The East Asian World

1400–1800

Key Events
As you read this chapter, look for the key events in the history of the East Asian world.
• China closed its doors to the Europeans during the period of exploration between 1500 and 1800.
• The Ming and Qing dynasties produced blue-and-white porcelain and new literary forms.
• Emperor Yong Le began renovations on the Imperial City, which was expanded by succeeding emperors.

The Impact Today
The events that occurred during this time still impact our lives today.
• China today exports more goods than it imports.
• Chinese porcelain is collected and admired throughout the world.
• The Forbidden City in China is an architectural wonder that continues to attract people from around the world.
• Relations with China today still require diplomacy and skill.

The Forbidden City in the heart of Beijing contains hundreds of buildings.
In 1793, a British official named Lord George Macartney led a mission on behalf of King George III to China. Macartney carried with him British products that he thought would impress the Chinese so much that they would be eager to open their country to trade with Great Britain. King George wrote in his letter to the Chinese emperor: “No doubt the exchange of goods between nations far apart tends to their mutual convenience, industry, and wealth.”

Emperor Qianlong, however, was not impressed: “You, O King, are so inclined toward our civilization that you have sent a special envoy across the seas . . . to present your native products as an expression of your thoughtfulness. . . . As a matter of fact, the virtue and prestige of the Celestial Dynasty having spread far and wide, the kings of the myriad nations come by land and sea with all sorts of precious things. Consequently, there is nothing we lack, as your principal envoy and others have themselves observed. We have never set much store on strange or ingenious objects, nor do we need any more of your country’s manufactures.”

Macartney was shocked. He had believed that the Chinese would recognize, as he said, “that superiority which Englishmen, wherever they go, cannot conceal.” An angered Macartney compared the Chinese Empire to “an old, crazy, first-rate man-of-war [naval warship].” It had once awed its neighbors “merely by [its] bulk and appearance” but was now destined, under poor leadership, to be “dashed to pieces on the shore.”
Main Ideas
- China opened its doors to Europeans but closed those doors when it observed the effect of Western ideas on Chinese society.
- Between 1500 and 1800, Chinese art and culture flourished.

Key Terms
queue, banner

People to Identify
Ming, Zheng He, Manchu, Qing, Kangxi

Places to Locate
Guangzhou, Beijing, Manchuria, Taiwan

Preview Questions
1. What was remarkable about the naval voyages under Emperor Yong Le?
2. How did the Manchus gain the support of the Chinese?

Reading Strategy
Compare and Contrast As you read this section, complete a diagram like the one below to compare and contrast the achievements of the two dynasties.

Preview of Events
1551 China allows Portuguese to occupy Macao
1630 Major epidemic reduces the population in many areas
1736 Emperor Qianlong begins reign

Voices from the Past
Ferdinand Verbiest, a European missionary, reported on his experience with the Chinese emperor:

“This emperor [Kangxi] [punishes] offenders of the highest as well as lowest class with marvelous impartiality, according to their misdeeds, depriving them of rank and dignity. . . . On this account men of all ranks and dignities whatsoever, even the nearest to him in blood, stand in his presence with the deepest awe, and recognize him as sole ruler. . . . The same goodwill he showed us on many other occasions, to wit, in frequently sending us dishes from his own table to ours. He even ordered us sometimes to be entertained in his own tent.

—Sources of World History, Mark A. Kishlansky, ed., 1995

Kangxi was one of the greatest of the many strong emperors who ruled China during the Ming and Qing dynasties.

The Ming Dynasty

As you read this section, you will discover how the decision to stop the voyages of exploration in the 1400s caused China to turn inward for four centuries, away from foreign trade and toward agriculture.

The Mongol dynasty in China was overthrown in 1368. The founder of the new dynasty took the title of Ming Hong Wu (the Ming Martial Emperor). This was the beginning of the Ming dynasty, which lasted until 1644.

Under Ming emperors, China extended its rule into Mongolia and central Asia and briefly reconquered Vietnam. Along the northern frontier, the Chinese
strengthened the Great Wall and made peace with the nomadic tribes that had troubled them for centuries.

At home, Ming rulers ran an effective government using a centralized bureaucracy staffed with officials chosen by the civil service examination system. They set up a nationwide school system. Manufactured goods were produced in workshops and factories in vastly higher numbers. New crops were introduced, which greatly increased food production. The Ming rulers also renovated the Grand Canal, making it possible to ship grain and other goods from southern to northern China. The Ming dynasty truly began a new era of greatness in Chinese history.

The Voyages of Zheng He Ming Hong Wu, founder of the dynasty, ruled from 1368 until 1398. After his death, his son Yong Le became emperor. This was after a four-year campaign to defeat the rightful heir. To establish the legitimacy of his rule, Yong Le built large monuments, strengthened the Great Wall, and restored Chinese rule over Vietnam.

In 1406, Yong Le began construction of the Imperial City in Beijing. In 1421 he moved the capital from Nanjing to Beijing, after construction was sufficiently far along. The Imperial City (known today as the Forbidden City) was created to convey power and prestige. For nearly 500 years the Imperial City was home to China’s emperors. Yong Le died in 1424 and was buried with his wife and 16 concubines in a new cemetery for emperors outside of Beijing.

