The First Global Age: Europe and Asia
1415–1796

Chapter Preview
1  The Search for Spices
2  Diverse Traditions of Southeast Asia
3  European Footholds in Southeast Asia and India
4  Encounters in East Asia

Chapter Review and Assessment
Trade Between Europe, Africa, and Asia About 1700
Ocean trade routes permitted the development of cultural and economic ties between Europe, Africa, and Asia.

CHAPTER EVENTS

1400

1466 The Gutenberg Bible is printed.

1498
Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama reaches India after rounding Africa. His voyage sets the stage for the rise of a Portuguese trading empire.

1511
Portugal seizes Malacca.

1500
The kingdom of Kongo thrives.
SECTION 1
The Search for Spices

Reading Focus
- Why did Europeans cross the seas?
- How did Portugal’s eastward explorations lead to the development of a trading empire?
- How did Columbus’s voyages affect the search for a passage to the Indies?

Vocabulary
- cartographer
- astrolabe
- caravel
- scurvy
- circumnavigate

Taking Notes
Print out the table below. As you read the section, add information about the explorations of Portugal and Spain in the 1400s and 1500s.
A desire to share in the rich spice trade of the East spurred Europeans to explore the oceans.

Setting the Scene

Today, we take pepper for granted. To Europeans of past ages, though, this spice was as valuable as gold. Ancient Romans paid as much as $125 for 12 ounces of pepper. During the Middle Ages, the pepper in your local supermarket could have paid a year's rent. By the late 1400s, the desire to share in the rich spice trade of the East spurred Europeans to explore the oceans.

Europeans Explore the Seas

Europeans had traded with Asia long before the Renaissance. The Crusades introduced Europeans to many luxury goods from Asia. Later, when the Mongol empire united much of Asia in the 1200s and 1300s, Asian goods flowed to Europe along complex overland trade routes.

The Black Death and the breakup of the Mongol empire disrupted trade. By the 1400s, though, Europe was recovering from the plague. As its population grew, so did the demand for trade goods. The most valued items were spices, such as cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, and pepper. People used spices in many ways—to preserve food, add flavor to dried and salted meat, and make medicines and perfumes. The chief source of spices was the Moluccas, an island chain in present-day Indonesia, which Europeans then called the Spice Islands.

Motives

In the 1400s, Muslim and Italian merchants controlled most trade between Asia and Europe. Muslim traders brought prized goods to eastern Mediterranean ports. Traders from Venice and other Italian cities then carried the precious cargoes to European markets. Europeans, however, wanted to gain direct access to the riches of Asia. To do so, the Atlantic powers—first Portugal, then Spain—sought a route to Asia that bypassed the Mediterranean.

The desire for wealth was not the only motive that lured people to sea. Some voyagers were still fired by the centuries-old desire to crusade against the Muslims. The Renaissance spirit of inquiry further fired people's desire to learn more about the lands beyond Europe.

Improved Technology

Several improvements in technology helped Europeans conquer the vast oceans of the world. Cartographers, or mapmakers, created more accurate maps and sea charts. European sailors also learned to use the astrolabe, an instrument developed by the ancient Greeks and perfected by the Arabs, to determine their latitude at sea.

Along with more reliable navigational tools, Europeans designed larger and better ships. The Portuguese developed the caravel, which combined the square sails of European ships with Arab lateen, or triangular, sails. Caravels also adapted the sternpost rudder and numerous masts of Chinese ships. The new rigging made it easier to sail across or even into the wind. Finally, European ships added more weaponry, including sturdier cannons.

Portugal Sails Eastward

Portugal, a small nation on the western edge of Spain, led the way in exploration. By the 1400s, Portugal was strong enough to expand into
Muslim North Africa. In 1415, the Portuguese seized Ceuta (say oo tuh) on the North African coast. The victory sparked the imagination of Prince Henry, known to history as Henry the Navigator.

**Mapping the African Coast** Prince Henry embodied the crusading drive and the new spirit of exploration. He hoped to expand Christianity and find the source of African gold.

At Sagres, in southern Portugal, Henry gathered scientists, cartographers, and other experts. They redesigned ships, prepared maps, and trained captains and crews for long voyages. Henry then sent out ships that slowly worked their way south to explore the western coast of Africa.

Henry died in 1460, but the Portuguese continued their quest. In 1488, Bartholomeu Dias rounded the southern tip of Africa. Despite the turbulent seas, the tip became known as the Cape of Good Hope because it opened the way for a sea route to Asia.

