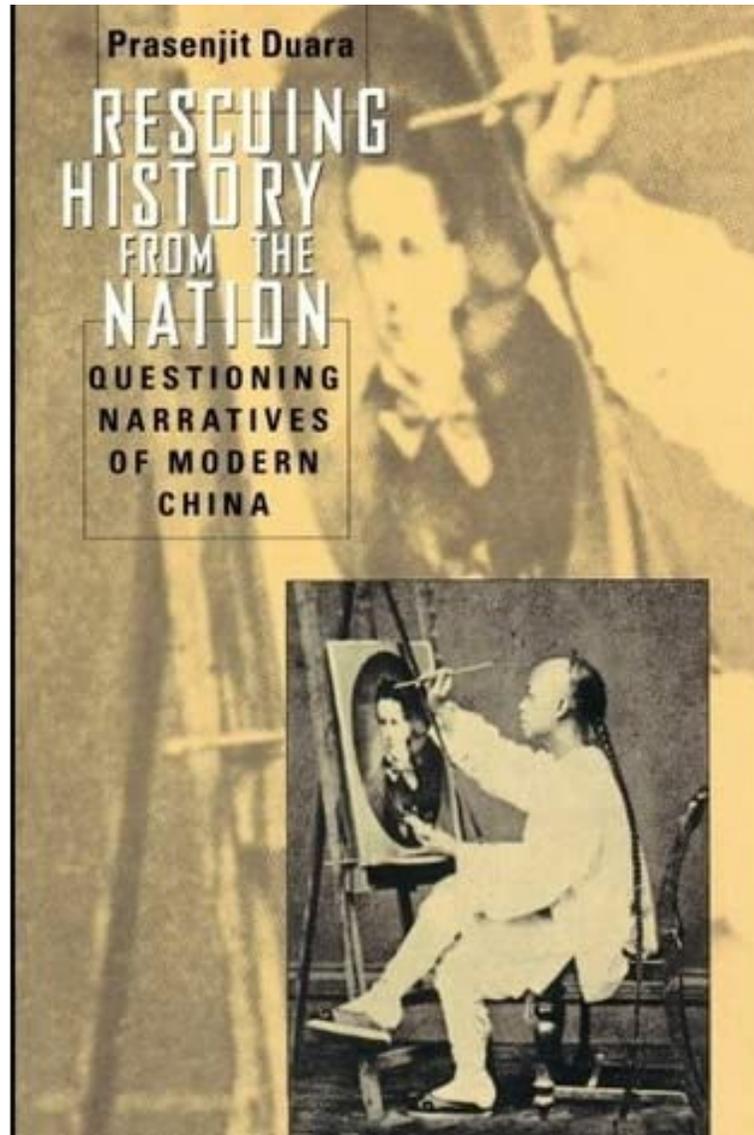


# Introduction

Main themes in China's modern history

## Elements of 'nation' in pre-modern China:

- Language
- Culture
- Bureaucracy



# From Empire to Nation

- China = geographic + (ethnic) + political + historical unity which dates back to 5000 years ago
- Traditional China > empire ruled by a cultural elite (mostly ethnic Han Chinese)
- Economy > mostly agrarian
- 1800s dramatic changes > econ. & pol. stagnation + Clash with West
- **Transformation from Ritual system (emperor = celestial) → international relations**

# China's Clash with the West

- Opium Wars (1839 – 1860) → Unequal treaties
- Semi-colonial settlements (W Europe, US, Japan, Russia)
- Novelties from the West introduced by force into a set of pre-existent institutions.
- Fail to produce a harmonious synthesis of new (Western) + old (China).
  