During his reign, Yong Le also sent a series of naval voyages into the Indian Ocean that sailed as far west as the eastern coast of Africa. Led by the court official Zheng He (JUNG HUH), seven voyages of exploration were made between 1405 and 1433. On the first voyage, nearly 28,000 men embarked on 62 ships. The largest ship was over 440 feet (134.1 m) long. (Columbus’s Santa Maria was only 75 feet [22.9 m] long.) The fleet passed through Southeast Asia and visited the western coast of India and the city-states of East Africa. It returned with items unknown in China and information about the outside world. The emperor was especially fascinated by the giraffes from Africa, and he placed them in the imperial zoo.

The voyages led to enormous profits, which alarmed traditionalists within the bureaucracy. Some of them held the Confucian view that trading activities were unworthy. Shortly after Yong Le’s death, the voyages were halted, never to be revived. One can only guess what difference it would have made if Zheng He’s fleet had reached the Americas before Columbus did.

First Contacts with the West In 1514, a Portuguese fleet arrived off the coast of China. It was the first direct contact between the Chinese Empire and Europe since the journeys of Marco Polo.

At the time, the Ming government thought little of the arrival of the Portuguese. China was at the height of its power as the most magnificent civilization on
Earth. From the perspective of the emperor, the Europeans were only an unusual form of barbarian. To the Chinese ruler, the rulers of all other countries were simply “younger brothers” of the Chinese emperor, who was seen as the Son of Heaven.

The Portuguese soon outraged Chinese officials with their behavior. They were expelled from Guangzhou (Canton) but were allowed to occupy Macao.

At first, the Portuguese had little impact on Chinese society. Portuguese ships did carry goods between China and Japan but direct trade between Europe and China remained limited. Perhaps more important than trade, however, was the exchange of ideas.

Christian missionaries had also made the long voyage to China on European merchant ships. The Jesuits were among the most active. Many of them were highly educated men who brought along instruments, such as clocks, that impressed Chinese officials and made them more receptive to Western ideas.

Both sides benefited from this early cultural exchange. Chinese scholars marveled at their ability to read better with European eyeglasses. Christian missionaries were impressed with many aspects of Chinese civilization, such as the teachings of Confucius, the printing and availability of books, and Chinese architecture. Reports back home soon made Europeans even more curious about this great civilization on the other side of the world.

**Fall of the Ming Dynasty** After a period of prosperity and growth, the Ming dynasty gradually began to decline. During the late sixteenth century, a series of weak rulers led to a period of government corruption. High taxes, caused in part by this corruption, led to peasant unrest. Crop yields declined because of harsh weather.
In the 1630s, a major epidemic greatly reduced the population in many areas. One observer in a major city wrote, “There were few signs of human life in the streets and all that was heard was the buzzing of flies.”

The suffering caused by the epidemic helped spark a peasant revolt led by Li Zicheng (LEE DZUH• CHUNG). The revolt began in central China and then spread to the rest of the country. In 1644, Li and his forces occupied the capital of Beijing (BAY• JING). The last Ming emperor committed suicide by hanging himself from a tree in the palace gardens.

The overthrow of the Ming dynasty created an opportunity for the Manchus, a farming and hunting people who lived northeast of the Great Wall in the area known today as Manchuria. The Manchus conquered Beijing, and Li Zicheng’s army fell. The victorious Manchus then declared the creation of a new dynasty called the Qing (CHING), meaning “pure.” This dynasty, created in 1644, remained in power until 1911.

The Qing Dynasty

At first, the Chinese resisted the new rulers. At one point, rebels seized the island of Taiwan just off the coast of China. The new Manchu government evacuated the coastline across from the island in preparation for an attack on the rebels. To make it easier to identify the rebels, the government ordered all men to adopt Manchu dress and hairstyles. All Chinese males were to shave their foreheads and braid their hair into a pigtail called a queue. Those who refused were to be executed: “Lose your hair or lose your head.”

The Manchus eventually adopted the Chinese political system and were gradually accepted as the legitimate rulers of the country. The Qing flourished under a series of strong early rulers. The emperors pacified the country, corrected serious social and economic ills, and restored peace and prosperity.

Qing Adaptations The Qing maintained the Ming political system but faced one major problem: the Manchus were ethnically and culturally different from their subject population. The Qing dealt with this reality in two ways.

The Way It Was

Sports & Contests

The Martial Arts in China

The phrase martial arts refers to arts of combat and self-defense. Martial arts are a significant part of Asian history and culture. In recent years, they have become part of Western culture as well. Throughout the United States, for example, one can learn Japanese karate and judo, Korean tae kwon do, and Chinese kung fu and tai chi. Chinese martial arts are especially well known because of films featuring actors trained in the martial arts.

Chinese martial arts were already highly visible during the Han dynasty. Later, in 495, a Zen Buddhist monastery in Henan province developed methods of physical training that became Shaolin Quan. This style of boxing is known to the world today as kung fu.
Martial arts in China fell into five groups: empty-hand boxing, sparring, training in pairs, group exercises involving six or more athletes, and weapons training. Weapons included bows and arrows, swords, spears, and chains with a pointed tip.

