# **Ethnic Relations and Political Power in Late Qing and Early Republican China**

Ethnic relations in China have been complex and fluid throughout history. The late Qing and early Republican periods were no exception, as the country underwent significant political and social changes. These changes had a profound impact on the ways in which different ethnic groups interacted with each other and with the state.



Manchus and Han: Ethnic Relations and Political Power in Late Qing and Early Republican China, 1861-1928 (Studies on Ethnic Groups in China) by Edward J. M. Rhoads

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 4.7 out of 5
Language : English
File size : 5632 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Print length



: 414 pages

### **The Late Qing Period**

The late Qing period (1644-1912) was a time of great political and social upheaval in China. The Qing dynasty, which had been founded by the Manchus, was facing increasing pressure from both internal and external forces. Internally, the country was plagued by rebellions and peasant uprisings. Externally, the Qing government was forced to deal with the encroachment of Western powers.

These challenges had a significant impact on ethnic relations in China. The Manchu government was increasingly unable to control the vast and diverse territory of the empire. This led to a rise in ethnic tensions and conflicts.

One of the most significant ethnic conflicts of the late Qing period was the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864). The rebellion was led by a charismatic Christian convert named Hong Xiuquan. Hong claimed to be the younger brother of Jesus Christ and promised to establish a new kingdom of peace and equality. The rebellion attracted a large following among the poor and disenfranchised, especially in southern China.

The Taiping Rebellion was eventually defeated by the Qing government with the help of Western powers. However, the rebellion had a lasting impact on ethnic relations in China. The rebellion had shown the Qing government to be weak and unable to protect its people. This led to a loss of confidence in the government and a rise in ethnic tensions.

#### The Early Republican Period

The Qing dynasty was overthrown in 1912 and replaced by a new republic. The republic was founded on the principles of democracy and equality. However, these principles were not always easy to put into practice. The new republic was plagued by political instability and warlordism.

The political instability of the early Republican period led to a resurgence of ethnic conflicts. Warlords often used ethnic tensions to their advantage, recruiting soldiers from different ethnic groups and playing them off against each other. This led to a number of bloody conflicts, including the Xinjiang War (1933-1934) and the Sichuan-Yunnan-Guizhou War (1945-1949).

The early Republican period also saw the rise of a new form of Chinese nationalism. This nationalism was based on the idea that all Chinese people, regardless of their ethnicity, were part of a single nation. This new nationalism helped to unite Chinese people against foreign aggression. However, it also led to a suppression of ethnic diversity and a rise in Han Chinese chauvinism.

Ethnic relations in China have been complex and fluid throughout history. The late Qing and early Republican periods were no exception, as the country underwent significant political and social changes. These changes had a profound impact on the ways in which different ethnic groups interacted with each other and with the state.

The political instability and warlordism of the early Republican period led to a resurgence of ethnic conflicts. However, the rise of a new form of Chinese nationalism also helped to unite Chinese people against foreign aggression. This new nationalism has played a significant role in shaping ethnic relations in China up to the present day.



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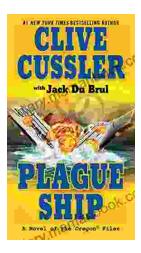
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