

CHAPTER 26-TRADITION AND CHANGE IN EAST ASIA

In 1368, the Ming drove the last of the Mongol Yuan dynasty out of China. The Ming restored traditional Chinese culture, centralized the government, and because they still faced invasions from the north, rebuilt and repaired the Great Wall. The Ming Dynasty suffered as pirates on the coast attacked cities and interfered with trade. There was also government corruption, a series of famines and peasant revolts. In 1644 the Manchu came down from Manchuria and, with the help of the peasants, brought an end to the Ming Dynasty.

The Manchu, pastoral nomads with a strong military tradition like the Mongols, started the Qing Dynasty. They had first captured Korea and Mongolia before coming into China. They remained in control in part because of a policy that forbade intermarriage with the Chinese that kept the Manchu an ethnic elite. Among the best known of the Qing emperors were Kangxi (1661–1722), an effective ruler who conquered Taiwan and extended his control into Central Asia and Tibet, and Qianlong (1736–1795), a sophisticated and enlightened ruler who extended the Chinese empire south into Vietnam, Burma, and Nepal.

Both the Ming and Qing emperors adopt the idea of the “Son of Heaven,” meaning the emperor had heavenly powers but also an obligation to maintain order. The scholar-bureaucrats who were trained in Confucian ideas and had passed the civil service exams did the real governing of the empire. The civil examinations, based on Confucian texts, created a meritocracy in which the brightest men in China became part of the government. The Confucian-based exams also gave China a sense of common values.

The basic unit of Chinese society remained the family with filial piety, respect for the oldest male, and, by extension, the emperor was held in the highest esteem. It was a strict patriarchal model. In it, boys were preferred over girls. Marriage was seen as a way to continue the male line and widows encouraged to commit suicide. Foot binding was a way to control women’s freedom.

The increased importation of new American food crops boosted production and increased population, allowing for cheap labor for manufacturing and trade. China became a major trading power, but this brought contact with foreign merchants who were seen as a threat. Because of such abundant labor, both the Ming and the Qing considered technology unnecessary. There was also still a class system. The educated and wealthy were at the top, and below them, a large class of peasants, and an artistic as well as a business class. Both dynasties (Ming and Qing) supported education by setting up schools to prepare students for the civil service exams and by expanding libraries and funding an encyclopedia.

In 1552, a Jesuit, Matteo Ricci, who spent sixty years in China and learned Chinese, impressed the Ming with math and science and began to make a small number of Christian converts. While the Jesuits were tolerant of Chinese theology, later missionaries were not as tolerant and a struggle began which involved the Pope and the Emperor Kangxi. The Pope was less tolerant of Chinese theology and Kangxi denounced Christianity. As a result, the missions in China came to an end.

In Japan, the Tokugawa shogunate ended the warfare between the feudal states and imposed a military government (*bakufu*) that controlled the local lords

and attempted to also isolate Japan from the outside world. In part because of this peace, agricultural production in Japan doubled between 1600 and 1700 and resulted in a rise in population. This brought a rise in the power in the merchant class and a decline in the power of the samurai. The Japanese adopted neo-Confucianism, but there was also a drive to establish a Japanese identity and distinct culture, especially in the urban centers. Japan's contact with the outside world remained largely limited.

Key Concept 4.1. Globalizing Networks of Communication and Exchange

- IV. The new global circulation of goods was facilitated by royal chartered European monopoly companies that took silver from Spanish colonies in the Americas to purchase Asian goods for the Atlantic markets, but regional markets continued to flourish in Afro-Eurasia by using established commercial practices and new transoceanic shipping services developed by European merchants.
- V. The new connections between the Eastern and Western hemispheres resulted in the Columbian Exchange.
- VI. The increase in interactions between newly connected hemispheres and intensification of connections within hemispheres expanded the spread and reform of existing religions and created syncretic belief systems and practices.

Key Concept 4.2. New Forms of Social Organization and Modes of Production

- I. Traditional peasant agriculture increased and changed, plantations expanded, and demand for labor increased. These changes both fed and responded to growing global demand for raw materials and finished products.
- II. As new social and political elites changed, they also restructured new ethnic, racial and gender hierarchies.

Key Concept 4.3. State Consolidation and Imperial Expansion

- I. Rulers used a variety of methods to legitimize and consolidate their power.