expedition which her Majesty the Queen has been compelled to send out for the purpose of obtaining redress, and of enforcing the due observance of Treaty provisions, shall be paid to her Majesty’s representative in China by the authorities of the Guangdong province.

The necessary arrangements with respect to the time and mode of effecting these payments, shall be determined by her Majesty’s representative, in concert with the Chinese authorities of Guangdong.

When the above amounts shall have been discharged in full, the British forces will be withdrawn from the city of Guangzhou.

Done at Tianjin, this twenty-sixth day of June, in the year of our Lord one Thousand eight hundred and fifty-eight; corresponding with the Chinese date, the sixteenth day, fifth month, of the eighth year of Xianfeng.

(L.S.) [Earl of] Elgin and Kincardine.

Signatures and Seal of Chinese Plenipotentiaries

4.4 A NARRATIVE ON THE BURNING OF THE YUANMING YUAN (OCTOBER 18, 1860)

In 1860, Lord Elgin returned to China as the leader of a second expeditionary force to demand the ratification of the Treaty of Tianjin. After a successful attack on the Daguan, near Tianjin, the armies marched inland to Hexiugou, a small town about halfway between Tianjin and Beijing. Elgin then sent a small contingent lead by Thomas Wade, Harry Parkes and Henry Loch to negotiate with the Qing. At the same time the Qing court learned the British had detained a Tianjin official. Prince Yixin (the emperor’s brother), likely remembering the treatment of Commissioner Ye Mingchen by the British, ordered the British arrested—including Parkes and Loch. The prisoners were quickly divided into several groups of four or five men and whisked away to separate locations. After the looting of the Yuanming Yuan, on October 13th, Britain and France delivered an ultimatum that demanded the release of the prisoners. The next day Parkes and Loch were released. As the prisoners’ deplorable treatment became known (nineteen of the thirty-six prisoners died, largely from neglect, exposure, and starvation), outrage soon shaped Western actions. The Reverend M’Ghee, chaplain to the British forces, wrote the following description.

Questions
1. What objective does M’Ghee suggest the burning of the Yuanming Yuan will achieve?
2. What sentiments does M’Ghee express about the destruction of the Yuanming Yuan? Do you agree with his conclusions?

My duties did not permit me to be present on the first day when this work of destruction was begun; the troops were spread over the country[side] by one and two companies, and fired every building in four palatial “gardens,” as they are called, beginning with the Yuanming Yuan; next, and to the west, the Wanshou Yuan; then the Jinming Yuan; and last the Xiangshan, which mean respectively the “enclosed and beautiful garden,” “the birthday garden,” “the golden and brilliant garden,” and the “fragrant hills.”

On the second day I arrived at about eight o’clock in the morning, at the Yuanming Yuan … We marched through scenery of the most enchanting beauty, planted hills, lakes, temples, with villages interspersed, which were the abodes of the Imperial troops; many a matchlock was to be seen in their houses, but they thought only of conciliating us by “chun-chinimg,” “kow-towing,” and offerings of hot tea and cold water. I never experienced more mingled feelings than upon this occasion. As I rode along through scenes which

CHIN-CHIN—A type of “pigeon English” phrase used in Chinese ports as a greeting or salute. It is likely a corruption of the Chinese phrase qing-qing, a response akin to “salutation,” or “with regards.”
(if anything can compensate for the absence of those “looks that we love,” as Moore calls them) it was worthwhile coming all the way from home to see; I could not help giving to them all the admiration of my heart which their beauty demanded. A tribute so due that you must perforce pay it.

I turned the corner of a high wall round which the paved road led, and before me was a dense mass of smoke, and the fierce blaze of the raging fire towering above it, and far above the trees. A temple, which means not one building, but a whole cluster of separate edifices, circling round one great shrine, was in flames, and communicating destruction to the noble trees, in and around it, which had shed their grateful shade over it for many a generation: its gilded beams and porcelain roof of many colors, in which of course the Imperial yellow claimed the superiority—all, all, a prey to the devouring element. You could not but feel that although devoid of sympathy for its deity, there was a sacriilege in devoting to destruction structures which had been reared many, many hundred years ago; nor was it the buildings only, adorning as they did the scenery which claimed your sympathy, but every building was a repository of ancient and curious art, enamels made before the present dynasty of China, books to no end, engravings of all sorts of scenes, historical, illustrating the wars of the Chinese and Manchus, some the production of purely native talent, and others by Jesuit missionaries, and drawn in the Chinese style. These missionaries are generally learned in something else besides religion, and thus they beat ours [British] out of the field altogether. Embroidered hangings of enormous value, altar furniture plated with gold, things, which apart altogether from their value, were full of interest from their beauty and rarity, all devoted to destruction; some few were saved by officers, but as carriage was difficult, but few.

