The Worlds of the 15th Century

AP World History Notes
Chapter 13
Paleolithic Persistence

- Paleolithic (old stone-age) peoples still existed in the 15th century
- Hunting and gathering societies
- Where? → Australia, much of Siberia, the arctic coastlands, and parts of Africa and the Americas
Agricultural Village Societies

- Small village-based communities organized by kinship relations
- Agricultural
- No incorporation into larger empires or civilizations
- Where? → much of North America, parts of the Amazon River basin, Southeast Asia, and Africa south of the equator
Agricultural Village Societies

- No oppressive political authority
- No class inequalities
- No seclusion of women

The Igbo peoples of West Africa
Herding Peoples

- Nomadic pastoral peoples
- Had more direct and dramatic contact with larger civilizations than agricultural village societies or hunter-gatherers
- Where? ➔ Central Asia/the steppe, parts of Africa
- Arguably the most significant = the Mongols
Timur

- Turkic warrior who tried to restore the Mongol Empire in the late 14th & early 15th centuries
- Devastation once again to Russia, Persia, and India
- Died (in 1405) while preparing an invasion of China
- Empire didn’t last → conflict among his successors
- Last great military success of Central Asian nomads
Ming China (1368-1644)

- Rebuilt strong central government
- Reinstated civil service examinations and made them even harder
- Increase in food and trade production
- Increase in population
Ming China

- Capital = Beijing
- Emperor Yongle built the Forbidden City = magnificent imperial residence
- Also built the Temple of Heaven = where rulers performed Confucian-based rituals to ensure the well-being of Chinese society
Ming China

- Focus = repairing the damage caused by Mongol rule
- Restored millions of acres of cultivation
- Rebuilt: canals, reservoirs, and irrigation systems
- Planted millions of trees to reforest China
Chinese Exploration

- China undertook large and impressive maritime expeditions

- Largest = launched in 1405 and led by Zheng He
  - 300 ships; 27,000 crew members; variety of different people on board

- He made 7 voyages between 1405 and 1433
Voyages of Zheng He
Chinese Exploration

**Goals of Chinese exploration:**

- Enroll distant peoples and states in the Chinese tribute system
- Bring back exotic goods from foreign lands (ex: zebras, giraffes, etc.)
- Establish Chinese power and prestige in the Indian Ocean
- Exert Chinese control over foreign trade
Chinese Exploration

- Abrupt and deliberate end to Chinese exploration in 1433

- WHY?
  - Death of Emperor Yongle = chief supporter
  - Many officials saw expeditions as a waste of money and resources
  - Believed focus should be on real threat = nomads to the north