The Tang dynasty began to select military officials through martial arts contests and established regular competitions. During the Ming dynasty, the martial arts became even more developed. The classic work on martial arts, Treatise on Armament Technology, was published, and martial arts techniques were organized into schools.

One method developed during the Ming era was tai chi. This method focused on providing for better health and longer life by unlocking the flow of energy (chi) in the body. Today, martial arts such as tai chi are used as methods of exercise.

After Communists came to power in China in 1949, the government again fostered the martial arts as a competitive sport. Martial arts teams have spread throughout the world. In 1991, an International Wushu (Martial Arts) Association was formed, consisting of representatives from 38 nations. That same year, the First World Martial Arts Championship took place in Beijing.

First, the Qing tried to preserve their distinct identity within Chinese society. The Manchus, who made up only 1 percent of the population, were defined legally as distinct from everyone else in China. The Manchu nobility maintained large landholdings and received revenues from the state treasury. Other Manchus were organized into separate military units, called banners. The “bannermen” were the chief fighting force of the empire.

Second, the Qing dealt with the problem of ethnic differences by bringing Chinese into the imperial administration. More than 80 percent of lower posts were filled by Chinese, although they held a much smaller share of the top positions. The Manchus’ sharing of power won the support of many Chinese.

Reign of Kangxi Kangxi (KONG•SEE), who ruled from 1661 to 1722, was perhaps the greatest emperor in Chinese history. A person with political skill and a strong character, Kangxi took charge of the government while still in his teens and reigned for 61 years.

Kangxi rose at dawn and worked until late at night. He wrote, “One act of negligence may cause sorrow all through the country, and one moment of negligence may result in trouble for thousands of generations.” Kangxi calmed the unrest along the northern and western frontiers by force. As a patron of the arts and letters, he gained the support of scholars throughout the country.

During Kangxi’s reign, the efforts of Christian missionaries reached their height. The emperor was quite tolerant of the Christians. Several hundred officials became Catholics, as did an estimated three hundred thousand ordinary Chinese. The Christian effort was undermined by squabbling among the Western religious orders who opposed the Jesuit policy of accommodating local beliefs and practices in order to facilitate conversion. Although Kangxi tried to resolve the problem, no solution was reached. After the death of Kangxi, however, his successor began to suppress Christian activities throughout China.

Westerners in China Qianlong, who ruled from 1736 to 1795, was another outstanding Qing ruler. During his reign, however, the first signs of internal decay began to appear in the Qing dynasty. As the emperor grew older, he fell under the influence of

**Connecting to the Past**

1. **Summarizing Information** Identify at least five martial arts and the five groups of Chinese martial arts.

2. **Writing about History** Martial arts are very popular in the United States today. Why do you think this is so? Write a persuasive essay in which you present a case for offering martial arts classes as part of the physical educational program at your school.
destructive elements at court. Corrupt officials and higher taxes led to unrest in rural areas. Growing pressure on the land because of population growth also led to economic hardship for many peasants. In central China, unhappy peasants launched a revolt known as the White Lotus Rebellion (1796–1804). The revolt was suppressed, but the enormous expenses of fighting the rebels weakened the Qing dynasty.

Unfortunately for China, the Qing dynasty was declining just as Europe was seeking more trade. At first, the Qing government sold trade privileges to the Europeans. However, to limit contacts between Europeans and Chinese, the Qing confined all European traders to a small island just outside Guangzhou. The traders could reside there only from October through March and could deal only with a limited number of Chinese firms licensed by the government.

For a while, the British accepted this system. By the end of the eighteenth century, however, some British traders had begun to demand access to additional cities along the Chinese coast. At the same time, the Chinese government was under pressure from its own merchants to open China to British manufactured goods.

In 1793, a British mission led by Lord George Macartney visited Beijing to seek more liberal trade policies. However, Emperor Qianlong wrote to King George III that China had no need of “your country’s manufactures.” The Chinese would later pay for their rejection of the British request.

**Predict Consequences** Predict the consequences of the Chinese attitude toward trade with Europe.
Main Ideas
- A rapid increase in population led to rural land shortages.
- Chinese society was organized around the family.
- Architecture, decorative arts, and literature flourished during this period.

Key Terms
commercial capitalism, clan, porcelain

People to Identify
Cao Xuegin, Emperor Yong Le

Places to Locate
Imperial City, Beijing

Preview of Events
1400
1475
1550
1625
1700
1775
1850

1368
Ming dynasty begins a new era of greatness in China

1406
Renovations are begun on the Imperial City

1791
Popular novel, The Dream of the Red Chamber, is published

Guide to Reading
Economic Changes

In the sixteenth century, an Italian named Matteo Ricci expressed a great appreciation of Chinese printing:

“The Chinese method of printing has one decided advantage, namely, that once these tablets are made, they can be preserved and used for making changes in the text as often as one wishes. . . . The simplicity of Chinese printing is what accounts for the exceedingly large numbers of books in circulation here and the ridiculously low prices at which they are sold.”

—China in the Sixteenth Century, Louis J. Gallagher, trans., 1942

Europeans who lived in China found much to admire in Chinese civilization.

