East Asia Stability Meets Foreign Traders

Bentley - Chapter 27
AMSCCO - Chapter 20
Introduction

• In contrast to Sub-Saharan Africa, Asian lands (particularly China and Japan) benefited from the new global connections of the 1450-1750 era.
• Also, in contrast to the Americas, the Chinese and Japanese did not succumb to European political or economic control.
• Until the 19th century, they controlled their own affairs.
Introduction

• The governments and elites of Ming and Qing China and Tokugawa Japan were intensely conservative in this period, emphasizing Confucian values of self-discipline, loyalty, obedience, and patriarchy.

• Christian missionaries made little headway in their attempts to convert east Asians and were seen by the elites and the governors as politically destabilizing.
Introduction

• Most European merchandise had little appeal to the elite Chinese and Japanese, and the Confucian bias against merchants added to the elite disdain of European traders.

• The Chinese in particular benefited from an influx of foodstuffs from the “Columbian Exchange,” and the influx of silver from Spanish-American mines.
Introduction

- Even though they were at the bottom of the Confucian social scale, 18th-century east Asian merchants were becoming increasingly wealthy and prominent.
- In Japan, urban-based merchants patronized the “floating worlds” of geishas, sumo wrestling, and kabuki theater, creating their own subculture of Tokugawa Japan.
Introduction

- Jesuit, Dominican, and Franciscan priests sought converts in China and Japan.
  - The Jesuits tried to convert the elite, while the other orders worked among the poor.
  - The contentious relations between the Christian orders did nothing to impress the Chinese and Japanese elites, who had little attraction for Christianity.
Introduction

- Eventually, both the Chinese and Japanese governments would expel the missionaries and severely limit the contact European merchants could have with their own people.
- By doing so, they also shut themselves off from the “cutting edge” of scientific knowledge and technology, which was found in western Europe by the late 17th and 18th centuries.
Taking a step back

• In the previous time period, China had been ruled by the Yuan/Mongol dynasty.
  • The Yuan had relegated the Chinese to a lower status than Mongols and other non-Chinese foreigners.
  • There was a decline in the power of Confucians.
  • The status of merchants was increased which the Confucian bureaucrats resented.
The Ming Dynasty

• Ming = “brilliance”
  • This is what its founder Hongwu hoped to return to Chinese government after nearly 300 years of Mongol rule.
  • The Ming went to great lengths to erase all remains of Mongol cultural elements and to restore Chinese traditions.
    • They encouraged people to abandon Yuan names and dress.
The Ming Dynasty

- They built a powerful imperial state, revived and staffed the civil service system with Confucian scholars, and promoted Confucian social precepts.
- They sponsored imperial academies and colleges devoted to studies of the Chinese past.
- They produced a deeply conservative government whose goal was to maintain stability in a large, agrarian state.
The Ming Dynasty

• To rebuild China to its traditional image, Honwu relied on two specific factions:
  • The Mandarins who were imperial officials who traveled throughout the realm overseeing government policies.
  • The Eunuchs who acted in his name at court and who he believed not to be a threat as they could not father families who might rise to challenge imperial authority.
The Ming Dynasty

• Responding to perceived outside threats to China, Emperor Yongle moved the capital to Beijing (Forbidden City palace complex) to keep a close watch on the Mongols and other northern invaders.

• He also launched a series of expensive, but short-lived naval expeditions through the Indian Ocean to demonstrate the superiority of Chinese culture.
The Voyages of Zheng He

- A Muslim Admiral (and court eunuch) who started his first of 7 voyages in 1405
- The Fleet at its height included more than 300 ships and 25,000 people
- Brought back exotic treasures including a giraffe
The Voyages of Zheng He

• Confucian scholars believed that interaction and trade with foreign cultures threatened China’s social order due to the agrarian lifestyle
• Emperor Zhu Gaozhi thought the expeditions were too expensive
• Made building a ship with more than two masts a punishable offense
• A positive effect was it stopped pirate activities off the coast of China
The Ming Dynasty

• Later Ming emperors would restore, rebuild, and refortify the Great Wall to more than 1500 miles of walls over 35’ high, with watch and signal towers as well as living quarter for deployed Chinese troops.
Interactions with Europeans

• Portugal visited China in 1514 after constructing ports along the Indian Ocean
• This led to others trying to get into China including Jesuits
• Tried to win them over with their knowledge of science, but the Chinese considered them barbaric
• Because the Portuguese traders ignored their government, the British eventually forced them out of South Asia in 1620
Ming Decline

