



# China Limits European Contacts

## MAIN IDEA

### CULTURAL INTERACTION

Advances under the Ming and Qing dynasties left China uninterested in European contact.

## WHY IT MATTERS NOW

China's independence from the West continues today, even as it forges new economic ties with the outside world.

## TERMS & NAMES

- Ming dynasty
- Hongwu
- Yonglo
- Zheng He
- Manchus
- Qing dynasty
- Kangxi

**SETTING THE STAGE** The European voyages of exploration had led to opportunities for trade. Europeans made healthy profits from trade in the Indian Ocean region. They began looking for additional sources of wealth. Soon, European countries were seeking trade relationships in East Asia, first with China and later with Japan. By the time Portuguese ships dropped anchor off the Chinese coast in 1514, the Chinese had driven out their Mongol rulers and had united under a new dynasty.

## TAKING NOTES

**Summarizing** Use a chart to summarize relevant facts about each emperor.

Emperor	Facts
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

## China Under the Powerful Ming Dynasty

China had become the dominant power in Asia under the **Ming dynasty** (1368–1644). In recognition of China's power, vassal states from Korea to Southeast Asia paid their Ming overlords regular tribute, which is a payment by one country to another to acknowledge its submission. China expected Europeans to do the same. Ming rulers were not going to allow outsiders from distant lands to threaten the peace and prosperity the Ming had brought to China when they ended Mongol rule.

**The Rise of the Ming** A peasant's son, **Hongwu**, commanded the rebel army that drove the Mongols out of China in 1368. That year, he became the first Ming emperor. Hongwu continued to rule from the former Yuan capital of Nanjing in the south. (See the map on page 527.) He began reforms designed to restore agricultural lands devastated by war, erase all traces of the Mongol past, and promote China's power and prosperity. Hongwu's agricultural reforms increased rice production and improved irrigation. He also encouraged fish farming and growing commercial crops, such as cotton and sugar cane.

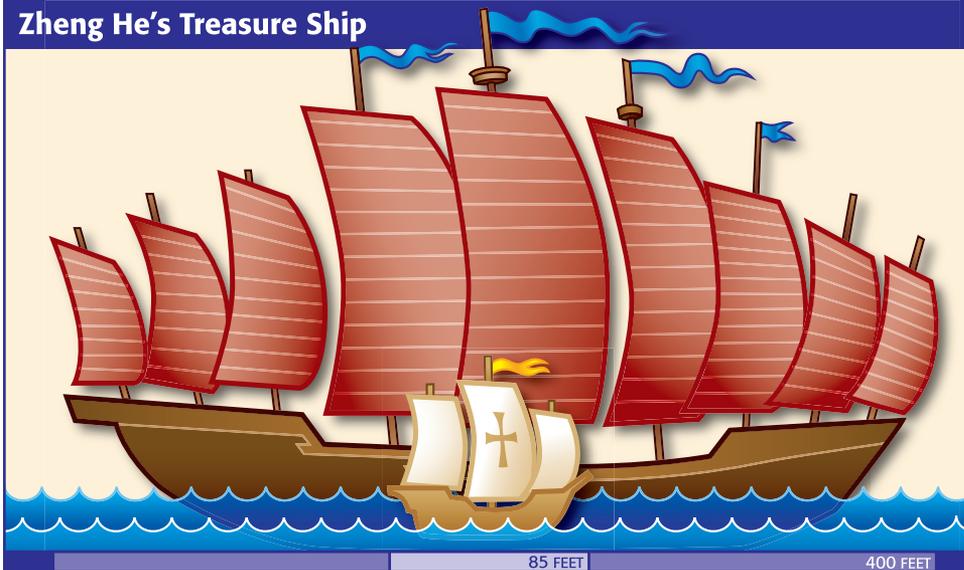
Hongwu used respected traditions and institutions to bring stability to China. For example, he encouraged a return to Confucian moral standards. He improved imperial administration by restoring the merit-based civil service examination system. Later in his rule, however, when problems developed, Hongwu became a ruthless tyrant. Suspecting plots against his rule everywhere, he conducted purges of the government, killing thousands of officials.

Hongwu's death in 1398 led to a power struggle. His son **Yonglo** (yung•lu) emerged victorious. Yonglo continued many of his father's policies, although he moved the royal court to Beijing. (See the Forbidden City feature on page 538.)

▼ Porcelain vase from the Ming dynasty



## Zheng He's Treasure Ship



◀ Zheng He's treasure ship compared with Christopher Columbus's *Santa Maria*

Yonglo also had a far-ranging curiosity about the outside world. In 1405, before Europeans began to sail beyond their borders, he launched the first of seven voyages of exploration. He hoped they would impress the world with the power and splendor of Ming China. He also wanted to expand China's tribute system.

**The Voyages of Zheng He** A Chinese Muslim admiral named **Zheng He** (jung hū) led all of the seven voyages. His expeditions were remarkable for their size. Everything about them was large—distances traveled, fleet size, and ship measurements. The voyages ranged from Southeast Asia to eastern Africa. From 40 to 300 ships sailed in each expedition. Among them were fighting ships, storage vessels, and huge “treasure” ships measuring more than 400 feet long. The fleet's crews numbered over 27,000 on some voyages. They included sailors, soldiers, carpenters, interpreters, accountants, doctors, and religious leaders. Like a huge floating city, the fleet sailed from port to port along the Indian Ocean.