**On to India** In 1497, Vasco da Gama led four ships around the Cape of Good Hope. After a 10-month voyage, da Gama finally reached the great spice port of Calicut on the west coast of India. The long voyage home took a heavy toll. The Portuguese lost half their ships. Many sailors died of hunger, thirst, and scurvy, a disease caused by a lack of vitamin C in their diets during months at sea. Still, the venture proved highly profitable to the survivors. In India, da Gama had acquired a cargo of spices that he sold at a profit of 3,000 percent.

Da Gama quickly outfitted a new fleet. In 1502, he forced a treaty of friendship on the ruler of Calicut. Da Gama then left Portuguese merchants there to buy spices when prices were low and to store them near the dock until the next fleet could return. Soon, the Portuguese seized key ports around the Indian Ocean to create a vast trading empire.

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**Theme: Impact of the Individual** How might Portugal's history have been different if Henry had been the oldest son?
ran low, and the crew became anxious. Finally, on October 12, a lookout yelled, “Land! Land!”

Columbus then spent several months cruising the islands of the Caribbean. Because he thought he had reached the Indies, he called the people of the region Indians. In 1493, he returned to Spain to a hero's welcome. In three later voyages, Columbus remained convinced he had reached the coast of East Asia. Before long, though, other Europeans realized that Columbus had found a route to continents previously unknown to them.

Line of Demarcation Spain and Portugal pressed rival claims to the lands Columbus explored. In 1493, Pope Alexander VI stepped in to keep the peace. He set a Line of Demarcation dividing the non-European world into two zones. Spain had trading and exploration rights in any lands west of the line. Portugal had the same rights east of the line.

In 1500, the Portuguese captain Pedro Alvarez Cabral was blown off course as he sailed around Africa. Landing in Brazil, which lay east of the Line of Demarcation, he claimed it for Portugal.

Naming the “New World” In 1507, a German cartographer read reports about the “New World” written by an Italian sailor, Amerigo Vespucci. The mapmaker labeled the region America. The islands Columbus had explored in the Caribbean became known as the West Indies.

*The Indies, or East Indies, was the European name for a group of islands in Southeast Asia. Today, they are a part of Indonesia*

**The Search Continues**

Europeans continued to seek new routes around or through the Americas. In 1513, the Spanish adventurer Vasco Núñez de Balboa, with the help of Native Americans, hacked a passage through the tropical forests of Panama. From a ridge on the west coast, he gazed at a huge body of water that he called the South Sea. On September 20, 1519, a minor Portuguese noble named Ferdinand Magellan set out from Spain with five ships. His crew included men from Europe, Africa, and Southeast Asia.

**Perils at Sea** As the ships sailed south and west, through storms and calms and tropical heat, Magellan had to put down more than one mutiny. At last, the fleet reached the coast of South America. Carefully, they explored each bay, hoping for one that would lead to the Pacific.

In November 1520, Magellan's ships entered a bay at the southern tip of South America. Amid brutal storms, rushing tides, and unpredictable winds, Magellan charted a passage that became known as the Strait of Magellan. The ships emerged from this lashing into Balboa's South Sea, which Magellan renamed the Pacific—peaceful—Ocean.

**Circumnavigating the Globe** Their mission accomplished, most of the crew wanted to return to Spain the way they had come. Magellan, however, insisted they push on across the Pacific to the East Indies. Three more weeks, he thought, would bring them to the Spice Islands.

Magellan soon found that the Pacific was much wider than he imagined. For nearly four months, the ship plowed across the uncharted ocean. Finally in March 1521, the fleet reached the Philippines. There, Magellan was killed when he got involved in a local conflict. In the end, only one ship and 18 sailors completed the voyage. On September 8, 1522, nearly three years after setting out, the survivors reached Seville. The Spanish hailed them as the first people to [circumnavigate](#), or sail around, the world.
One of Magellan's five ships

**Search for a Northwest Passage**  “I believe that never more will any man undertake to make such a voyage,” predicted Antonio Pigafetta, a survivor of the Magellan voyage. But he was wrong. While Spain and Portugal claimed their zones, English, Dutch, and French explorers searched the coast of North America for a northwest passage to Asia.

