BHIE-141 : HISTORY OF CHINA *C.* 1840-1978
TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

Course code: BHIE-141
Assignment Code: BHIE-141/ASST/TMA/2026-27
Marks: 100

Note: There are three Sections in the Assignment. You have to answer all questions in the Sections.

Assignment - I

Answer the following in about 500 words each.

1.	Explain the First Opium war and Treaty of Nanking?	20
2.	Write about the bourgeoisie in the period of Yuan Shikai.	20

Assignment - II

Answer the following questions in about 250 words each.

3.	Explain the reforms set up by Qing dynasty.	10
4.	Explain the strategy adopted by Communist Party of China (CPU)?	10
5.	Discuss the significance of the Chinese Revolution.	10

Assignment - III

Answer the following questions in about 100 words each.

6.	Taping uprising	6
7.	Boxer uprising	6
8.	The Three principles of Sun Yatsen	6
9.	The Hundred days reforms	6
10.	Long March	6

1. Explain the First Opium war and Treaty of Nanking? 20

Answer

The First Opium War (1839–1842) marked a decisive turning point in modern Chinese history. It was fought between Qing China and Britain, but its causes extended beyond the immediate dispute over the opium trade. The conflict arose from unequal commercial relations, British demands for diplomatic and trading privileges, the Qing government's attempt to control a destructive narcotic trade, and the military imbalance between the two states. The Treaty of Nanking (Nanjing), signed in August 1842, ended the war and became the first of the major unequal treaties imposed on China.

Before the war, European merchants traded mainly through Canton (Guangzhou) under the Qing government's regulated trading system. Britain purchased large quantities of tea, silk and porcelain, while Chinese demand for British manufactured goods was limited. The resulting outflow of silver troubled British merchants. The British East India Company's cultivation and sale of opium from India helped reverse that balance. Although Chinese authorities had prohibited its import, smuggling grew rapidly during the early nineteenth century. Addiction, corruption and the movement of silver out of China created serious social and fiscal problems.

Lin Zexu and the immediate crisis. In 1839 the Daoguang emperor sent Commissioner Lin Zexu to Canton to enforce the prohibition. Lin demanded that foreign merchants surrender their opium stocks and promise to stop trading in the drug. Large quantities of confiscated opium were destroyed at Humen. British officials, particularly Superintendent Charles Elliot, treated the confrontation as a challenge to British commercial and diplomatic interests. The British government chose military intervention, invoking protection of merchants and the demand for more equal official relations; this language concealed the central importance of the opium trade and coercive access to Chinese markets.

Britain possessed an overwhelming naval advantage, including steam-powered vessels, modern guns and effective maritime logistics. Fighting began in 1839 and intensified in 1840 when a British expedition attacked positions on the Chinese coast. British forces moved between the Pearl River region, the coast of Zhejiang and the Yangtze valley. The capture of key ports and the advance towards Nanjing demonstrated Qing military weaknesses. Chinese coastal defences, command arrangements and equipment could not match a coordinated modern naval expedition. Qing officials also underestimated the scope of British military capabilities, while court policy alternated between resistance and attempts at negotiation.