

 **POWER BASICS**®

World History II

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UNIT 4

Europe Colonizes the Globe



LESSON 12: The Response of China and Japan to European Expansionism



GOAL: To explain expansionism; to discuss how China and Japan responded to European nations' attempts to trade with them

WORDS TO KNOW

expansionism

trading station

porcelain

PLACES TO KNOW

Guangzhou

Macao

Nagasaki

European Expansionism

Expansionism is the term for a country's policy of expanding its territory and influence. All of the great European trading nations you have been reading about—Spain, France, England, Portugal, and the Netherlands—were following expansionist policies during the 1500s, 1600s, and 1700s.

The countries were expanding in many ways. They were expanding economically as they traded more and more goods in more and more places. They were expanding geographically as they established colonies and trading posts around the world. And they were expanding their influence as their peoples and their ideas came to these places.

TIP



You know that when something *expands*, it grows larger. This gives you a clue to what expansionism means.

It is important to remember that the Europeans never went into “uninhabited lands.” There were already native peoples nearly everywhere they went. After all, the Europeans were seeking trade—trade with other people. In the New World, the great tracts of lands the Europeans claimed

for themselves were already inhabited by Native Americans. Whenever a nation expands, it usually does so at the cost of other peoples. This was certainly true in the case of European expansionism in the 1500s, 1600s, and 1700s.

In this lesson, you will see how two nations—China and Japan—coped with the European desire to trade with them.

■ PRACTICE 77: European Expansionism

Circle the letter of the correct answer to each of the following questions.

1. What is *expansionism*?
 - a. when a country's policy is to expand its territory and influence
 - b. when a country trades with other countries
 - c. when a country thinks its culture is the best
 - d. all of the above

2. What European nations participated in expansionism?
 - a. Spain, France, and Portugal
 - b. England and the Netherlands
 - c. Japan and China
 - d. both *a* and *b*

Trade with China

Europeans had traded with China on a limited basis for centuries. Ever since Marco Polo returned from his voyage there, Europeans had been fascinated with China—and with Chinese goods. One of the trade goods that so fascinated Europeans was **porcelain**, or “china.” It was not available anywhere else in the world. How it was made remained a mystery to the Europeans until about 1700.

But China was not an easy nation with which to trade. Within China, merchants were members of the lowest social class. Merchants did not produce anything, as craftspeople and peasant farmers did. Because they made their living selling the results of the labor of others, they were held in low regard. Moreover, the Chinese had long considered agriculture, not trade, to be the basis of their economy.

Chinese rulers had a similar outlook on foreign trade. They did not believe that foreign trade would increase the wealth of the empire. Instead, they were used to receiving tribute, or taxes, from outlying nations that they had conquered. Furthermore, foreign trade might mean foreign influence. Such influence might corrupt Chinese culture and turn the peasants against the Chinese government.

Despite these obstacles, Europeans were determined to open a maritime, or sea-based, European-Chinese trade.

■ PRACTICE 78: Trade with China

Decide if each statement below is true (T) or false (F). Write the correct letter on the line before each statement.

_____ 1. China was an easy nation with which to trade.

_____ 2. The Chinese held merchants in low regard.

_____ 3. Chinese rulers were afraid of foreign influence.

Portuguese and Dutch Trade with China

The first European nation to open maritime trade with China was Portugal. Portuguese ships first reached Chinese shores in 1514. But, it wasn't until 1557—some 43 years later—that the Chinese agreed to trade with the Portuguese. After decades of negotiation, they allowed the Portuguese to establish a tiny trading station at **Macao**. (A **trading station** was a small group of buildings where traders lived, goods were stored, and trades took place.) Over time, many similar trading stations would spring up around eastern Asia.

As you have already learned, Chinese rulers feared that foreigners would change Chinese culture. And, as you've also read, Europeans continually sent missionaries to other lands in hopes of spreading

Christianity. The Chinese fear and the European hope collided when Portugal opened trade with China.

The Portuguese sent Christian missionaries to their trading station in Macao. The missionaries, who were educated men, impressed the Chinese emperor and his court. They added to Chinese knowledge about astronomy and the calendar. Because of this contribution, they were allowed to stay. Many even served in important posts in the Chinese government.

Over time, however, many powerful Chinese began to resent the missionaries. They thought foreigners had no role in the Chinese government. They were concerned that the missionaries would spread their religion. As a result, in the 1700s, all Portuguese were forced to withdraw from China.