In 1497, King Henry VII of England sent a Venetian navigator known as John Cabot to seek a more northerly route than the one Columbus had charted. Cabot found rich fishing grounds off Newfoundland, which he claimed for England. Later the French captain Jacques Cartier explored the St. Lawrence River, while Henry Hudson, sailing for the Dutch, explored the Hudson River. None of them found the hoped-for route to Asia, but the search for a Northwest Passage continued for centuries.

**Looking Ahead**

The European age of exploration set off a period of growing global interdependence that continues today. Yet the activities of European explorers brought both tragedy and triumph. As trade increased, conflicts between Europe and other civilizations would become more pronounced. These conflicts emerged first in Asia.

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**Hardships on the Uncharted Sea**

“We remained 3 months and 20 days without taking in provisions or other refreshments and ate only old biscuit reduced to powder, full of grubs and stinking from the dirt which rats had made on it. We drank water that was yellow and stinking. We also ate the ox hides from under the mainyard which we softened by soaking in seawater for several days.”

—Journal of Antonio Pigafetta

**Skills Assessment**

**Primary Source** Why was Magellan's crew forced to consume spoiled food and water?
Because of its location, Southeast Asia was affected by the cultures of both China and India.

Setting the Scene

According to the chronicles of early Burma (modern Myanmar), King Anawrata spoke to a Buddhist monk named Thera Arahantha.

"'Preach to me somewhat—yea, but a little—of the Law preached by the Lord, the Master.'"

“And Arahantha preached the Law, beginning with the things not to be neglected…. Then the king's heart was full of faith, steadfast, and immovable. Faith sank into him as oil filtered a hundred times soaks into cotton."

—The Glass Palace Chronicle of the Kings of Burma

Buddhism was one of many exports from India that had a profound effect on the peoples of Southeast Asia. Sandwiched between China and India, the region known today as Southeast Asia was strongly influenced by both of these powerful neighbors. Yet the distinct cultures of Southeast Asia retained their own unique identities.
Southeast Asia is made up of two major regions. The first region, mainland Southeast Asia, includes several peninsulas that jut south between India and China. Today, the mainland is home to Myanmar (mee uhn mahr), Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, and part of Malaysia. The second region, island Southeast Asia, consists of more than 20,000 islands scattered between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea. It includes the present-day nations of Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei (bru ni), and the Philippines.

**Location** The mainland is separated from the rest of Asia by mountains and high plateaus. Still, traders and invaders did push overland into the region. Mountains also separate the four main river valleys of Southeast Asia—the Irrawaddy (ihr uh wahd ee), Chao Phraya, Mekong, and Red. These river valleys were home to early civilizations.

Island Southeast Asia has long been of strategic importance. All seaborne trade between China and India had to pass through either the Malacca or Sunda straits. Whoever commanded the straits controlled rich trade routes.

**Trade Routes in the Southern Seas** The monsoons, or seasonal winds, shaped trading patterns in the “southern seas.” Ships traveled northeast in summer and southwest in winter. Between seasons, while waiting for the winds to shift, merchants harbored their vessels in Southeast Asian ports, which became important centers of trade and culture. Soon, an international trade network linked India, Southeast Asia, and China to East Africa and the Middle East.

The key products of Southeast Asia were spices. Only a fraction of the spices traded in the region was destined for markets in Europe. Most cargoes went to East Asia, the Middle East, and East Africa.

**Early Traditions** The peoples of Southeast Asia developed their own cultures before Indian or Chinese influences shaped the region. At Bang Chiang in Thailand, archaeologists have found jars and bronze bracelets at least 5,000 years old. This evidence is challenging old theories about when civilization began in the region.

Over the centuries, diverse ethnic groups speaking many languages settled in Southeast Asia. Living in isolated villages, they followed their own religious and cultural patterns. Many societies were built around the nuclear family rather than the extended families of India and China.

Women had greater equality in Southeast Asia than elsewhere in Asia. Female merchants took part in the spice trade, gaining fame for their skill in bargaining, finance, and languages. In some port cities, they gained enough wealth and influence to become rulers. Matrilineal descent, or inheritance through the mother, was an accepted custom in Southeast Asia. Women also had some freedom in choosing or divorcing marriage partners. Even after Indian and Chinese influences arrived, women retained their traditional rights.

**Impact of India**

Indian merchants and Hindu priests filtered into Southeast Asia, slowly spreading their culture. Later, Buddhist monks and scholars introduced Theravada beliefs. Following the path of trade and religion came the influence of writing, law, government, art, architecture, and farming.

