

# What Was the Boxer Rebellion?

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Chinese Boxers fight U.S. Marines in Beijing, 1900. Image from the public domain

The Boxer Rebellion was a fight between China and other countries. The rebellion happened more than 100 years ago. The Boxers were ordinary villagers who also trained in martial arts. They are known in Chinese as the "Society of Righteous and Harmonious Fists." The Boxers were very proud of Chinese culture and didn't want other countries to change it.



At the time, Europeans and Americans were pressing their beliefs on the Chinese people. The Chinese saw themselves as part of the Middle Kingdom. The idea of the Middle Kingdom is that China is the center of the civilized world. In the eyes of many Chinese, rude foreigners were pushing Chinese people around. It seemed like the Chinese government was not able to stop them.

### **Drug trade and foreign influence**

The government had lost badly in the two wars against Britain, called the Opium Wars. After it lost, China was forced to let British merchants bring a drug called opium into the country. It was also forced to do more trade with other countries and give up certain lands. European countries, the U.S., Russia and even Japan were all taking control of Chinese trade.

Europeans and Americans also wanted people in China to become Christians. But Chinese people already had their own religions. The Boxers thought that China was losing its culture.

### **Group based on martial arts**

The people of China decided to fight back. They formed a group that was based on martial arts and magic. The British called them boxers because they didn't have a better word for martial artists.



At first, the Boxers were also mad at the Qing dynasty. The Qing were the rulers of China. A dynasty is a family that rules over a country and passes down power from parent to child. The Boxers did not see the Qing as true Chinese and wanted to push them out of China. This is because most people in China belong to a group called Han. The Qing were not Han, but belonged to a group called Manchu.

### **Qing dynasty helps the Boxers**

The Empress Dowager Cixi was the head of the Qing dynasty. At first, she and other Qing officials didn't know how to react to the Boxers. The Qing were caught between the western foreigners and the angry Han Chinese. The Qing dynasty decided that the foreigners were the bigger problem, so they sent soldiers to help the Boxers.

## Foreign army defeats Boxers and the Qing



The Boxers killed more than 230 foreigners. They also killed thousands of Chinese who had become Christians. Foreign countries put together an army to fight the Boxers and the Qing. These countries were Japan, Britain, Germany, Russia, France, Austria, the United States and Italy. This mixed army was able to beat the rebels and Empress Cixi was forced to run away.

The Boxer Rebellion marked the beginning of the end for the Qing. The dynasty lost its power 10 or 11 years later. It was the last dynasty to rule China.

**Quiz**

- 1 Read the second paragraph of the article.

*At the time, Europeans and Americans were pressing their beliefs on the Chinese people. The Chinese saw themselves as part of the Middle Kingdom. The idea of the Middle Kingdom is that China is the center of the civilized world. In the eyes of many Chinese, rude foreigners were pushing Chinese people around. It seemed like the Chinese government was not able to stop them.*

Which answer choice is the MOST accurate explanation of this paragraph?

- (A) The Chinese did not understand how so many foreigners had found their kingdom.
- (B) The Chinese believed that foreign powers were ruining their civilized kingdom.
- (C) Europeans and Americans were trying to help the Chinese government.
- (D) Europeans and Americans had never seen Chinese civilization before.

- 2 Read the paragraph from the section "Drug trade and foreign influence."

*The government had lost badly in the two wars against Britain, called the Opium Wars. After it lost, China was forced to let British merchants bring a drug called opium into the country. It was also forced to do more trade with other countries and give up certain lands. European countries, the U.S., Russia and even Japan were all taking control of Chinese trade.*

Which detail from the paragraph BEST supports the conclusion that outside trade was allowing harmful things to enter China?

- (A) The government had lost badly in the two wars against Britain, called the Opium Wars.
- (B) After it lost, China was forced to let British merchants bring a drug called opium into the country.
- (C) It was also forced to do more trade with other countries and give up certain lands.
- (D) European countries, the U.S., Russia and even Japan were all taking control of Chinese trade.

- 3 What was the relationship between the Han people and the Qing dynasty?
- (A) The Qing and the Han decided to stop the Boxer Rebellion and work with foreigners.
  - (B) The Qing and the Han joined together after the Boxer Rebellion to form a dynasty.
  - (C) The Qing belonged to a different group, so the Han and the Boxers wanted to push them out of China.
  - (D) The Qing decided to help the Boxers, so the Han also agreed to help the Boxers fight foreign powers.
- 4 What effect did religion have on the Boxer Rebellion?
- (A) Religion was part of the reason for the Boxer Rebellion because it was changing Chinese culture.
  - (B) Religion convinced many members of the Boxer Rebellion to stop fighting and make peace.
  - (C) Religion caused some of the groups who joined the Boxer Rebellion to side with Chinese Christians.
  - (D) Religion started the Boxer Rebellion because Boxers did not want foreigners learning their beliefs.