- Hybrid
- Collapse of Qing Dynasty

**The story is not just about imperialism and destruction, it is also about something new being born, something which is a hybrid.**

(Odd Arne Westad)

# Part I

China opening to the world (1912 – 1949)



# Pre-1949 Chronology

- 1911 ~~Chinese Empire (Qing Dynasty)~~ → Republican Revolution
- 1912 Foundation of The Republic of China (ROC)
- 1919 (Treaty of Versailles) / China → May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement
- 1923-1927 GMD+CCP alliance (backed by Comintern)
- 1928-1949 GMD = China's main political reference
- 1928-1937 Nanjing Decade (GMD rule)
- 1937-1945 Japanese Occupation (GMD+CCP anti-Jap alliance)
- 1945-1949 Civil War (GMD vs CCP)
- 1949 Foundation of The People's Republic of China (PRC)
- 1949 – ROC (Taiwan)

# May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement Consequences



- **Core Themes in intellectual arena**
  - Progress and Nationalism, Revolution
  - Advent of ideologies – Social Democracy, Social Darwinism, Marxism, Anarchism
  - Anti-Tradition – clean break from traditional schools of thought
- **Rise of Mass politics**
  - Genuine populist impulse – legitimisation of mass politics as a tool for social change
- **Introduction of Marxism-Leninism to a wider audience**  
(eventually leading to foundation Chinese Communist Party in 1922)

# Soviet role in China's national project

- Soviet assistance to Chinese revolution
- Build Marxist-Leninist Party

(financial aid, military advisers, arms, model of party-army)

The Soviet bring CCP and GMD into First United Front

Mao Zedong and Chiang Kai-shek unite their forces  
to fight for China's National Revolution (1923 - 1927)



## The age of openness

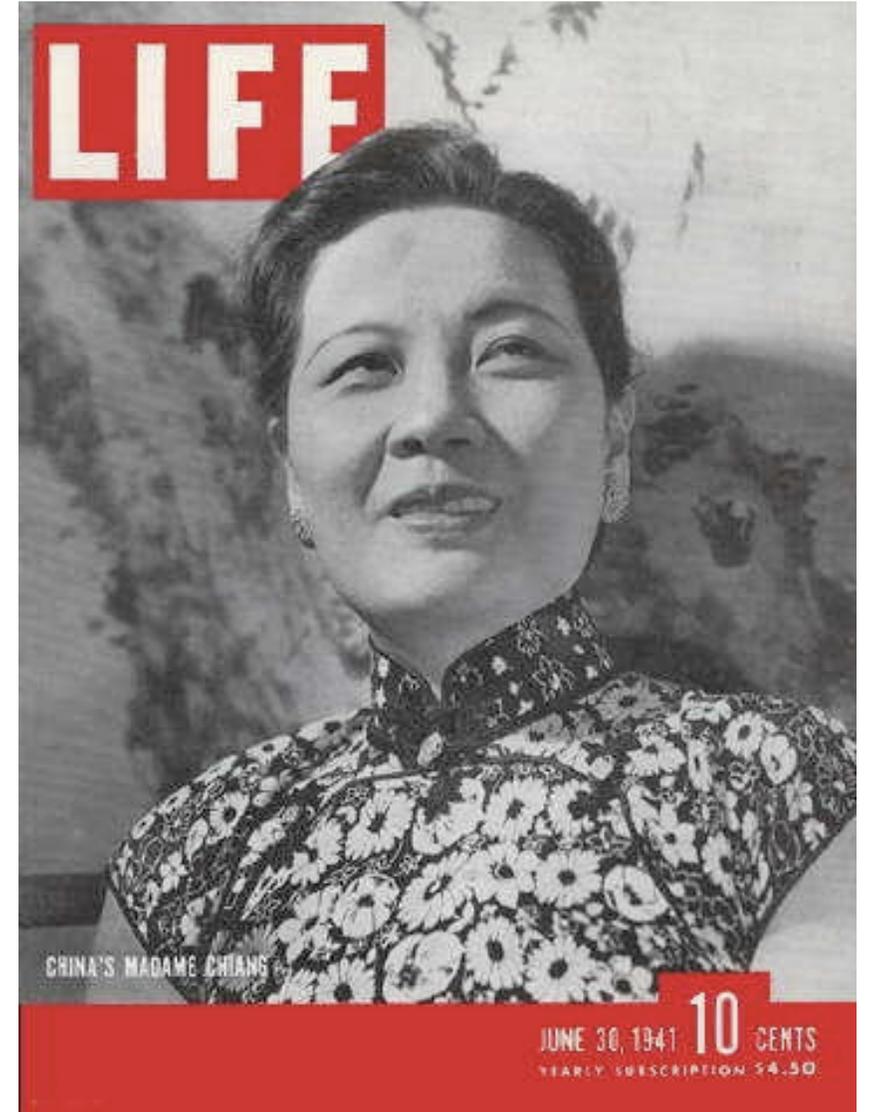
OPENNESS TO THE WORLD =  
= MAIN FEATURE OF 1912-1937