**Increasing Contacts** In the early centuries a.d., Indian traders settled in port cities in growing numbers. They gave presents to local rulers and married
into influential families. Trade brought prosperity as merchants exchanged products such as cottons, jewels, and perfume for raw materials such as timber, spices, and gold.

In time, local Indian families exercised considerable power. Also, people from Southeast Asia visited India as pilgrims or students. As these contacts increased, Indian beliefs and ideas won widespread acceptance. Indian influence reached its peak between 500 and 1000.

**Islam** Long after Hinduism and Buddhism took root in Southeast Asia, Indians carried a third religion, Islam, into the region. By the 1200s, Muslims ruled northern India. From there, traders spread Islamic beliefs and Muslim civilization throughout the islands of Indonesia and as far east as the Philippines. Arab merchants, too, spread the new faith. The prevalence of Islam in lands surrounding the Indian Ocean contributed to the growth of a stable, thriving trade network.

*Today, Indonesia has the largest Muslim population of any nation in the world.*

### New Kingdoms and Empires

The blend of Indian influences with local cultures produced a series of kingdoms and empires in Southeast Asia. Some of these states rivaled those of India.

**Pagan** The kingdom of Pagan (pah gahn) arose in the fertile rice-growing Irrawaddy Valley in present-day Myanmar. In 1044, King Anawrata (ah nah rah tuh) united the region. He is credited with bringing Buddhism to the Burman people. Buddhism had reached nearby cultures long before, but Anawrata made Pagan a major Buddhist center. He filled his capital city with magnificent stupas, or dome-shaped shrines, at about the same time that people in medieval Europe were beginning to build Gothic cathedrals.

Pagan flourished for some 200 years after Anawrata's death, but fell in 1287 to conquering Mongols. When the Burmans finally threw off foreign rule, they looked back with pride to the great days of Pagan.

**The Khmer Empire** Indian influences also helped shape the Khmer (kuh mehr) empire, which reached its peak between 800 and 1350. Its greatest rulers controlled much of present-day Cambodia, Thailand, and Malaysia. The Khmer people adapted Indian writing, mathematics, architecture, and art. Khmer rulers became pious Hindus. Like the princes and emperors of India, they saw themselves as god-kings. Most ordinary people, however, preferred Buddhism.

In the 1100s, King Suryavarman II built the great temple complex at Angkor Wat. The ruins that survive today, though overgrown with jungle and pocked by the bullets of recent wars, are among the most impressive in the world. Hundreds of carved figures tell Hindu myths and glorify the king. Although the images of Vishnu, Shiva, and the Buddha reflect strong Indian influence, the style is uniquely Khmer.

**Srivijaya** The trading empire of Srivijaya (shree vah jī yah), in Indonesia, flourished from the 600s to the 1200s. Srivijaya controlled the Strait of Malacca, which, as you have learned, was vital to shipping. Both Hinduism and Buddhism reached this island empire. As elsewhere in Southeast Asia, however, the local people often blended Indian beliefs into their own forms of worship, based on nature spirits.
Later, Islam spread to Sumatra, Java, and other islands. Local rulers adopted the new religion, which cemented commercial links with other Muslim trading centers around the Indian Ocean.

**Vietnam Emerges**

In most of Southeast Asia, Indian influence outweighed Chinese influence. Indian traditions spread mostly through trade rather than conquest. China, however, sent military forces to conquer the neighboring state of Annam (now northern Vietnam).

The heart of northern Vietnam was the Red River delta, around present-day Hanoi. There, the river irrigated fertile rice paddies, or fields, which provided food for a growing population. The Vietnamese had their own distinct culture. As in other parts of Southeast Asia, women often held positions of authority.

**Chinese Domination** In 111 B.C., Han armies conquered the region. China remained in control for 1,000 years. During that time, the Vietnamese absorbed Confucian ideas. They adopted the Chinese civil service system and built a government bureaucracy similar to that found in China. Vietnamese nobles learned to speak the Chinese language and read Chinese characters. Unlike the rest of Southeast Asia, where Theravada Buddhism had the strongest impact, Vietnam adopted Mahayana beliefs from China. Daoism also helped shape Vietnamese society.

**Resistance** Despite these powerful Chinese influences, the Vietnamese preserved a strong sense of their separate identity. In A.D. 39, two noble sisters, Trung Trac and Trung Nhi, led an uprising that briefly drove the Chinese occupiers from the land. They tried to restore a simpler form of government based on ancient Vietnamese traditions. To this day, the Trung sisters are remembered as great martyrs and heroes. Finally in 939, as the Tang dynasty collapsed in China, Vietnam was able to break free from China. The Vietnamese turned back repeated Chinese efforts to reconquer their land, but did remain a tributary state of China.