Between 1500 and 1800, China remained a mostly agricultural society. Nearly 85 percent of the people were small farmers. Nevertheless, the Chinese economy was changing.

The first change involved an increase in population, from less than 80 million in 1390 to more than 300 million at the end of the 1700s. The increase had several causes. A long period of peace and stability under the early Qing dynasty was one. Improvements in the food supply were another. A faster growing species of rice from Southeast Asia increased the food supply.
The population increase meant there was less land available for each family. The imperial court tried to make more land available by limiting the amount wealthy landowners could hold. By the eighteenth century, however, almost all the land that could be farmed was already being farmed. Shortages of land in rural areas led to unrest and revolts.

Another change in this period was a steady growth in manufacturing and increased trade between provinces. Taking advantage of the long era of peace and prosperity, merchants and manufacturers expanded their trade in silk, porcelain, cotton goods, and other products. Many cities experienced a growth in population.

Despite the growth in trade and manufacturing, China did not develop the kind of commercial capitalism—private business based on profit—that was emerging in Europe. Some key differences between China and Europe explain this fact.

In the first place, middle-class merchants and manufacturers in China were not as independent as those in Europe. Trade and manufacturing remained under the firm control of the government. Many Chinese looked down on trade and manufacturing as inferior to farming. The state reflected this attitude by levying heavy taxes on manufacturing and trade and low taxes on farming.

**Reading Check** **Contrasting** What was the key difference in government policy toward trade and manufacturing in Europe and in China?

**Daily Life**

Daily life in China remained similar to what it had been in earlier periods. The emphasis on family relationships, based on Confucian ideals, contributed stability to Chinese society.

**The Chinese Family** Chinese society was organized around the family. The family was expected to provide for its members’ needs, including the education of children, support of unmarried daughters, and care of the elderly. At the same time, all family members were expected to sacrifice their individual desires for the benefit of the family as a whole.

**A Population Explosion**

Between 1700 and 1800, many areas in the world experienced a population explosion. In Europe, China, India, and the Muslim world, the number of people grew dramatically. Europe, for example, went from 120 million people in 1700 to almost 200 million by 1800; China, from less than 200 million to 300 million during the same period.

Four factors were important in causing this population explosion. First, better agricultural growing conditions affected wide areas of the world and enabled people to produce more food. Second, new foods provided additional sources of nutrition. Food crops were introduced in new areas: sweet potatoes in China, corn in Africa and Europe, and potatoes in northern Europe and Russia. Third, states controlled larger territories and were able to ensure a higher degree of order. Less violence led to fewer deaths.

Finally, by the eighteenth century, people had begun to develop immunities to epidemic diseases. The migration of people after 1500 had led to devastating epidemics. For example, the arrival of Europeans in Mexico led to millions of deaths from smallpox, measles, and chicken pox among a native population that had no immunities to European diseases. By 1750, however, the number and effects of plagues and epidemic diseases had decreased in Europe, India, China, and Southwest Asia.

Many demographers believe that the world is currently experiencing another population boom. Research current population figures and predictions for the next 50 years. Check at least three sources. Is the information corroborated in three sources? If not, what reasons can explain the differences? How can you assess the reliability of the sources you used?
The ideal family unit in Qing China was the extended family, in which as many as three or four generations lived under the same roof. When sons married, they brought their wives to live with them in the family home. Unmarried daughters also remained in the house, as did parents and grandparents. Chinese society held the elderly in high regard. Aging parents knew they would be cared for by their children.

Beyond the extended family was the clan, which consisted of dozens, or even hundreds, of related families. These families were linked by a clan council of elders and a variety of common social and religious activities. The clan system made it possible for wealthier families to help poorer relatives.

**The Role of Women**  
Women were considered inferior to men in Chinese society. Only males could have a formal education and pursue a career in government or scholarship. Within the family, capable women often played strong roles. Nevertheless, the wife was clearly subordinate to the husband. Legally, she could not divorce her husband or inherit property. The husband, in contrast, could divorce his wife if she did not produce sons. He could also take a second wife. Husbands were expected to provide support for their wives and children. In many cases, the head of the family would also be responsible for providing for more than just his own wife and children.

A feature of Chinese society that restricted the mobility of women was the practice of footbinding. The origins of footbinding are not clear. Scholars believe it began among the wealthiest class of women and was later adopted by all classes. Bound feet were a status symbol. Women who had bound feet were more marriageable than those who did not, thus there was a status incentive as well as an economic incentive. An estimated one-half to two-thirds of the women in China bound their feet.

The process, begun in childhood, was very painful. Women who had their feet bound could not walk, they were carried. Not all clans looked favorably on footbinding. Women who worked in the fields or in occupations that required mobility did not bind their feet.

**Reading Check**  
Describing What was the legal status of women in China?
Cultural Developments

During the late Ming and the early Qing dynasties, traditional culture in China reached new heights.

The Chinese Novel During the Ming dynasty, a new form of literature arose that eventually evolved into the modern Chinese novel. Works in this literary form were enormously popular, especially among well-to-do urban dwellers.