• Reasons
  • Pirates and smugglers disrupted trade and taxes in coastal and even interior provinces.
  • An increasingly extravagant lifestyle occupied Ming emperors’ time and attention, and eunuchs isolated and manipulated the entire imperial household to enrich their own power and position.
  • In the mid 17th-century, a series of famines struck China and the Ming emperors did not respond effectively leading to peasant revolts.
  • Invasions from peoples from Manchuria who portrayed themselves as avengers who could save China from the corrupt Ming.
The Qing Dynasty

- The Manchus (1644-1911), invaders from Manchuria to the northeast
  - Under the leader Nurhaci, the Manchus were unified into a powerful, centralized state and effective military force that captured both Korea and Mongolia before moving toward China.
The Qing Dynasty

• By the end of the 17th-century, the Manchus had won the support of many of the Ming military and the Ming Confucian scholars who disliked the luxury-loving Ming emperors and resented the increasingly powerful eunuchs.

• The Manchus overwhelmed the Chinese forces and proclaimed the Qing dynasty in 1644.
The Qing Dynasty

- Though well-schooled in Confucian precepts and Chinese culture and tradition, the conquering Manchus were careful to preserve their own ethnic and cultural identity.
  - Forbade intermarriage with Chinese.
  - Chinese could not travel to Manchuria or learn the Manchurian language.
  - Chinese men were forced to grow a Manchu-style queue as a sign of submission to the dynasty.
The Qing Dynasty

• After displacing the Ming, the Qing dynasty ruled China until the early 20th-century due to strong imperial leadership.
  • Manchu emperors had a reputation for effective rule until the 19th-century, when they eventually succumbed to the lure of luxurious living just as their Ming predecessors had done.
Kangxi

- (1661-1722)
- Confucian scholar; effective, enlightened ruler; sometime poet
- Organized flood-control and irrigation projects (Confucian belief that rulers should look after the welfare of their subjects and promote agriculture)
- Was tolerant towards Catholics and Jesuits were respected because they learned to teach Chinese
- Authorized the Kangxi Dictionary with 42,000 Chinese characters, also sponsored a *Collection of Books*, similar to Diderot’s Encyclopedia during Enlightenment France
- Conquered Taiwan; extended to Mongolia, central Asia, and Tibet
Qianlong

- The grandson of Kangxi
- A sophisticated and learned ruler, poet, and artist
- Needing funds, they sold limited trading privileges to European powers, keeping them in Canton
- Encouraged merchants to settle in China’s far western provinces
- Vietnam, Burma, and Nepal were made vassal states of China
  - Sent armies to Tibet to install the Dalai Lama on the throne there
Qianlong

- Under his rule, China was peaceful, prosperous, and powerful (he could even afford to cancel taxes four times during his reign)
- China was a proto-industrial society, while some industry existed, many still worked on farms
  - Still sold tea, silk and porcelain to Europe and China
- The bureaucracy became corrupt later on with people paying high taxes and rebelling.
The Unification of Japan
The Tokugawa Shogunate

- Tokugawa Ieyasu brought stability to Japan after 1600
  - Japan divided into warring feudal estates
  - As shogun, Ieyasu established a military government known as *bakufu*
- First need to control the daimyo, powerful local lords
  - Each daimyo absolute lord within his domain
  - Tokugawa shoguns required daimyo to live alternative years at Edo
  - *Bakufu* controlled daimyo marriages, travel, expenditures
The Tokugawa Shogunate

• Control of foreign relations
  – The shoguns adopted policy of isolation from outside world, 1630s
  – Foreign trade was under tight restriction at the port of Nagasaki
  – Despite the policy, Japan was never completely isolated
Economic and Social Change

• Population growth
  • Agricultural production doubled between 1600 and 1700
  • Population rose by a one-third from 1600 to 1700
  • Then slow growth due to infanticide, contraception, late marriage, abortion
    • Japanese families resorted to these measures because Japan was land poor

• Social change
  • Peace undermined the social and economic role of warrior elites
    • Many samurai/daimyo became indebted and declined into genteel poverty
  • Merchants became prominent, and often wealthier than the ruling elites
The Son of Heaven

- Emperor considered "the son of heaven"
  - Heavenly powers and an obligation to maintain order on the earth
  - Privileged life, awesome authority, and paramount power
- Governance of the empire fell to civil servants, called scholar-bureaucrats
  - Schooled in Confucian texts, calligraphy
  - Had to pass rigorous examinations with strict quotas
The Examination System

- Civil service exam was intensely competitive; few chosen for government positions
- Others could become local teachers or tutors
- System created a meritocracy with best students running the country
- Wealthy families had some advantages over poor families although the exams were open to all males
- Confucian curriculum fostered common values
The Patriarchal Family