**Trung Sisters**

Although the Chinese conquest of Annam introduced Confucian values, many local traditions continued for centuries. Women remained involved in politics, law, and trade. Still, officials were surprised when sisters Trung Trac and Trung Nhi forged a legacy for themselves as freedom fighters.

The sisters managed to do what no one else could. They forced the conquering Chinese out and established home rule. They did this by recruiting and training over 80,000 men and women to fight. Thirty-six of their generals were women.

After three years, however, the Chinese emperor sent an army against the sisters. According to legend, after a terrible defeat, the Trung sisters drowned themselves to avoid capture.

**Theme: Impact of the Individual** Why are the Trung sisters still revered in Vietnam today?
SECTION 3
European Footholds in Southeast Asia and India

Reading Focus
- How did the Portuguese and the Dutch build empires in the East?
- How did Spain control the Philippines?
- How did the decline of Mughal India affect European traders?

Vocabulary
- outpost
- sepoy

Taking Notes
Print out the concept web. As you read this section, fill in the blank circles with information about European influence in Southeast Asia and India. Add more circles as necessary.

Guided Reading
Main Idea
Europeans used military power to build trading empires in Southeast Asia.

Setting the Scene

In 1511, a Portuguese fleet commanded by Afonso de Albuquerque (ahl boo kehr keh) dropped anchor off Malacca, a rich Muslim trading port that controlled the sea route linking India, Southeast Asia, and China. “Have you come in peace or in war?” asked the sultan. “Peace,” replied Albuquerque. The true goal of the Portuguese, however, was not peace, but conquest.

The fleet remained at anchor for several weeks. Then they opened fire. The Portuguese quickly took the city, killing its inhabitants and seizing its wealth. On the ruins of a mosque, Albuquerque built a fort. The sultan had fled, thinking the invaders would loot and leave. But when he heard about the fort, he realized that the Portuguese had come to stay.

Portugal's Empire in the East

After Vasco da Gama's voyage, the Portuguese, under Albuquerque's command, burst into the Indian Ocean. In 1510, they seized the island of Goa off the coast of India, making it their major military and commercial base. Albuquerque then moved to end Muslim power and turn the Indian Ocean into a “Portuguese lake.”

Trading Outposts
Albuquerque burned coastal towns and crushed Arab fleets at sea. The Portuguese attacked Aden, at the entrance to the Red Sea, and took Ormuz, gateway to the Persian Gulf. In 1511, Albuquerque took Malacca, massacring the city's Muslims and making the Europeans hated and feared.

The Portuguese in India

Afonso de Albuquerque explained to his soldiers why the Portuguese wanted to capture Malacca:

“The king of Portugal has often commanded me to go
In less than 50 years, the Portuguese had built a trading empire with military and merchant outposts, or distant areas under their control, rimming the southern seas. They seized cities on the east coast of Africa so they could resupply and repair their ships. For most of the 1500s, Portugal controlled the spice trade between Europe and Asia.

**Impact** Despite their sea power, the Portuguese remained on the fringe of Asian trade. They had neither the strength nor the resources to conquer much territory on land. In India and China, where they faced far stronger empires, they merely sought permission to trade.

The intolerance of Portuguese missionaries caused resentment. In Goa, they attacked Muslims, destroyed Hindu temples, and introduced the Inquisition. Portuguese ships even sank Muslim pilgrim ships on their way to Mecca. Some Asian merchants chose to trade with the Portuguese. Others, however, chose to bypass Portuguese-controlled towns and continue their older trade patterns.

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**Rise of the Dutch**

The Dutch were the first Europeans to challenge Portuguese domination in Asia. The land we know today as the Netherlands included a group of provinces and prosperous cities on the North Sea. The region had long been a center of handicrafts and trade. Through royal marriages, it fell under Spanish rule in the early 1500s. Later, the Protestant northern provinces won independence.

**Sea Power** In 1599, a Dutch fleet returned to Amsterdam from Asia after more than a year's absence. It carried a cargo of pepper, cloves, and other spices. Church bells rang to celebrate this “Happy Return.” Those who had invested in the venture received 100 percent profit. The success of this voyage led to a frenzy of overseas activity.