One Chinese novel, *The Golden Lotus*, is considered by many to be the first realistic social novel. *The Golden Lotus* depicts the corrupt life of a wealthy landlord in the late Ming period who cruelly manipulates those around him for sex, money, and power.

*The Dream of the Red Chamber*, by Cao Xueqin, is generally considered even today to be China’s most distinguished popular novel. Published in 1791, it tells of the tragic love between two young people caught in the financial and moral disintegration of a powerful Chinese clan.

Ming and Qing Art During the Ming and the early Qing dynasties, China experienced an outpouring of artistic brilliance. In architecture, the most outstanding example is the Imperial City in Beijing. Emperor Yong Le began construction of the Imperial City—a complex of palaces and temples—in 1406. Succeeding emperors continued to add to the palace.

The Imperial City is an immense compound surrounded by six and one-half miles (10.5 km) of walls. It includes a maze of private apartments and offices, as well as stately halls for imperial audiences and banquets and spacious gardens. Because it was off-limits to commoners, the compound was known as the Forbidden City.

The decorative arts also flourished in this period. Perhaps the most famous of all the arts of the Ming Era was blue-and-white porcelain. Europeans admired the beauty of this porcelain and collected it in great quantities. Different styles of porcelain were produced during the reign of individual emperors.

Reading Check

**Checking for Understanding**
1. Define commercial capitalism, clan, porcelain.
2. Identify Cao Xueqin, Emperor Yong Le.
3. Locate Imperial City, Beijing.
4. Explain the significance of the Chinese extended family.
5. Summarize the plot of *The Dream of the Red Chamber*.

**Critical Thinking**
6. Draw Conclusions Although legally inferior to men, what important roles did women in the peasant class have?
7. Identifying Information Use a diagram to identify the economic changes in China from 1500 to 1800.

**Analyzing Visuals**
8. Examine the picture of women spinning silk shown on page 275 of your text. How does this picture reflect the role of women in Chinese society during the eighteenth century?

**Writing About History**
9. Persuasive Writing Pretend you are a Chinese mother talking to your daughter in 1700. Using research or your own ideas, convince her that foot-binding is necessary and beneficial.
Finding Exact Location on a Map

Why Learn This Skill?

A friend tells you that she lives at the northwest corner of Vine Street and Oak Avenue. By giving you the names of two streets that cross, she has pinpointed her exact location. We use a similar system to identify the exact location of any place on Earth.

Learning the Skill

Over many centuries, cartographers developed a grid system of imaginary lines—lines of latitude and lines of longitude. Lines of latitude run east and west around the earth. Because they always remain the same distance from each other, they are also called parallels. The parallel lines of latitude measure distance north and south of the Equator, which is located at 0 degrees latitude. Each line of latitude is one degree, or 69 miles (110 km), from the next. There are 90 latitude lines between the Equator and each pole. For example, New York City lies 41 degrees north of the Equator, or 41ºN.

Lines of longitude, or meridians, run north and south from pole to pole. Unlike lines of latitude, lines of longitude are not always the same distance from each other. Lines of longitude are farthest apart at the Equator, and they intersect at the North and South Poles. The prime meridian marks 0 degrees longitude and runs through Greenwich, England, and western Africa. Longitude lines are measured by their distance east and west of the prime meridian up to 180 degrees. New York City, for example, lies 74 degrees west of the prime meridian, or 74ºW.

With this system we can pinpoint the “grid address” of any place on Earth. For example, if we wanted to find a grid address for New York City, we would first find the line of latitude closest to it. Then, by following this line, we would locate the nearest line of longitude to cross it. The point where the lines intersect is the grid address. New York City’s grid address would be 41ºN, 74ºW.

Practicing the Skill

Use the map above to answer the following questions.

1. What is Ise’s approximate grid address?
2. What city sits at approximately 35ºN, 140ºE?
3. What is Osaka’s approximate grid address?
4. What is Mt. Fuji’s approximate grid address?

Applying the Skill

Create a travel itinerary for a tour of the ruins of ancient Egypt, Greece, or Southwest Asia. Choose at least 10 sites to visit. Draw a map of each region, including grid lines. On the map, identify each site’s approximate grid location.

Glencoe’s Skillbuilder Interactive Workbook, Level 2, provides instruction and practice in key social studies skills.
Main Ideas
- Japan was unified by three powerful political figures.
- Between 1500 and 1800, Japan experienced many peasant uprisings.
- Korea could not withstand invasions by the Japanese and Manchus.

Key Terms
daimyo, han, hostage system, eta

People to Identify
Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, Tokugawa Ieyasu, Matsuo Basho

Places to Locate
Kyoto, Osaka, Edo, Korea

Preview of Events

- c. 1450
  - Power of shogun collapses

- 1568
  - Japan’s unification begins

- 1750
  - Edo is one of the largest cities in the world

Reading Strategy
Categorizing Information Using a diagram like the one below, categorize the different elements of Japanese culture.

