CHAPTER 15
GLOBAL COMMERCE

AP World History Notes
Time Period: 1450 - 1750
European countries that got involved in Asian commerce = first the Portuguese, then the Spanish, French, Dutch, and British

Motivations for European involvement in Asian commerce:

- Exotic spices = cinnamon, nutmeg, mace, cloves, and pepper
- Chinese silk
- Indian cotton and rhubarb
- Precious gems = emeralds, rubies, and sapphires
Europeans and Asian Commerce

At the time, Eastern goods came into the Mediterranean through the Middle East from the Indian Ocean.

Europeans’ problems with this:
- Source of supply of goods = Muslim merchants who charged heavy taxes
- Once it got to Europe = Italian merchants (especially from Venice) had a monopoly over trade of these Asian products
- They had no valuable products to trade in return → so they had to pay in gold or silver for Asian goods
EUROPEANS AND ASIAN COMMERCE

Goal of Europeans in Asia = trade, not empire-building
A PORTUGUESE EMPIRE OF COMMERCE

• Portugal had to use its military to secure trade bases within the Indian Ocean → did not have attractive goods that it could use to establish itself within the trade network

• Easy to do because:
  • They had more advanced technology and weapons
  • Merchant ships in the Indian Ocean weren’t heavily armed
  • Portuguese ships had cannons; merchant ships did not
A PORTUGUESE EMPIRE OF COMMERCE

- Portugal set up fortified trade bases in:
  - Mombasa in East Africa
  - Hormuz at the entrance to the Persian Gulf
  - Goa on the west coast of India
  - Malacca in Southeast Asia
  - Macao on the south coast of China
A PORTUGUESE EMPIRE OF COMMERCE

• Portugal created a “trading post empire” within the Indian Ocean
  • Goal = control commerce, not large territories or populations
  • Goal = control trading posts by force of arms, not by economic competition
• Major thing Portugal controlled = the spice trade
PORTUGUESE POLICIES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

• Required all merchant vessels to purchase a *cartaz* (pass) to sail throughout the region
• Charged merchant vessels taxes of 6-10% of their cargoes
• Blocked the Red Sea route to the Mediterranean Sea
• Monopolized the trade route around Africa to Europe
PORTUGUESE CONTROL IN THE LONG-RUN

• Portugal never succeeded in controlling more than half of the spice trade to Europe

• By 1600 = the Portuguese trading post empire was in steep decline
  • Competition from other European powers
  • Competition from rising Asian states like Japan and Mughal India
PORTUGUESE CONTROL IN THE LONG-RUN

• Portuguese just assimilated themselves into the old, traditional patterns of the Indian Ocean trade network
  • Carried Asian goods to Asian ports
  • Sold their shipping services
  • Many settled in permanently in Asian or African ports ➔ married native women, learned local languages, converted to Islam, etc.
Spain and the Philippines

- Spain was the first to follow in Portugal’s footsteps
- Established itself on the Philippine islands
  - Named after King Philip II of Spain
- Spain set up outright colonial rule → because:
  - Close to China and the spice islands
  - Small and militarily weak societies on the Philippines
  - No competing claims for the islands
Spanish takeover of the Philippines = easy and relatively bloodless

Used:
- Small-scale military operations
- Gunpowder weapons
- Local alliances
- Gifts and favors to native chiefs
- Pageantry of Catholic rituals

Remained a Spanish colony until 1898
SPAIN AND THE PHILIPPINES

• With Spanish rule came:
  • Mass conversion to Christianity
  • Relocation from scattered settlements to permanent, concentrated Christian communities
  • Taxes, tribute, and unpaid labor
  • Large estates owned by Spanish settlers or prominent Filipinos

• Responses to colonial oppression = short-lived revolts; flight to the interior mountains or bustling capital of Manila
THE EAST INDIA COMPANIES

- British and Dutch East India Companies
- Both militarily and economically stronger than Portugal → quickly overtook Portugal within the Indian Ocean network in the early 1600s
- Established their own parallel and competing trading post empires
  - Dutch = focused on Indonesia
  - British = focused on India
THE EAST INDIA COMPANIES

• East India Companies = private trading companies that use merchant investors to raise money and share risks

• These companies were granted charters by their governments that allowed them to:
  • Make war
  • Govern conquered peoples
  • Hold trading monopolies
DUTCH EAST INDIA COMPANY

- Trading posts = in Indonesia
- Controlled production and shipping of: cloves, cinnamon, nutmeg, and mace (all spices)
- Seized control of spice-producing islands with force and bloodshed
BRITISH EAST INDIA COMPANY

• Trading posts = in India
• Did not practice “trade by warfare” like the Dutch → were no match for the Mughal Empire in India
• Secured their trading bases on the coast with the permission of Mughal authorities
  • Usually took substantial payments and bribes
• Focus = Indian cotton textiles
ASIAN COMMERCE

• Impact of European involvement in Asian commerce = not very big on the major powers of South and East Asia (Mughal India, China, and Japan)

• Europe posed no real military or economic threat to them

• Were able to get rid of European intruders if need be
JAPAN AND THE EUROPEANS

• When European merchants first arrived in Japan (1500s) → Japan = tied down with interior conflicts between competing daimyos (feudal lords), each with his own band of samurai

• Result = it was easy for the Europeans to stay there

• European ideas taken by the Japanese = shipbuilding skills, military technology, geographic knowledge, commercial opportunities, and religious ideas
JAPAN AND THE EUROPEANS

• Early 1600s = Japan unified politically by military commanders
  • Now led by the lead commander = shogun
    • From the Tokugawa clan
    • Set up the Tokugawa Shogunate
• Shoguns began to see Europeans as a threat to Japan’s new unity

Tokugawa Ieyasu
JAPAN AND THE EUROPEANS

- Result = Japan did the following:
  - Expelled Christian missionaries
  - Violently suppressed the practice of Christianity
    - Included: Torture and execution of missionaries and converts
  - Forbade Japanese people from travelling abroad
  - Banned European traders from entering Japan

- Result = Japan became isolated from the world of European commerce for 2 centuries (1650-1850)
  - Maintained trading ties with only China and Korea
ASIAN COMMERCE

• Despite European naval dominance, Asian merchants did not disappear

• Many commercial networks (run by Asians) continued to operate successfully

• Chinese merchants = carried spices from Southeast Asia to China

• Christian merchants from Armenia = active in overland trade linking Europe, the Middle East, and Central Asia

• Indian merchants and moneylenders = lived throughout Central Asia, Persia, and Russia & connected these regions to markets in India