By the late 1500s, Dutch warships and trading vessels put the Netherlands in the forefront of European commerce. They used their sea power to set up colonies and trading posts around the world. At the southwestern tip of Africa, the Dutch built the Cape Town settlement, where they could repair and resupply their ships.

**Dutch Dominance** In 1602, a group of wealthy Dutch merchants formed the Dutch East India Company. In the next decades, the Dutch strove to make themselves the major European power in the east. In 1641, they captured Malacca from the Portuguese and opened trade with China. Before long, they were able to enforce a monopoly in the Spice Islands, controlling shipments to Europe as well as much of the trade within Southeast Asia.

Like the Portuguese, the Dutch used military force to further their trading goals. At the same time, they forged closer ties with local rulers than the Portuguese had. Many Dutch merchants married Asian women.

Trade brought the Dutch enormous wealth. At home, Dutch merchants built tall mansions along the canals of Amsterdam and hired artists like Rembrandt to paint their portraits. In the 1700s, however, the growing power of England and France contributed to the decline of the Dutch trading empire in the East.
Spain Seizes the Philippines

While the Portuguese and Dutch set up bases on the fringes of Asia, Spain took over the Philippines. Magellan had claimed the archipelago for Spain in 1521. Within about 50 years, Spain had conquered and colonized the islands, renaming them for the Spanish king Philip II. Unlike most other peoples of Southeast Asia, the Filipinos were not united. As a result, they could be conquered more easily.

In the spirit of the Catholic Reformation, Spanish priests set out to convert the Filipino people to Christianity. Later, missionaries from the Philippines tried to spread Catholic teachings in China and Japan.

The Philippines became a key link in Spain's overseas trading empire. The Spanish shipped silver mined in Mexico and Peru across the Pacific to the Philippines. From there, they used the silver to buy goods in China. In this way, large quantities of American silver flowed into the economies of East Asian nations.

Mughal India and European Traders

Before the 1700s, European traders made very little impression on India, which was enjoying one of its greatest periods of strength and prosperity. In 1526, Babur had founded the Mughal dynasty. European merchants were dazzled by India's splendid court and its many luxury goods. There seemed little of value that Europeans could offer to the sophisticated civilization of Mughal India.

Industry and Commerce  Besides producing spices, India was the world leader in textile manufacturing. It exported large quantities of silk and cotton cloth, from sheer muslins to elaborate chintzes. Handicrafts and shipbuilding added to the country's wealth.
Indian artisans created products like this hand-painted cotton wall hanging for European markets. Indian cottons became so popular in England that, to protect the English textile industry, Parliament tried to ban them.

The Mughal empire was larger, richer, and more powerful than any kingdom in Europe. When Europeans sought trading rights, Mughal emperors saw no threat in granting such concessions. The Portuguese and later the Dutch, English, and French thus were permitted to build forts and warehouses in coastal towns.

**Turmoil and Decline**  When Akbar's successors ended his policy of religious toleration, conflicts rekindled between Hindu and Muslim princes. Years of civil war drained Mughal resources. Rulers then increased taxes, sparking peasant rebellions. Several weak rulers held the throne in the early 1700s. Corruption became widespread, and the central government eventually collapsed.
British-French Rivalry As Mughal power faltered, French and English traders played off rival Indian princes against one another. Both the English and French East India companies made alliances with local officials and independent rajahs. Each company organized its own army of sepoys, or Indian troops.

By the mid-1700s, the British and the French had become locked in a bitter struggle for global power. In 1756, war between Britain and France erupted in Europe. The fighting soon spread, involving both nations' lands in Asia and the Americas.

In India, Robert Clive, an agent of the British East India Company, used an army of British troops and sepoys to drive the French from their trading posts. The Company then forced the Mughal emperor to recognize its right to collect taxes in Bengal in the northeast. By the late 1700s, the Company had become the real ruler of Bengal, able to use its great wealth to spread its influence into other parts of India.
SECTION 4  
Encounters in East Asia

Reading Focus

- How was European trade with China affected by the Manchu conquest?
- What factors led Korea to isolate itself from other nations?
- What attitude did the Tokugawa shoguns have toward foreign traders?

Taking Notes

As you read this section, make a table to show how westerners acted and were received in East Asia. Print out this table as a model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WESTERN BEHAVIOR AND ATTITUDES</th>
<th>CHINA</th>
<th>KOREA</th>
<th>JAPAN</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matteo Ricci speaks Chinese</td>
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<td>Macartney offers empire</td>
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<td>Response to westerners</td>
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Guided Reading

Main Idea

China, Korea, and Japan limited contact with western nations.

