

Unit 4 Summary: Global Interactions, c. 1450- c. 1750

Overall Changes

- 1) **The world became truly global** - the western hemisphere came into continued contact with the eastern hemisphere. Technological innovations, strengthened political organization, and economic prosperity all contributed to this change that completely altered world trade patterns.
- 2) **Maritime trade dominated the world** - Technological advancements and willingness of political leaders to invest in it meant that sea-based trade became much more important. As a result, old land-based empires lost relative power to the new sea-based powers.
- 3) **European kingdoms gained world power** - The relative power and prosperity of Europe increased dramatically during this time in comparison to empires in the longer-established civilization areas.
- 4) **Nomads began to become a thing of the past** - Nomads continued to play an important role in trade and cultural diffusion, and they continued to threaten the borders of the large land-based empires. However, their power dwindled as travel and trade by water became more important.
- 5) **Labor systems were transformed** - The acquisition of colonies in North and South America led to major changes in labor systems. After many Amerindians died from disease transmitted by contact with Europeans, a vigorous slave trade from Africa began and continued throughout most of the era. Slave labor became very important all over the Americas. Other labor systems, such as the mit'a and encomienda in South America, were adapted from previous native traditions by the Spanish and Portuguese.
- 6) **"Gunpowder Empires" emerged in the Middle East** - Empires in older civilization areas gained new strength from new technologies in weaponry. Basing their new power on gunpowder, they still suffered from the old issues that had plagued land-based empires for centuries: defense of borders, communication within the empire, and maintenance of an army adequate to defend the large territory. By the end of the era, many were less powerful than the new sea-based kingdoms of Europe.

Major Empires

EUROPEAN EMPIRES

Key European Empires emerged during this time. They included:

1. Portugal – power came from exploration and colonization; important in the early slave trade; first to set up trading centers along Africa's coast and to trade directly with India and China through maritime trade
2. Spain – unified by the marriage of Isabella and Ferdinand; wealth came from exploration and colonization; expelled Muslims and Jews; Inquisition; Spanish control of Latin America; decimation of the Native Americans; beginning of American slave trade
3. England – power from trade and colonization; mercantilism – economic system where the “mother country” has colonies and restricts them to trade only with the mother; long history of Constitutionalism – power to Parliament and limited monarchy; King Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth bring England to its height in power and prestige
4. France – power from trade and colonization; Louis XIV highlighted the system of absolutism – total power to the monarchy; controlled nobles by having them live at Versailles

RUSSIA

During this time period, Russia expelled the Mongols and began to have more contacts with the West. Peter the Great made it his goal to “westernize” Russia. He mandated western style clothing, education, and military structures. Russia becomes a major power in world affairs and expanded its empire dramatically.

EXPLORATION AND COLONIZATION OF THE AMERICAS

Upon the arrival of Europeans, the Americas had millions of inhabitants. Some were advanced and some were primitive. The Aztecs and Incas had unified large segments of land and people under their control. The Europeans, primarily the Spanish began the systems that would decimate the populations of the Americans and set in motion the eventual Atlantic Slave Trade.

Major changes and results from the interaction between Europeans and Native Americans (Columbian Exchange) included:

1. Diseases – small pox, tuberculosis, measles, and influenza attacked the Native Americans who had not developed the immunity to fight exposure; Europeans contracted a more deadly form of syphilis
2. Animals – pigs, cows, and horses were taken to the Americas leading to an increase in transportation and food stuffs
3. Crops – Native American crops of corn, squash, beans, tomatoes, potatoes, and chilies led to a population increase in Europe

THE “GUNPOWDER EMPIRES”

Ottoman Empire:

Founded by Osman, the Ottoman Empire included a collection of Turkish tribes from Asia Minor. In 1453 they conquered Constantinople and ended the Byzantine Empire. From Constantinople (soon to be called Istanbul) they launched raids into the Balkans of Europe.

Under Sulieman the Magnificent, the Ottomans controlled land on three continents. They took land from Baghdad to Belgrade and laid siege to Vienna. The Siege of Vienna (1530) was a turning point in Ottoman expansion and European unity to fight Muslim invaders.

They used an extensive civil service and bureaucracy. They maintained a large, multiethnic empire for 600 years. The Sultan was an absolute ruler; Ottoman wealth came from the control of trade between the Black Sea and Mediterranean Sea.

Great army of mounted and foot soldiers; made use of Janissaries, Balkan Christians captured as boys who became skilled soldiers. Slaves were used for labor.

Most Turks were Sunni; however, Orthodox Christians and Jews also made up sizable portions of the empire. The empire was culturally diverse largely due to trade connections and diversity of lands governed. The merchant class was important.

