Week 03 : The Rise of the Modern Chinese State

The late Qing

- In 1895 China lost the Sino-Japanese War.
- Under the terms of the Treaty of Shimonoseki, China lost Taiwan and recognised Korea as an independent state.
- Japan became the pre-eminent military power in East Asia, and was no longer a vassal of China.

It annexed Korea after defeating Russia in 1905

Japan’s modernisation

- This was possible because the process of Japan’s modernisation had begun earlier (during the Meiji period of 1868-1912), and it was more comprehensive.
- While in China the process centred on keeping China intrinsically Chinese, Japan drew from the political, social and economic systems that were the foundations of Western strength.

During the Meiji period (1868-1912) Japan went from being an agricultural country with many feudal lords to having a centralised bureaucratic state, a constitution and elected parliament, burgeoning industry, a modern education system consisting of free public schools, and a modern military.

So this is how Japan was able to become so strong in such a short space of time—by dramatically transforming many aspects of its society. China was still grappling with what to keep, alter or discard.

Sun Yat-sen

This impressed Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925), who spent time in Canton, Hong Kong and Hawaii, where he was introduced to the West. He became a doctor, but turned towards liberating China from Manchu rule—a nationalist project.

- Sun travelled raising money for a revolution.
- In 1897 he devised the Three Principles of the People: Nationalism, Livelihood and Democracy.
- And in 1905 he founded the Tongmenghui (United League)—a secret society aimed at overthrowing the Qing.
- In 1911, Chinese provinces began declaring independence from the Qing. In 1912 the Qing emperor abdicated.

The Manchus

- The Manchus are an ethnic group from north of China. They defeated the Ming (1368-1644) and established their own dynasty, the Qing (1644-1911).
- They retained many aspects of the Ming bureaucracy and expanded China’s territory.

The ROC

- The road from this point was not easy.