Setting the Scene

The Europeans who reached Asia in the 1500s often made a poor impression on their hosts. The Italian traveler Niccolò Manucci told how Asians thought that Europeans “have no polite manners, that they are ignorant, wanting in ordered life, and very dirty.”

Europeans, by contrast, wrote enthusiastically about China. In 1590, a visitor described Chinese artisans “cleverly making devices out of gold, silver and other metals.” He was also impressed with their abilities in handicrafts and gunsmithing, and wrote: “They daily publish huge multitudes of books.”

Portuguese ships first reached China by way of the South China Sea during the Ming dynasty. To the Chinese, the Portuguese were “southern barbarians.” Like other foreigners, they lacked the civilized ways of the Middle Kingdom.

European Trade With China

The Ming dynasty, you will recall, ended its overseas explorations in the mid-1400s. Confucian officials had little use for foreigners. “Since our empire owns the world,” said a Ming document, “there is no country on this or other sides of the seas which does not submit to us.”

Strict Limits on Trade  Portuguese traders reached China by sea in 1514. To the Chinese, the newcomers had little to offer in exchange for silks and porcelains. European textiles and metalwork were inferior to Chinese products. The Chinese therefore demanded payment in gold or silver.

The Ming eventually allowed the Portuguese a trading post at Macao, near Canton, present-day Guangzhou (gwaahu joh). Later, they let Dutch, English, and other Europeans trade with Chinese merchants, but only under strict limits. Foreigners could trade only at Canton under the supervision of imperial officials. When each year's trading season ended, they had to sail away.

Connections to Today

Guangzhou’s International Trade

For centuries, the thriving port of Guangzhou has welcomed merchants from many lands. Today, thousands of business people from all over the world attend the twice-yearly Guangzhou Fair. There they buy Chinese products to sell overseas and market their own goods to sell in China.
Scholars and Missionaries  
A few European scholars, like the brilliant Jesuit priest Matteo Ricci, did make a positive impression on Ming China. In the 1580s, Ricci learned to speak Chinese and adopted Chinese dress. Ricci and other priests had little success spreading their religious beliefs, although Chinese rulers welcomed the chance to learn the arts and sciences of Renaissance Europe.

The Manchu Conquest

By the early 1600s, the aging Ming dynasty was decaying. Revolts erupted, and Manchu invaders from the north pushed through the Great Wall. The Manchus ruled a region in the northeast that had long been influenced by Chinese civilization. In 1644, victorious Manchu armies seized Beijing and made it their capital.

Qing Rule  The Manchus set up a new dynasty called the Qing (chihng), meaning “pure.” To preserve their distinct identity, the Manchus barred intermarriage between Manchus and Chinese. Manchu women were forbidden to follow the traditional Chinese practice of footbinding. Still, the Manchus won the support of the Chinese scholar-officials because they adopted the Confucian system of government. For each top government position, the Qing chose two people, one Manchu and one Chinese. Local government remained in the hands of the Chinese, but Manchu troops stationed across the empire ensured loyalty.

Two rulers oversaw the most brilliant age of the Qing. Kangxi (kahng shee), who ruled from 1661 to 1722, was an able administrator and military leader. He extended Chinese power into Central Asia and promoted Chinese culture. Kangxi's grandson Qianlong (chyehn lohng) had an equally successful reign from 1736 to 1796. He expanded China's borders to rule the largest area in the nation's history. Qianlong retired after 60 years because he did not want to rule longer than his grandfather had.

Prosperity  The Chinese economy expanded under both emperors. New crops from the Americas, such as potatoes and corn, boosted farm output, which in turn contributed to a population boom. China's population rose from 140 million in 1740 to over 300 million by 1800. Peace and prosperity encouraged further growth in handicraft industries, including silk, cotton, and porcelain. Internal trade grew, as did the demand for Chinese goods from all over the world.

Response to Westerners  The Qing maintained the Ming policy of restricting foreign traders. Still, Europeans kept pressing to expand trade to cities other than Guangzhou. In 1793, Lord Macartney arrived in China at the head of a British diplomatic mission. He brought samples of British-made goods to show the Chinese the advantages of trade with westerners. The Chinese thought the goods were gifts offered as tribute to the emperor and looked on them as rather crude products.

