

In the late 18th century, Britain, one of the \_\_\_\_\_ powers of Europe, had just walked out of the American Revolutionary War with the expensive \_\_\_\_\_ of losing not only much of its national \_\_\_\_\_ but also its 13 American colonies. The empire therefore sought ways to find new \_\_\_\_\_ of revenue and new trade opportunities, and then it found one possible \_\_\_\_\_: China.

China, the “Middle Kingdom,” as it \_\_\_\_\_ itself, had been one of the dominant actors in the world for more than \_\_\_\_\_ millennia. As Emperor Qianlong wrote in a letter to King George \_\_\_\_\_ in 1793:

“Our Celestial Empire possesses all things in prolific \_\_\_\_\_ and lacks no product within its own \_\_\_\_\_.”

The wars waged between Britain and China in the \_\_\_\_\_ changed many things and left indelible scars on China. These wars, as we \_\_\_\_\_ know, are the Opium Wars.

The Opium Wars in the mid-19th century were two \_\_\_\_\_ conflicts waged between the Qing Dynasty, noted for its initial \_\_\_\_\_ and tumultuous final years, and Western countries, namely Britain.

In the 18th century, China enjoyed a \_\_\_\_\_ trade balance with Great Britain, exporting porcelain, silk, and tea in exchange for \_\_\_\_\_. This trade, on the contrary, was not balanced on the side of Britain, as millions of \_\_\_\_\_ of silver were flowing out of the British Empire and into China, forcing Britain to seek ways to counter the \_\_\_\_\_ imbalance.

Then they found a solution: opium.

In the late 18th century, the \_\_\_\_\_ of opium in British territories in Bengal was \_\_\_\_\_, and Britain started exporting opium from British-controlled \_\_\_\_\_ to China.