

Chapter 22 Reading Guide: Asian Transitions in an Age of Global Change

CHAPTER SUMMARY

East and Southeast Asian early modern trends were highly diverse. Most Asian peoples, except in the islands of Southeast Asia, were only marginally affected by the European arrival. India, China, and Japan were not fundamentally reshaped by the West. The peoples of East Asia developed new political and social strengths while following a policy of isolation in response to global trends. Vasco da Gama's voyage to India had opened the way to the East for Europeans, but it soon became clear that Europeans had little to offer Asians in exchange for their desired products. Asians were not interested in converting to Christianity. Asian states were too strong to be conquered by Europeans, but the latter's sea power allowed control of spice exports and regulation of some parts of the Asian trading network. The Europeans participated in the existing economic and political system, rather than attempting to capture it.

1. Why were East Africans hostile to da Gama when he first encountered them?
2. What did da Gama have that Indian merchants were happy to take?
3. Why did the Portuguese resort to a military solution to break into the Indian Ocean trading system?
4. Why did European countries, especially the Netherlands, have a great deal of influence on the East Indies but less on mainland India and China?

TRADING EMPIRE: THE PORTUGUESE RESPONSE TO THE ENCOUNTER AT CALICUT.

5. Describe the theory of mercantilism.
6. How did mercantilism lead the Portuguese to use military force in the Indian Ocean region?
7. Europe was technologically backwards compared to most of the Asian powers. However, in two key areas it had surpassed most Asians except the Chinese. Identify those two areas.

PORTUGUESE VULNERABILITY AND THE RISE OF THE DUTCH AND ENGLISH TRADING EMPIRES.

8. Who replaced the Portuguese in the East Indies?
9. Describe the tactics the Dutch used to control the spice trade?

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10. The English were not as involved in the spice trade as the Dutch. What did the English focus on?

VISUALIZING THE PAST: INTRUDERS: THE PATTERN OF EARLY EUROPEAN EXPANSION INTO ASIA

11. Examine the location of the imperial capitals (i.e., European) on the map. Where do you see most of them?
12. Why are there none in China?

GOING ASHORE: EUROPEAN TRIBUTE SYSTEMS IN ASIA.

13. Why could the Europeans not conquer the inland areas of China, India, or Persia?
14. Japan is an island roughly the same size as some of the islands in the East Indies yet it was not dominated by European powers. Why? Keep in mind that Java, one of the East Indies islands, is the most populous island in the world, ahead of Japan, so numbers do NOT explain this. (hint: look up the word “martial”, therein lies a clue)
15. What crop became very important to the island of Java?
16. What part of Southeast Asia did Spain focus its attention on?
17. Describe the tribute system:

SPREADING THE FAITH: THE MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE IN SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA.

18. How did the Dutch and English differ from the Portuguese and Spanish in their relations with the peoples of Southeast Asia? What might explain this?
19. How did the Hindu caste system run counter to basic fundamentals of Christianity and block efforts by Europeans to convert high-caste Indians?

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20. What part of Asia was considered the greatest success for Christian missionaries and why was it easier to convert?

MING CHINA: A GLOBAL MISSION REFUSED.

21. Who overthrew the Mongols and established the Ming dynasty? What was unusual about his background?
22. What was his first priority as emperor?

ANOTHER SCHOLAR-GENTRY REVIVAL.

23. Why would the new emperor, who was poorly educated, give the power back to the scholar-gentry that they had lost under Mongol domination?
24. Why would young Chinese men put themselves through the ordeal of taking the civil service exams given the slim chance of passing?

REFORM: HONGWU'S EFFORTS TO ROOT OUT ABUSES IN COURT POLITICS.

25. What did Hongwu do to promote scrupulous behavior among the scholar-gentry?

A RETURN TO SCHOLAR-GENTRY SOCIAL DOMINANCE.

26. What reform by Hongwu to improve the lives of the peasantry was the most effective?
27. In this section we learn another reason why young Chinese men would compete for the few positions available in the bureaucracy. What is it and who do you think pressured these young men to study for the exam?
28. We already know that China was losing technological ground to the European powers during the Early Modern period. What do you see in this section that indicates neo-Confucianism was a factor in this failure to stay ahead intellectually?

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AN AGE OF GROWTH: AGRICULTURE, POPULATION, COMMERCE, AND THE ARTS.

29. How did the Columbian Exchange affect the southern China region?
30. Identify the only two places in China where foreign merchants were allowed to trade.
31. Why do you think China restricted foreigners to only those two ports?
32. In what artistic area did China make the greatest innovations during this time?
33. What invention served as a catalyst for the development of the art form noted above?

AN AGE OF EXPANSION: THE ZHENGHE EXPEDITIONS.

34. Identify the Chinese admiral who led 7 expeditions to lands beyond China.
35. Given the comparison of Chinese naval power to European naval power, why is it surprising that the Americas were left for European nations to discover and exploit?

IN DEPTH: MEANS AND MOTIVE IN OVERSEAS EXPANSION: EUROPE AND CHINA COMPARED.

36. Why did Chinese merchants see long distance trade as a waste of time for themselves?
37. What did the scholar-gentry want to focus on rather than overseas exploration and trade?

CHINESE RETREAT AND THE ARRIVAL OF THE EUROPEANS.

38. What was the strategy of the Jesuits to convert Asians in India, China, & Japan?
39. How did the Franciscans and Dominicans differ in their conversion strategies from the Jesuits?

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40. What did they spend their time doing and why does this seem strange?

MING DECLINE AND THE CHINESE PREDICAMENT.

41. Identify the group in China you feel suffered the most as the Ming dynasty began to lose control and support your opinion with evidence.

FENDING OFF THE WEST: JAPAN'S REUNIFICATION AND THE FIRST CHALLENGE.

42. How did Europeans play a role in Japan's early reunification?

43. List the three military leaders, in order, who restored Japanese unity.

44. What did Hideyoshi try to do regarding Korea (and that Japan will try again during WWII)?

DEALING WITH THE EUROPEAN CHALLENGE.

45. Why did the Tokugawa shogunate, following Nobunaga, turn against Christianity?

JAPAN'S SELF-IMPOSED ISOLATION.

46. What happened to Christians, European or Japanese, after Tokugawa Ieyasu came to power?

47. Why did Ieyasu isolate Japan?

48. What Chinese philosophy played a role in Japan's isolation?

49. Despite its isolation, how did Japan use the one port foreigners could trade in, Deshima, that contrasted with China?

GLOBAL CONNECTIONS: AN AGE OF EURASIAN CLOSURE.

50. Identify 3 changes that resulted from European activity in Asia during the Early Modern period.

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