Further misunderstandings followed. Macartney insisted on an audience with the emperor. The Chinese told Macartney he would have to perform the traditional kowtow, touching his head to the ground to show respect to the emperor. Macartney refused. He also offended the Chinese by speaking
of the natural superiority of the English. The negotiations faltered. In the end, Qianlong did receive Macartney, but the meeting accomplished nothing. Later, in a letter to King George III of Britain, Qianlong rejected the request for trading rights.

At the time, Qianlong's attitude seemed justified by China's successes. After all, he already ruled the world's greatest empire. Why should he negotiate with a nation as distant as Britain? In the long run, however, his policy proved disastrous. Even then, there was much the Chinese could have learned from the West. In the 1800s, China would learn about western advances—especially in military technology—the hard way.

**Korea and Isolation**

Like China, Korea restricted outside contacts in the 1500s and 1600s. Earlier, Korean traders had far-ranging contacts across East Asia. A Korean map from the 1300s accurately outlines lands from Japan to the Mediterranean. Koreans probably acquired this knowledge from Arab traders who had visited Korea.

The Choson dynasty, you will recall, firmly embraced Confucian ideas. Like the Chinese, Koreans felt that Confucian learning was the most advanced in the world. The low status of merchants in Confucianism also led Koreans to look down on foreign traders.

Two other events led the Koreans to turn inward. A Japanese invasion in the 1590s devastated the land of Korea. Then in 1636, the Manchus conquered Korea before overrunning Ming China. When the Manchus set up the Qing dynasty in China, Korea became a tributary state, run by its own government but forced to acknowledge China's supremacy. The two invasions left Korea feeling like “a shrimp among whales.”

In response, the Koreans chose isolation, excluding all foreigners except the Chinese and a few Japanese. When European sailors were shipwrecked on Korean shores, they were imprisoned or killed. As a result, Korea became known in the West as the “Hermit Kingdom.”

Even though Korea had few contacts with the world for about 250 years, this period was a great age for Korean arts and literature. In one satirical tale, author Pak Chi-won describes a poor scholar who breaks with tradition to become a merchant. Here, Master Ho describes doing business in an isolated country:

> “Our country has no trade with other countries, and … everything we use is produced and consumed in the same province…. With ten thousand yang, you can buy just about all of one particular item produced in the country. You can buy the whole lot, whether you load it on a cart or on a boat.”

—Pak Chi-won, “The Story of Ho”

**Japan and Foreign Traders**

Unlike the Chinese or Koreans, the Japanese at first welcomed western traders. In 1543, the Portuguese reached Japan. Later came the Spanish, Dutch, and English. They arrived at the turbulent time when strong daimyo were struggling for power. The Japanese quickly acquired western firearms and built castles modeled on European designs. In fact, the new weapons may have helped the Tokugawa shoguns centralize power and impose order.
Japan was much more open to European missionaries than China. Jesuits, like the Spanish priest Francis Xavier, found the Japanese curious and eager to learn about Christianity. A growing number of Japanese adopted the new faith.

The Tokugawa shoguns, however, grew increasingly hostile toward foreigners. After learning how Spain had seized the Philippines, they may have seen the newcomers as agents of an invading force. In addition, Japanese officials disliked the intrigues and competition among Christian missionaries. They also suspected that Japanese Christians—who may have numbered as many as 300,000—owed their allegiance to the pope, rather than to Japanese leaders. In response, the Tokugawas expelled foreign missionaries. They brutally persecuted Japanese Christians, killing many thousands of people.

By 1638, the Tokugawas had barred all western merchants and forbidden Japanese to travel abroad. To further their isolation, they outlawed the building of large ships, thereby ending foreign trade. In order to keep informed about world events, they permitted just one or two Dutch ships each year to trade at a small island in Nagasaki harbor. Through this tiny gateway, a few Japanese did learn about some foreign ideas. They studied Dutch medical texts, for example, which they found to be more accurate than Chinese ones.

Looking Ahead

Japan maintained its policy of strict isolation for more than 200 years. Isolation had a profound effect on Japan. Without outside influence, Japanese culture turned inward. Still, art and literature spread beyond the upper classes. Artists found new ways to interpret traditions.

During this time, internal trade boomed. Cities grew in size and importance, and some merchant families gained wealth and status. By the early 1700s, Edo (present-day Tokyo) had a million inhabitants, more than either London or Paris.

In 1853, Japan was forced to reopen contacts with the western world. Renewed relations unleashed an extraordinary period of change that helped Japan emerge as a major world power.