Voices from the Past

In 1649, the Japanese government issued an edict to be read in every village:

“Peasants are people without sense or forethought. Therefore they must not give rice to their wives and children at harvest time, but must save food for the future. They should eat millet, vegetables, and other coarse food instead of rice. Even the fallen leaves of plants should be saved. The husband must work in the fields, the wife must work at the loom. However good-looking a wife may be, if she neglects her household duties by drinking tea or sightseeing or rambling on the hillsides, she must be divorced. Peasants must wear only cotton or hemp. They may not smoke tobacco. It is harmful to health, it takes up time and costs money.”


The life of the Japanese peasant was a difficult one, and there were many peasant revolts between 1500 and 1800.

The Three Great Unifiers

At the end of the fifteenth century, Japan was in chaos. The centralized power of the shogunate had collapsed. Daimyo, heads of noble families, controlled their own lands and warred with their neighbors. Soon, however, a dramatic reversal would unify Japan. The process of unification began in the late sixteenth century with three powerful political figures.
The first was Oda Nobunaga (oh•DAH noh•boo•NAH•gah). Nobunaga seized the imperial capital of Kyoto and placed the reigning shogun under his control. During the next few years, he tried to consolidate his rule throughout the central plains.

Nobunaga was succeeded by Toyotomi Hideyoshi (toh•yoh•TOH•mee HEE•day•YOH•shee), a farmer’s son who had become a military commander. Hideyoshi located his capital at Osaka. By 1590, he had persuaded most of the daimyo on the Japanese islands to accept his authority.

After Hideyoshi’s death in 1598, Tokugawa Ieyasu (toh•kuh•GAH•wah ee•YAH•soo), the powerful daimyo of Edo (modern-day Tokyo), took control of Japan. Ieyasu took the title of shogun in 1603. The Tokugawa rulers completed the restoration of central authority begun by Nobunaga and Hideyoshi. Tokugawa shoguns remained in power at their capital at Edo until 1868. Tokugawa rule brought a long period of peace known as the “Great Peace.”

Under Tokugawa Ieyasu, however, all missionaries were expelled, and Japanese Christians were persecuted.

European merchants were the next to go. Only a small Dutch community in Nagasaki was allowed to remain in Japan. Dutch ships were permitted to dock at Nagasaki harbor only once a year and could remain for only two or three months.

Explaining What was the effect of the Jesuit practice of destroying shrines?

Tokugawa Rule

The Tokugawa rulers set out to establish control of the feudal system that had governed Japan for over three hundred years. As before, the state was divided into about 250 separate territories called hans, or domains. Each was ruled by a daimyo. In theory, the

Jesuit priests in Japan
daimyo were independent, because they were able to support themselves from taxes on their lands. In actuality, the shogunate controlled the daimyo by a hostage system.

In this system, the daimyo were required to maintain two residences—one in their own lands and one in Edo, where the court of the shogun was located. When the daimyo was absent from his residence in Edo, his family was forced to stay there.

During this long period of peace—known as the “Great Peace”—brought by Tokugawa rule, the samurai who had served the daimyo gradually ceased to be a warrior class. Many of them became managers on the lands of the daimyo.

Reading Check Explaining What was the hostage system? What was its effect on the daimyo?

Economic and Social Changes

A major economic change took place under the Tokugawa. Since the fourteenth century, many upper-class Japanese, influenced by Confucianism, had considered trade and industry beneath them. Under the Tokugawa, trade and industry began to flourish as never before, especially in the growing cities of Edo, Kyoto, and Osaka.

By 1750, Edo had a population of over a million and was one of the largest cities in the world. Banking flourished, and paper money became the normal medium of exchange in business transactions. A Japanese merchant class emerged and began to play a significant role in the life of the Japanese nation.

What effect did these economic changes have on Japanese peasants, who made up most of the population? Some farm families benefited by exploiting the growing demand for cash crops (crops grown for sale). Most peasants, however, experienced both declining profits and rising costs and taxes. Many were forced to become tenants or to work as hired help.

When rural conditions became desperate, some peasants revolted. Almost seven thousand peasant revolts and demonstrations against high taxes took place during the Tokugawa Era.

The Class System Social changes also marked the Tokugawa Era. These changes affected the class system and the role of women. During this era, Japan’s class system became rigid. Rulers established strict
legal distinctions among the four main classes: warriors, peasants, artisans, and merchants. Intermarriage between classes was forbidden.

The emperor and imperial court families were at the very top of the political and social structure. Next came the warrior class composed of the shogun, daimyo, samurai, and ronin. The shogun was supreme ruler below the emperor and distributor of the national rice crop. The local daimyo received land and rice from the shogun in exchange for military service. Samurai received rice from the daimyo in exchange for their services as advisors, castle guards, and government officials. Finally, the ronin were warriors without masters who traveled the countryside seeking employment.

Below the warriors were the farmers (peasants). Farmers produced rice and held a privileged position in society, but were often poor. The artisan class included craftspeople such as swordmakers and carpenters. Finally, the merchant class distributed food and essential goods. This class was at the bottom of the social hierarchy because they profited from the labor of others.

Below these classes were Japan’s outcasts, the eta. The Tokugawa enacted severe laws to regulate the places of residence, the dress, and even the hairstyles of the eta.

The Role of Women The role of women in Tokugawa society became somewhat more restricted. Especially in the samurai class, where Confucian values were highly prized, the rights of females were restricted. Male heads of households had broad authority over property, marriage, and divorce.