[...]

Soon the wreath becomes a volume, a great black mass, out burst a hundred flames, the smoke obscures the sun, and temple, palace, buildings and all hallowed by age, if age can hallow, and by beauty, if it can make sacred, are swept to destruction, with all their contents, monuments of imperial taste and luxury. A pang of sorrow seizes upon you, you cannot help it, no eye will ever again gaze upon those buildings which have been doubtless the admiration of ages, records of by-gone skill and taste, of which the world contains not the like. You have seen them once and forever, they are dead and gone, man cannot reproduce them. You turn away from the sight; but before you arises the vision of a sad, solemn, slow procession. Mark that most touching sight, the dashing charger led, not ridden; the saddle is empty, the book is in the stirrup, but it is empty also; the limb that filled it forms now a part of the skeleton that lies in the coffin on that gun-carriage. You saw that sight two days ago, you see a vision of it now; you turn back and gaze with satisfaction on the ruin from which you had hidden your face and say, “Yes, thank God, we can make them feel something of the measure of their guilt;” and if there were another building left to burn, you would carry the brand to it yourself.

[...]

Yes, a good work, I repeat it, though I write it with regret, with sorrow; stern and dire was the need that a blow should be struck which should be felt at the very heart’s core of the Government of China and it was done. It was a sacrifice of all that was most ancient and most beautiful, but it was offered to the manses of the true, the honest, and the valiant, and it was not too costly, oh no! one of such lives was worth it all. It is gone, but I do not know how to tear myself away from it. I love to linger over the recollection and picture it to myself, but I cannot make you see it. A man must be a poet, a painter, an historian, a virtuoso, a Chinese scholar, and I don’t know how many other things besides, to give you even an idea of it, and I am not an approach to any of them. But whenever I think of beauty and taste, of skill and antiquity, while I live, I shall see before my mind’s eye some scene from those grounds, those palaces, and ever regret the stern but just necessity which laid them in ashes.

4.5 A NARRATIVE ON THE LOOTING AND PRIZE MONEY AT THE YUANMING YUAN (OCTOBER 7, 1860)

The Allied forces of France and Britain marched to the Chinese capital in early October of 1860. However, neither army occupied Beijing. Instead they marched to the Yuanming Yuan, twelve miles north of the city. While French accounts accuse the British of starting the looting and British reports blame the French, there is absolutely no doubt that both armies were heavily involved in pillaging the imperial garden. What is often misunderstood or overlooked is how the two armies organized and carried out the collection and distribution
of plundered goods. The items seized by the British were collected, cataloged, and auctioned off. Each British soldier received a share of the total public sale proceeds. Within a year, British auction houses were offering “the emperor of China’s Great Seal of State” and other items clearly listed as having originated from the Yuanming Yuan. Garnet Wolseley, who served as a quartermaster-general in the British armed forces, offered the following account.

Questions
1. Why do you think the two European armies chose the imperial garden as their target of their military operation?
2. What attitudes does Wolseley express with regards to the looting?

[At the Yuanming Yuan palace gates] about twenty badly-armed eunuchs made some pretence at resistance but were quickly disposed of, and the doors burst open, disclosing the sacred precincts of his Majesty’s residence, to what a Chinaman would call the sacrilegious gaze of the barbarians. A mine of wealth and of everything curious in the empire lay as a prey before our French allies. Rooms filled with articles of vertu [fine art] both native and European, halls containing vases and jars of immense value, and houses stored with silks, satins, and embroidery, were open to them. Indiscriminate plunder and wanton destruction of all articles too heavy for removal commenced at once. Guards were placed about in various directions; but to no purpose. When looting is once commenced by an army it is no easy matter to stop it. At such times human nature breaks down the ordinary trammels which discipline imposes, and the consequences are most demoralizing to the very best constituted army. Soldiers are nothing more than grown-up schoolboys. The wild moments of enjoyment passed in the pillage of a place live long in a soldier’s memory. Officers and men seemed to have been seized with a temporary insanity; in body and soul they were absorbed in one pursuit, which was plunder, plunder. I stood by whilst one of the regiments was supposed to be parading; but although their fall in was sounded over and over again, I do not believe there was an average of ten men a company present. Plundering in this way bears its most evil fruit in an army; for if when it is once commenced an effort is made to stop it, the good men only obey; the bad soldiers continue to plunder, and become rich by their disobedience, whilst the good ones see the immediate effect of their steadfastness is to keep them poor.