- **Foreign relations permeate every part of Chinese society**

(Kirby 1997)

- **Open governance**
- **Open borders**
- **Open minds**
- **Open markets**

(Dikötter, *The age of openness*)



Song Meiling = Madame Chiang Kai-Shek

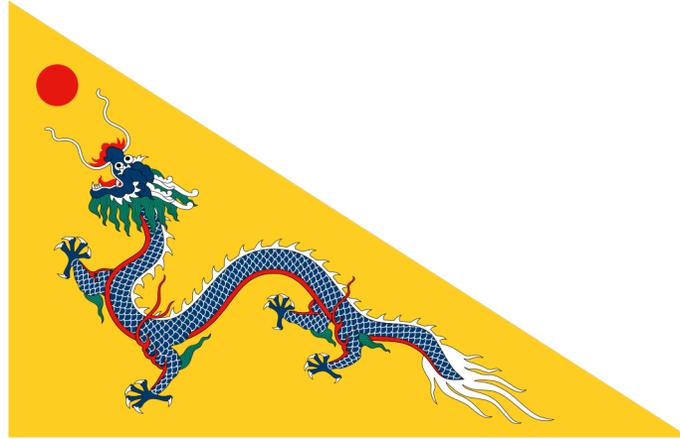
China's first taste  
of global  
governance:  
*The League of  
Nations*

- **League of Nations (1920-1946) → precursor of United Nations**
- from colonial to international framework
- “civilizing mission” (Western industrialized nations responsible for assisting colonial countries in their modernization efforts)
  
- **1931** Program of Technical Cooperation to ROC
- technological + financial aid supporting GMD nation-building effort. Experts from Britain, Italy and Germany on economic development, special emphasis on small rural cooperatives in agriculture.
- Unsuccessful:
- No knowledge of destination country + Disregard local circumstances
- Attempt to introduce different models in non-homogeneous way

China's first taste  
of global  
governance:  
*The International  
Chamber of  
Commerce (ICC)*

- Private international organization founded in Paris in 1920
- World federation of business organizations, firms and businesspeople
- ICC granted highest consultative status with UN Ec and Soc Council
- China membership (ROC 1931 – 1949); (PRC from 1994)
- Both Chinese govts used ICC to exert control over businesspeople & to propose political issues
- 1929 ROC tried to eliminate extraterritoriality - unsuccessful
- From 1994 PRC representative is CCPIT / CCOIC – China Council for the Promotion of International Trade / China Chamber of International Commerce - semi-official body in practice managed by government

# China - Japan Fascination & Rivalry



- Both confronted by Western powers
- Japan implemented successful modernization  
→ introduction of constitutionalism, technology, industrial change
- Japan also used Western political ideology
- Chinese intellectuals fascinated with Japanese achievements →  
Japan as example of modernity

# Japanese expansion in Asia

## JAPANESE EXPANSION IN THE LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Sino-Jap War (1937-1945)

- **CCP and GMD join forces to fight the Japanese invasion**
- 13 December 1937 – the rape of Nanjing
- CKS: “the Japanese are a disease of the skin, The Communists are a disease of the heart”
- End WWII Jap are defeated but who is going to rule China?

Beginning of civil war 1945-1949