Among the common people, women were also restricted. Parents arranged marriages, and a wife was expected to move in with her husband’s family. A wife who did not meet the expectations of her husband or his family was likely to be divorced. Still, women were generally valued for their roles as childbearers and homemakers among the common people. Both sexes worked in the fields as well, although men did the heavier labor.

Reading Check Explaining In what ways were the rights of women of the common class restricted?

Tokugawa Culture

In the Tokugawa Era, a new set of cultural values began to appear, especially in the cities. It included the rise of popular literature written by and for the townspeople.

People In History

Matsuo Basho
1644–1694—Japanese poet

Basho was one of the chief literary figures in Tokugawa Japan. Although he lived most of his life in Kyoto and Edo, he also traveled to many other parts of the country. He was concerned with the search for the meaning of life and found answers to his quest in nature. His poems, called haiku, are grounded in natural images. This feature is evident in the following examples, which are among his most famous poems:

- The ancient pond
- A frog leaps in
- The sound of the water.
- On the withered branch
- A crow has alighted—
- The end of autumn.

Literature The best examples of the new urban fiction in the seventeenth century are the works of Ihara Saikaku, considered one of Japan’s greatest writers. Saikaku’s greatest novel, Five Women Who Loved Love, tells of a search for love by five women of the merchant class. The women are willing to die for love—and all but one eventually do.

Much of the popular literature of the Tokugawa Era was lighthearted and intended to please its audiences. Poetry remained a more serious form of literary expression. Exquisite poetry was written in the seventeenth century by the greatest of all Japanese poets, Matsuo Basho.

Theater and Art A new world of entertainment in the cities gave rise in the theater to Kabuki, which emphasized action, music, and dramatic gestures to entertain its viewers. Early Kabuki dramas dealt with the world of teahouses and dance halls in the cities.

Government officials feared that such activities could corrupt the nation’s morals. Thus, the government forbade women to appear on stage. Officials therefore created a new professional class of male actors to impersonate female characters.

Art also reflected the changes in Japanese culture under the Tokugawa regime. The shogun’s order that all daimyo and their families have residences in Edo sparked an increase in building. Nobles competed to erect the most magnificent mansions with lavish and beautiful furnishings. The abundant use of gold foil on
walls and ceilings helped reflect the light in dark castle rooms, where windows were often small.

Japanese art was enriched by ideas from other cultures. Japanese pottery makers borrowed techniques and designs from Korea to create handsome ceramic pieces. The Japanese studied Western medicine, astronomy, languages, and even painting styles. In turn, Europeans wanted Japanese ceramics, which were prized as highly as the ceramics of the Chinese.

**Reading Check** Summarizing Why were government officials concerned about Kabuki theater?

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**Korea: The Hermit Kingdom**

The Yi dynasty in Korea, founded at the end of the fourteenth century, remained in power during the entire Tokugawa Era in Japan. From their capital at Hanyang (modern-day Seoul), Yi rulers patterned their society after that of their powerful Chinese neighbors to the north.

Korean rulers tried to keep the country isolated from the outside world, earning it the name “the Hermit Kingdom.” They were not always successful, however. A Japanese force under Toyotomi Hideyoshi invaded Korea in the late sixteenth century. Although the Japanese invaders were defeated, Korea was devastated, and the Yi dynasty was weakened. In the 1630s, a Manchu army invaded northern Korea and forced the Yi dynasty to become subject to China. Korea remained largely untouched by European merchants and Christian missionaries.

**Reading Check** Summarizing Why was Korea called “the Hermit Kingdom”?

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**Section 3 Assessment**

**Checking for Understanding**

1. Define daimyo, han, hostage system, eta.
2. Identify Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, Tokugawa Ieyasu, Matsuo Basho.
3. Locate Kyoto, Osaka, Edo, Korea.
4. Sequence the events that led to Japan’s policy of isolation.
5. List the four main social classes that existed during the Tokugawa Era. Who was at the top of the social structure, and who was at the bottom?

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**Critical Thinking**

6. Draw Inferences How were most peasants affected by the economic changes in Japan?
7. Organizing Information Using a chart like the one below, show how the new urban centers in Japan influenced the arts and entertainment.

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**Analyzing Visuals**

8. Examine the photograph of a Kabuki actor shown above. What does this photograph tell you about Japanese Kabuki theater, and how does this theater compare to and contrast with the different forms of theater (opera, pantomime, realistic drama) that developed in the West?

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**Writing About History**

9. Descriptive Writing Imagine that you are the literate wife of a samurai. Write a journal entry that describes your relationship to your husband, your children, and your mother-in-law.
The Japanese Discover Firearms

The Portuguese brought guns to Japan in the sixteenth century. In this selection, the daimyo of a small island off the southern tip of Japan provides an explanation of how to use the new weapons. Obviously, he is fascinated by the results.