- The basic unit of Chinese society was the family; the highest value, filial piety
  - Included duties of children to fathers, loyalty of subjects to the emperor
  - Important functions of clan
- Gender relations: strict patriarchal control over all females
  - Parents preferred boys over girls; marriage was to continue male line
  - Female infanticide; widows encouraged to commit suicide
  - Foot binding of young girls increased
  - Lowest status person in family was a young bride
Population Growth

• Intense garden-style agriculture fed a large population
  • Confucian view that land was the source of everything praiseworthy
  • Only a small fraction of China’s land is suitable for planting (11%)
  • American food crops in seventeenth century: maize, sweet potatoes, and peanuts
    • Farmers could now take advantage of soils that had been uncultivated
  • Available land reached maximum productivity by mid-seventeenth century
Population Growth

• Population growth: 100 million in 1500, 225 million in 1750
  • 40% increase in 50 years (1700-1750)
  • In the long term, agriculture production could not keep pace with population growth
  • Per capita (per person) income began to decline
Economic Development

- Manufacturing and trade benefited from abundant, cheap labor
  - Exported large quantities of silk, porcelain, lacquerware, and tea
  - Compensated for the exports by importing silver bullion (supported the silver-based economy)
- Foreign trade brought wealth to the dynasty, but threatened scholar-bureaucrats
  - Kangxi began policy of strict control on foreign contact
  - Western merchants restricted to Macao (Portuguese) and Guangzhou (Britain)
  - Government discouraged large-scale commercial activities
Economic Development

• Government and technology
  • Ming and Qing dynasties considered technological change disruptive – favored political and social stability
  • With abundant skilled labor, labor-saving technologies unnecessary (less expensive to invest in labor than technology)
  • In the long term, China lost technological ground to European countries
Social Status

- Privileged classes
  - Scholar-bureaucrats and gentry occupied the most exalted positions
  - Directed local government and society
  - Wore distinctive clothing and were immune from labor service and taxes
  - Lived in cities and towns, rather than rural estates
Social Status

• Peasants, the largest class, esteemed by Confucius for their honest labor
• Artisans and other skilled workers enjoyed some economic status (higher income than peasants) – usually employed by the government or gentry and merchant families
• Merchants often powerful and wealthy even though Confucian moralists saw them as unscrupulous social parasites – could move up to gentry level through government examinations
• Military – considered a wretched but necessary evil – kept civilian bureaucrats in the highest command positions
• Lower classes or "mean people": slaves, servants, entertainers, prostitutes
Neo-Confucianism

• Confucian education supported by Ming and Qing emperors
  • Hanlin Academy in Beijing and provincial schools prepared students for civil service exams
  • Imperial cultural projects: encyclopedias and libraries

• Popular culture expanded to include novels, romances, travel adventures
The Return of Christianity

- Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), an Italian Jesuit in the Ming court
  - A learned man who mastered written and oral Chinese
  - Impressed Chinese with European science and mathematics
  - Popular mechanical devices: glass prisms, harpsichords, clocks

- Confucianism and Christianity
  - Jesuits were respectful of Chinese tradition, but won few converts
  - Chinese had problems with exclusivity of Christianity
The End of Jesuit Mission

- Rival Franciscan and Dominican missionaries criticized Jesuits' tolerance of ancestor veneration and willingness to conduct Chinese-language services
- When the pope upheld critics, emperor Kangxi denounced Christianity
- Jesuits had been an important bridge between Chinese and western cultures, introducing each to the achievements of the other.
  - Jesuits described China as an orderly and rational society
  - European rulers began to design their own civil service bureaucracies
  - Rational morality of Confucianism appealed to Enlightenment philosophes
Neo-Confucianism and the “Floating Worlds”

- Neo-Confucianism (loyalty, submission) became the official ideology of the Tokugawa
- Scholars of "native learning" tried to establish distinctive Japanese identity
- "Floating worlds"--centers of urban culture
  - Included teahouses, theaters, brothels, public baths
  - Offered escape from social responsibilities and the rigid rules of conduct
  - Ihara Saikaku, poet and novelist – wrote about themes of love
  - Kabuki theaters and bunraku (puppet) very popular
Christianity in Japan

- Christian missions, under Jesuits, had significant success in sixteenth century
- Anti-Christian campaign launched by Tokugawa shoguns
  - Feared any movement that might help daimyo
  - Buddhists and Confucians resented Christian exclusivity
  - After 1612, Christians banned from islands, thousands killed
Dutch Learning

- Dutch learning was one limited connection to the outside world
  - Dutch merchants permitted to trade at Nagasaki
  - Japanese scholars were permitted to learn Dutch and, after 1720, to read Dutch books
  - Shoguns became enthusiastic proponents of Dutch learning by mid-eighteenth century
  - European art, medicine, and science began to influence Japanese scholars