Mughal Empire:

Continuation of the Delhi Sultanate – descendants of the Mongol invaders (hence Mughal)

Land included modern day India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan

Strong military required high taxes

Military service was rewarded with land grants – upset regional rulers

Muslim authority over Hindus; Akbar married a Hindu woman and tried to reconcile with the majority Hindu population

Sikhism emerges in some areas – a combination of Islam and Hinduism

Limited trade

The Taj Mahal was built during this time. It is an excellent example of the renaissance in Muslim architecture

Safavid Empire:

Based in what is today Iran (Persia).

State religion-Shi'a Islam

All other religions and forms of Islam suppressed

“Middle Man” in East-West overland trade

Became a center of art and architecture (Isfahan)

Key figures-Shahs Ismail and Abbas

Cultural & Intellectual Developments	Important People	Content of Idea or Movement	Diffusion
Scientific Revolution	Copernicus Galileo Francis Bacon	World could be explained through natural laws rather than superstition Sun was the center of the universe Scientific Method Questions traditional church teachings	Throughout Europe and American colonies
The Enlightenment	John Locke Jean-Jacques Rousseau Thomas Hobbes Voltaire	Natural Rights – life, liberty and property Right of people to revolt and overthrow government Freedom of speech, press, and religion	Europe and American colonies
Neoconfucianism	Zhu Xi	combine elements of Buddhism and Daoism to make Confucianism more accessible for less literate Chinese	China, Korea, Japan
Protestant Reformation	Martin Luther John Calvin	Protest against corruption of Catholic Church-new form of Christianity based on the Bible	Northern Europe, North America
European Renaissance	Petrarch Machiavelli	Cultural, artistic revival based on classical Greek and Roman models	First northern Italy, then Europe-wide

TOKUGAWA JAPAN

The Japanese daimyos, or regional lords, had operated fairly independently from the shoguns before the early 17th century, when these military, feudalistic leaders were unified under one powerful family: the Tokugawa. The emperor was still honored as the ceremonial leader. The government eventually settled in Edo (modern Tokyo), and ruled their independent subjects by instituting alternate attendance, the practice of daimyos spending every other year at the Tokugawa shogun's court. This requirement meant that daimyos had limited time to focus on building armies back home, and they also had to maintain expensive second homes in Edo. The Tokugawa shoguns had less patience with Christian missionaries from the west than the Chinese did. Their aversion to Europeans was based partly on their observation of the Spanish conquest of the Philippines, a fate that they did not want to share. They also worried that Europeans might conspire with the daimyos to destroy Tokugawa control. In the 1630s the shogunate literally "closed Japan," by forbidding all Japanese from going abroad and expelling all Europeans from Japan. They carefully controlled trade with other Asians, and European traders could come no closer than nearby islands. These policies were strictly enforced as far as the shoguns were able to, although daimyos on far islands were difficult to control.

CHINA

Ming Dynasty

The Ming Emperors continued to rule China until the mid-1600s, but the dynasty was in decline for many years before that. Although its cultural brilliance and economic achievements continued until about 1600, China had some of the same problems that the Muslim empires had: borders difficult to guard, armies expensive to maintain, and transportation and communication issues.

Some particular factors that weakened Ming China included:

- 1) Climatic change** - A broad change of climate swept from Europe to China during the 1600s, with the weather turning much colder. This change seriously affected agriculture and health, and also contributed to serious famine across China. These conditions led frustrated peasants to frequent rebellion.
- 2) Nomadic invasions** - The 1500s saw the reemergence of the Mongols as a regional power, this time with the help and support of Tibet. In gratitude, the Mongols bestowed the Tibetan leader with the title of Dalai Lama, or "universal teacher" of Tibetan Buddhism. The Japanese also attacked Korea, a Chinese tributary state, requiring Ming armies to defend the area.
- 3) Pirates** - As sea-based trade became more and more important, the number of pirates also increased in the Chinese seas, just as they did in the Americas. Pirates were both Chinese and Japanese, and they lay in wait for ships going in and out of Chinese ports.
- 4) Decline of the Silk Road** - After so many centuries, the famed Silk Road trade finally fell into decline during this era. New technologies and European control meant that more and more trade was conducted by water, and land-based trade decreased.
- 5) Inept rulers** - The last emperors lived in luxury in the Forbidden City, and had little to do with governing the empire. For example, the last emperor was so disengaged that he did not know that he was under attack until the enemy literally was climbing over the palace walls.