“There are two leaders among the traders. In their hands they carried something two or three feet [6 or .9 m] long, straight on the outside with a passage inside, and made of a heavy substance. The inner passage runs through it although it is closed at the end. At its side, there is an opening which is the passageway for fire. Its shape defies comparison with anything I know. To use it, fill it with powder and small lead pellets. Set up a small target on a bank. Grip the object in your hand, compose your body, and closing one eye, apply fire to the opening. Then the pellet hits the target squarely. The explosion is like lightning and the report like thunder. Bystanders must cover their ears. This thing with one blow can smash a mountain of silver and a wall of iron. If one sought to do mischief in another man’s domain and he was touched by it, he would lose his life instantly. . . . Lord Tokitaka saw it and thought it was the wonder of wonders. He did not know its name at first nor the details of its use. Then someone called it ‘ironarms.’

Disregarding the high price of the arms, Tokitaka purchased from the aliens two pieces of the firearms for his family treasure. As for the art of grinding, sifting, and mixing of the powder, Tokitaka let his retainer learn it. Tokitaka occupied himself, morning and night, and without rest in handling the arms. As a result, he was able to convert the misses of his early experiments into hits—a hundred hits in a hundred attempts.”

—Lord Tokitaka, On the Use of Firearms

Analyzing Primary Sources

1. Who introduced firearms to Japan in the sixteenth century?
2. Considering the description of the firearm the Portuguese brought, what do you think we would call it today?
3. In the last paragraph, to whom does the term aliens refer?
Using Key Terms
1. Military units called ______ were strategically placed throughout China as the chief fighting force of the Manchu Empire.
2. Trade and manufacturing in China did not develop into ______ as it did in Europe.
3. Chinese pottery makers were famous for their blue and white ______.
5. The shogunate controlled the daimyo by what has been called a ______, forcing the daimyo lords to leave their families in their Edo residence when the daimyo lords were away.
6. Japan was divided into 250 separate territories called ______, each ruled by a daimyo lord.
7. During the Tokugawa Era, Japan’s class system became rigid with four classes and an underclass of outcasts, called the ______.

Reviewing Key Facts
8. Culture What was the Chinese view of Europeans, and how did interactions with Europeans impact Chinese society?
9. Government How did the Qing government solve the problem of being ethnically and culturally different from the people they governed?
10. Culture Why is the Imperial City in Beijing called the Forbidden City?
11. Society Explain how the samurai gradually ceased to be a warrior class.
12. Government How did the completion of the Grand Canal impact China?
13. Economics What was the Chinese attitude toward European products?
14. Society Why did Toyotomi Hideyoshi turn against the Jesuit missionaries?
15. History What year did the Portuguese make official contact with China?
16. Geography What is the current name of Edo, Japan? Why was Edo an important city to the Tokugawa rulers?
17. Geography Where was the ancient capital of Korea located?

Critical Thinking
18. Making Generalizations Do you believe that the plots of The Golden Lotus and The Dream of the Red Chamber would appeal to Western readers? Give your reasons.
19. Analyzing How might the surgeon general of the United States today respond to the portion of the Japanese government’s edict in 1649 that said, “They [peasants] should eat millet and vegetables and other coarse food instead of rice . . . . They may not smoke tobacco. It is harmful to health . . . .”?
Self-Check Quiz
Visit the Glencoe World History—Modern Times Web site at wh.mt.glencoe.com and click on Chapter 9—Self-Check Quiz to prepare for the Chapter Test.

Writing About History
20. Expository Writing Compare the isolationist periods of China and Japan. Discuss each government’s reasons for isolation, as well as the impact of isolation on their societies.

Analyzing Sources
Read the following excerpts from A Story That Matters, page 266.

“...there is nothing we lack. We have never set much store on strange or ingenious objects, nor do we need any more of your country’s manufactures.”
—Emperor Qianlong

“...that superiority which Englishmen, wherever they go, cannot conceal.”
—Lord George Macartney

21. Compare the attitudes of Lord Macartney and Emperor Qianlong.

22. What have been some of the historical results of the political views of China and Britain?

Applying Technology Skills
23. Creating an Electronic Database Conduct outside research to learn more about the Tokugawa emperors in Japan. Then create an electronic database listing names of the emperors, dates each ruled, their significant accomplishments, and any problems that arose in Japan during their reigns. Share your database with your class.

Making Decisions
24. Imagine you are a Jesuit missionary in Japan. What would lead you to destroy Japanese religious shrines? When it becomes evident that the Japanese are outraged by your actions, what would you do and why?

Analyzing Maps and Charts
Study the map on this page to answer the following questions.

25. How many major daimyo clans existed during the Tokugawa Era?

26. How many miles separate Uesugi and Shimazu?

27. Which clans are located at the same latitudes?

Standardized Test Practice
Directions: Use the passage and your knowledge of world history to answer the following question.

“...it seems to be quite remarkable... that in a kingdom of almost limitless expanse and innumerable population... [that has] a well-equipped army and navy... neither the King nor his people ever think of waging a war of aggression.”
—Journals of Matteo Ricci

The author suggests that people in the Ming dynasty
F lived in a militaristic society.
G adopted a “closed country” policy.
H were impoverished and starving.
J were prosperous but focused inward.

Test-Taking Tip: Do not rely on your memory of the passage to answer this question. Instead, look at each answer choice and check it against the quote.