[...] Our allies were so busy in the collection of their plunder that they did not move upon Beijing until the 9th October. Numbers of our officers had consequently an opportunity of visiting the palaces and securing valuables; but our men were carefully prevented from leaving camp. Those officers who were fortunate enough to have carts and time for amusement, brought into camp large collections of valuables. It was naturally most riling to our soldiers to see their allies rolling in wealth, and even their own officers all more or less provided with curiosities whilst they themselves got nothing. It would have been very easy for the Commander-in-Chief to have allowed our regiments to go out there one by one; but the state in which the French army was then in, and the recollection of what ours had been after the capture of Dehli were cogent reasons for avoiding such an arrangement. Subsequent to Sir Hope Grant’s visit to the palaces upon the 7th October, a room of treasure was discovered there, a small share of which was secured for our army by the active exertions of Major Anson, A.D.C., who had been appointed one of our prize agents. The treasure chiefly consisted of golden ingots, the portion falling to our lot amounting about eight or nine thousand pounds sterling. To have permitted our officers to retain what they had personally taken from the palaces, whilst the private soldier received nothing, would have been very hard upon the latter. The Commander-in-Chief therefore issued an order directing all officers to send in everything they had taken to the prize agents, who had been nominated to receive all such property, for the purpose of having it sold by public auction upon the spot and the proceeds distributed immediately amongst the army.

The sale took place in front of the large joss-house at headquarters, realizing 123,000 dollars, which enabled

Joss—A term used by Europeans to mean a religious icon or statue. Likely a Chinese corruption of the Portuguese Deos, “God,” the term was re-adopted by Europeans who thought it was a Chinese word. A “joss house” was any Chinese temple whether Buddhist, Confucian or Taoist.
the prize agents to issue seventeen dollars (nearly four pounds sterling) to every private belonging to our army. The officers were divided into three classes and received in the same proportion. The Commander-in-Chief whose share would have been considerable, renounced his claims; the Major-Generals, Sir John Michel, K.C.B. and Sir Robert Napier, K.C.B., following his example. One third went to the officers, two-thirds to the non-commissioned officers and men.

Prize money is a subject well understood but seldom received by our soldiers. [ . . . ] Any who have ever been present at the assault of a town will, I am sure, agree with me in thinking that no price is too high which we can pay for the prevention of those dreadful scenes of riot and consequent insubordination which have upon several occasions followed such an event. Discipline once relaxed as it must be when plunder is permitted, its entire fabric of regulations break down in one moment, which it takes many months of subsequent reorganization to reassert. If Sir Hope Grant had contented himself with promising that the question of prize money should be referred to the Home Government, after their recent Indian experience, our men would have been very dissatisfied, seeing every French soldier going about with his pockets filled with dollars and Sycee silver. Indeed, I fear that the temptation would have been too great for many of our men who knew that the Yunniming Yuan was only a few miles off. The plan which he adopted, although novel, was thoroughly successful, and all were pleased with its results.

MARGARY AFFAIR AND EFFECTS OF IMPERIALISM ON CHINA

In 1874 a young British translator, Augustus R. Margary, was dispatched from Beijing to the southwestern province of Yunnan to escort a group of British officials from Burma back to Beijing. He did not live to see Beijing again, for he was killed only days after meeting with the Burmese delegation near the Yunnan-Burma border.

The highest Qing official in the region, Yunnan-Guizhou Governor-General Cen Yuying, a year earlier had extinguished the final remnants of the Panthay Rebellion (3.6). Promoted, rewarded with several honorary titles, and given considerable latitude in bringing Yunnan back under imperial control, Cen Yuying was highly regarded by the emperor for imposing order and normalcy on a distant and unsettled province. Yet as the documents in this section suggest, an official who had helped quell a grave threat to Qing imperial control was not necessarily equipped to handle crises involving Westerners.

By the 1870s, Westerners were increasingly insistent on making inroads into internal China with its larger markets. As is described in the following documents, Chinese officials faced a double-edged danger from the increased presence of Westerners. Any warning against entering China or traveling to specific cities would be grounds for Westerners to accuse the Chinese of failing to meet their agreements in existing treaties. And any crime that was perpetrated against Westerners would be portrayed as evidence that the government harbored anti-foreign sentiments. As the following three documents (4.6, 4.8, 4.9) underscore, the Western powers began to adopt a more aggressive style of diplomacy and to bombard the Zongli Yamen with queries and

SYCEE — A term employed by Europeans in China to refer to silver ingots.

CEN YUYING (1829–1889) — A native of Guangxi, he rose rapidly through official ranks in Yunnan province during the Panthay Rebellion by pursuing an anti-Hui policy, later becoming Governor-General of Yunnan and Guizhou for much of the 1870s and 1880s.

ZONGLI YAMEN — Established in 1861 following the Convention of Beijing, its primary goal was to handle China's foreign relations in a more systematic manner. Often simply called the "Foreign Office," the office's full title Zongli Genggu Shiwa Yamen translates as "Office for the Management of the Affairs of All Foreign Countries."