



# The Last Emperor: A Primer

Little Boy, Big Changes

# A Little Boy to Rule China



Aixinjueluo Puyi, Emperor of China 1908 – 1924: He became emperor of the Qing Dynasty when he was 2 years and 10 months old.



The Last Emperor sitting on the Imperial Throne.

## An Empress Dies and Leaves Puyi as Emperor



Empress Dowager Cixi of the Qing – Ruled over China from 1861 – 1908 when she died. She gave the throne to Puyi.



# What Did China Look Like Under Qing Rule?



Emperor Puyi was the last of the line of emperors of the Qing Dynasty (1644 – 1912 officially), also known as the Manchu Dynasty.

# Where Did the Qing “Manchu” Come From?



Manchuria: Northeast China – The Qing or “Manchu” Dynasty took control of China becoming the last dynasty to rule the Middle Kingdom. The Manchu were a ruling minority to the rest of the predominantly Han Chinese.

# Where Did the Emperor Live?



**The Forbidden City, Beijing** – The Emperor lived here mostly in the winter. ([Click here](#) for a PowerPoint on this place)



**Summer Palace, Beijing** – The Emperor's second home was here. (Over 700 acres and 3,000 structures)



**Summer Palace, Beijing** - Empress Cixi spent a fortune on lavish items, such as this boat rather than funding the royal navy. Japan's navy easily defeated the Chinese boats in the Sino-Japanese War.

[Battle of the Yellow Sea](#) (Visualizing Cultures MIT – Japanese perspective. Modern Japan v. Backwards China)

# The Qing Dynasty Falls and a New Leader Rises



Flag of the  
Republic of  
China



In 1912, Dr. Sun Yat-sen became president of China once the Qing Dynasty was overthrown during the Xinhai Revolution. Puyi became the “non-ruling emperor” at this time inside the walls of the Forbidden City.

# Emperor of the Forbidden City Only



Just a child, Puyi was unlikely unaware of all the politics going on outside the Forbidden City, in addition to the fact that he wasn't the Emperor of China anymore.

# Outside the Forbidden City – China in Chaos (Warlord Era)



Warlords fought over China until the 1940's. Chiang Kai-shek, leader of the Kuomintang (Republic of China – Taiwan today) rose out of this civil war.

A Divided China

## Chiang Kai-shek and Sun Yat-sen



Chiang Kai-shek, leader of the Kuomintang (ROC) forces.



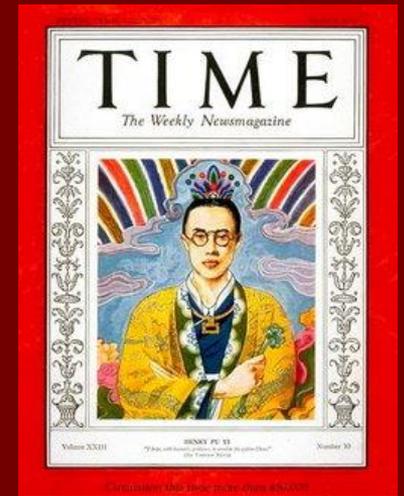
From 1927 to 1949, China endured a civil war between the Nationalists (Republic of China) and the Communists (People's Republic of China). During this period, World War II was fought and the Japanese took advantage of China's weakened state.



# The Puppet Emperor of China



Japanese Flag in WWII



Puyi, Emperor of Japanese controlled Manchukuo.



# Japan loses WWII and Manchukuo collapses with it.



The Japanese delegation on the USS Missouri formally surrendering to Allied forces.

## The Emperor of China No More



Puyi was captured by the Soviet Red Army and eventually handed over to the Chinese Communists. He was locked in a "Re-education camp" for 10 years before he was released as a Chinese communist citizen. Puyi became a gardener and lived a life of a normal Chinese citizen of that time.

# Forbidden No More



The Forbidden City is now a popular world tourist stop, no longer forbidden for the general public.