Early Qing Dynasty

The Manchus (from Manchuria) finally overthrew the Ming Dynasty in 1644. The Manchus had been asked by the Ming to help fight off the Mongols and the Japanese. After fighting the Mongols and Japanese off, they decided to take China as their own.

They called themselves the Qing ("pure") Empire because they saw themselves as restoring China to glory. The Qing Dynasty was to rule China until 1911, and in the years before 1750, the empire was very strong. The emperors ruled under many of the same precepts that China had always had, such as the Mandate of Heaven, which they saw as justification for their takeover. The Manchu did keep their ethnic identity, forbidding intermarriage between Manchus and Chinese. They also outlawed the Chinese from learning the Manchurian language, and they required Chinese men to shave their heads and grow long queues at the back of their heads as a sign of submission.

Despite the problems that China faced as a land-based Gunpowder Empire, the early Qing Dynasty - until the late 18th century - ruled over a "golden age" of Chinese civilization. Two of its early emperors had long and prosperous reigns: Kangxi (1661-1722) and Qianlong (1736-1795). Kangxi was an enlightened, brilliant ruler whose many talents illustrate the era. He was a Confucian scholar, poet, and supporter of education, but he was also a conquering warrior who understood the importance of military might. China was so prosperous in these early Qing days that Qianlong cancelled taxes on several occasions because the government simply didn't need the money.

Chinese Contact with Europeans

East-west contacts between China and Europe intensified during the early Qing Dynasty. One type of contact - Christian missionaries from the west - had probably come to China as early as the 7th century, but the plague and the collapse of the Yuan Dynasty had all but stopped the interchange. Contact revived during the 16th century when the Jesuits first began arriving in China. The Jesuit priests were an order of the Catholic Church that specialized in international missionary work. One of the early Jesuits, Matteo Ricci, very much impressed the Chinese, who admired his education, brilliance, and respect for Chinese customs and accomplishments. The Jesuits dazzled their hosts with European science and technology. For example, they were able to use their math skills to correct Chinese calendars that up until then had miscalculated solar eclipses. They prepared maps of the world, and charmed the Chinese with gadgets (like chiming clocks), and the emperors saw to it that Jesuits had a special place in their courts. However, they had limited success in converting people to Christianity. After the Pope condemned what he called "ancestry worship," Kangxi ordered the end to Jesuit ministries.

The Jesuits did inspire trade demands as word about the riches and sophistication of Qing China got back to Europe. Chinese products - tea, porcelain, silk, wallpaper, and decorative items - became quite fashionable among the European elite, and Europeans commonly saw Kangxi as a great philosopher king. The Chinese reacted by opening the southern port of Canton to Europeans, but again, the Middle Kingdom was very wary of foreign contact, and so they closely supervised the trade.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

Some major population shifts included:

- A rise in the population of Europe - Europe's population had been decimated by the 14th century plague epidemic, so during the 15th and 16th centuries population levels were growing to match previous levels.
- A decrease in the population of the Americas - This trend may run counter to common knowledge, but it does reflect the decimation of Amerindian populations by their encounters with Europeans. For example, in the late 15th century North America had almost 4 million people, Mexico had more than 21 million, the Caribbean and Central America each had almost 6 million, and South America (Andes and Lowlands) had almost 30 million. By 1700 the entire western hemisphere had only 13 million, a decrease from 67 million or so in 1500. Even though Europeans had settled in both North and South America by 1700, their numbers were too few to make an overall demographic difference.
- No overall population decrease occurred in Africa - Again, counter to common belief, the slave trade did not decimate the populations of Africa. By 1700 Africa had more than 60 million people, almost doubling their population in 1000. To be sure, some areas of Africa did reflect huge population losses, and logically those were places where the slave trade was most vigorous. Because the Atlantic trade was so much larger than the Saharan trade, areas most affected were along Africa's west coast, such as the Gold Coast and Slave Coast to the north, the Bight of Biafra in the middle, and Angola in the south.
- Between 1000 and 1700 C.E., the populations of Asia - including the Middle East, Indian, and East Asia - more than doubled to a total of about 415 million. Clearly, overall world population grew, and the majority of people by the end of the time period still lived in the Middle East and Asia.
- The Columbian Exchange almost certainly caused some environmental changes that help to explain the population trends listed above. For example, maize and cassava (a nutritious plant used in modern day in tapioca) were transported by Portuguese ships from Brazil to Angola in southwest Africa. Angolans cultivated the crops, which adapted very well to their land. Some historians believe that this exchange provided the base for the population increase that followed, despite the fact that many Angolans were captured and deported to the New World as slaves. Likewise, the Andean potato eventually became the staple for poor people in Europe, sustaining population growth despite the number of people that began to migrate to the New World.