Another reason for the Portuguese withdrawal was the growth of Dutch trade in the region. The Dutch were coming in greater numbers, and they provided stiff competition for the Portuguese.

■ PRACTICE 79: Portuguese and Dutch Trade with China

Match each description with a term from the list below. Write the letter of the correct term on the line before each description.

- a. missionaries b. Macao c. trading station

- _____ 1. a small compound of buildings where traders lived, goods were stored, and trades took place.
- _____ 2. the Portuguese trading station in China
- _____ 3. learned men who impressed the Chinese emperor and his court

British Trade with China

The British established maritime trade with China in 1699. They built a small trading station at **Guangzhou** (formerly known as Canton). The company that traded with China was the British East India Company.

Like the Portuguese before them, the British faced severe restrictions in China. They were not allowed to leave the trading station, which was built outside of the city. They could only trade with a few merchants, who were handpicked by the Chinese government. And their ships were only allowed to dock at Guangzhou. Goods had to be carried hundreds of miles to the coast, adding to the cost.

Why would the British sail so far for such limited trade? The answer is tea. The Europeans—especially the British—had developed a tremendous thirst for this new drink. Chinese tea was the best, and it commanded a handsome price in the markets back in England. Chinese silk was also in demand.

Over the next two centuries, British trade with China continued to grow. Hundreds of ships, loaded with tea and other goods, brought a taste of China to England.

■ PRACTICE 80: British Trade with China

Circle the letter of the correct answer to each of the following questions.

1. Where was the British trading station in China?
 - a. Macao
 - b. Beijing
 - c. Shanghai
 - d. Guangzhou

2. What did the British want to buy from the Chinese?
 - a. corn
 - b. tobacco
 - c. tea
 - d. coffee

Trade with Japan

As you learned in Lesson 6, Japan remained isolated from other countries for centuries. This began to change in the mid-1500s with the arrival of European traders. The first to arrive were the Portuguese.

Many Japanese noblemen, called daimyos, welcomed the Portuguese traders. Here was a chance for the daimyos to increase their wealth. For decades, Portugal engaged in successful trade with Japan.

But, not surprisingly, the traders were followed by the Christian missionaries. These missionaries concentrated on converting the daimyos. Then newly Christian daimyos encouraged the people they led to adopt the religion. The tactic worked well. Half a million Japanese converted to Christianity.

The rulers of Japan viewed the spread of Christianity as a threat to Japanese culture and their rule. They also felt that the foreign traders were influencing Japanese culture in other ways.

Meanwhile, the Dutch—Portugal's constant rival for trade in eastern Asia—also began to trade with the Japanese. The Dutch set up a small trading station in the port city of **Nagasaki**. Spain and Britain also set up trading posts.

Now there were people from several foreign countries on Japanese soil. This, combined with the spread of Christianity brought by the foreigners, was too much for the Japanese rulers. They decided to stop all foreign trade, despite the wealth it brought.

And stop it they did, in a dramatic fashion. In about 1640, the leaders of Japan simply closed the country to foreigners. Under the new rules, no foreigner was allowed into Japan. No Japanese were allowed to leave the country.

The years of isolation were also years of peace in Japan. A rich Japanese culture was formed. The type of drama called Kabuki developed. It included exciting plots and lively action on the stage. Another art form that developed in these years was the woodblock print. These prints could be made cheaply enough to reach a wide audience. They quickly became popular, and have stayed popular ever since.

Even without foreign trade, the economy was healthy. More and more, Japan's economy moved from farming to manufacturing and trade. This was good news for the growing merchant class. But it was bad news for the daimyos and samurai. Their wealth was based on land. As the economy changed, their wealth grew less. Also, the clear class lines began to blur. Rich merchants bought the rank of samurai. Some samurai and farmers went to cities and became merchants themselves. The rigid structure of Japanese society was starting to fall apart.

■ IN REAL LIFE



Even today Japan remains relatively “closed” to outside trade. American businesses often complain about how the Japanese government makes it difficult for Americans to conduct business there. In part, this is a result of Japan's long-standing preference for isolation.

■ PRACTICE 81: Trade with Japan

Decide if each statement below is true (T) or false (F). Write the correct letter on the line before each statement.

- _____ 1. Portuguese traders arrived in Japan in the mid-1500s.
- _____ 2. Japan closed itself to European traders in about 1640.
- _____ 3. The Japanese rulers closed Japan because they were afraid of foreign influence.
- _____ 4. Without foreign influence, Japanese culture grew weak.