Everywhere Zheng He went, he distributed gifts including silver and silk to show Chinese superiority. As a result, more than 16 countries sent tribute to the Ming court. Even so, Chinese scholar-officials complained that the voyages wasted valuable resources that could be used to defend against barbarians' attacks on the northern frontier. After the seventh voyage, in 1433, China withdrew into isolation. **A**

**Ming Relations with Foreign Countries** China's official trade policies in the 1500s reflected its isolation. To keep the influence of outsiders to a minimum, only the government was to conduct foreign trade, and only through three coastal ports, Canton, Macao, and Ningbo. In reality, trade flourished up and down the coast. Profit-minded merchants smuggled cargoes of silk, porcelain, and other valuable goods out of the country into the eager hands of European merchants. Usually, Europeans paid for purchases with silver, much of it from mines in the Americas.

Demand for Chinese goods had a ripple effect on the economy. Industries such as silk-making and ceramics grew rapidly. Manufacturing and commerce increased. But China did not become highly industrialized for two main reasons. First, the idea of commerce offended China's Confucian beliefs. Merchants, it was said, made their money “supporting foreigners and robbery.” Second, Chinese economic policies traditionally favored agriculture. Taxes on agriculture stayed low. Taxes on manufacturing and trade skyrocketed.

Christian missionaries accompanied European traders into China. They brought Christianity and knowledge of European science and technology, such as the clock. The first missionary to have an impact was an Italian Jesuit named Matteo Ricci. He

### MAIN IDEA

#### Making Inferences

**A** What do you think the people of other countries thought about China after one of Zheng He's visits?

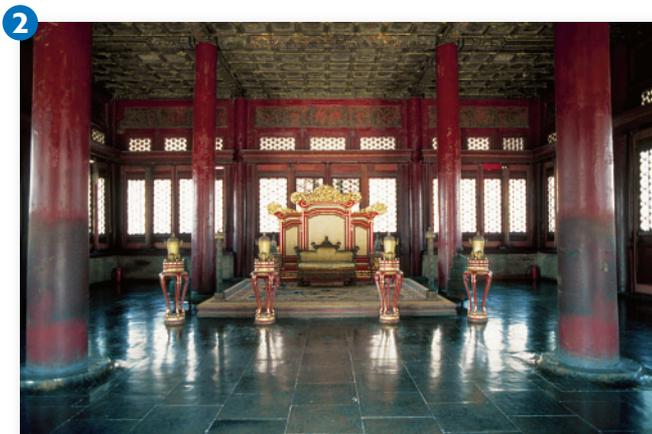
## The Forbidden City

When Yonglo moved the Chinese capital to Beijing, he ordered the building of a great palace complex to symbolize his power and might. Construction took 14 years, from 1406 to 1420. Red walls 35 feet in height surrounded the complex, which had dozens of buildings, including palaces and temples. The complex became known as the Forbidden City because commoners and foreigners were not allowed to enter.



### ▲ Hall of Supreme Harmony

Taihe Hall, or the Hall of Supreme Harmony, is the largest building in the compound. It measures 201 by 122 feet and stands about 125 feet high. This hall was used for important ceremonies, such as those marking the emperor's birthday or the day the crown prince took the throne.



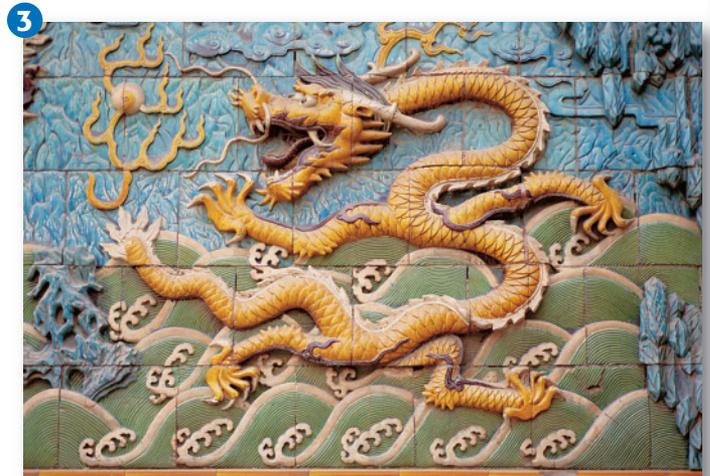
### ▲ Hall of Central Harmony

Zhonghe Hall, or the Hall of Central Harmony, was a smaller square building between the two main halls. It was a sort of private office where the emperor could stop to rest on his way to ceremonies.



### ▼ Nine-Dragon Wall

This wall, or screen, of glazed tiles shows nine dragons playing with pearls against a background of sea and sky. From ancient times, the dragon was the symbol of the imperial family. This is the largest of three famous nine-dragon screens that exist in China.



### SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Visuals

- Analyzing Motives** Why do you think the emperor wanted to keep common people out of the Forbidden City?
- Drawing Conclusions** What aspects of the Forbidden City helped to convey the power of the emperor?

gained special favor at the Ming court through his intelligence and fluency in Chinese. Still, many educated Chinese opposed the European and Christian presence.

## Manchus Found the Qing Dynasty

By 1600, the Ming had ruled for more than 200 years, and the dynasty was weakening. Its problems grew—ineffective rulers, corrupt officials, and a government that was out of money. Higher taxes and bad harvests pushed millions of peasants toward starvation. Civil strife and rebellion followed.

Northeast of the Great Wall lay Manchuria. In 1644, the **Manchus** (MAN•chooz), the people of that region, invaded China and the Ming dynasty collapsed. The Manchus seized Beijing, and their leader became China's new emperor. As the Mongols had done in the 1300s, the Manchus took a Chinese name for their dynasty, the **Qing** (chihng) **dynasty**. They would rule for more than 260 years and expand China's borders to include Taiwan, Chinese Central Asia, Mongolia, and Tibet.

**China Under the Qing** Many Chinese resisted rule by the non-Chinese Manchus. Rebellions flared up periodically for decades. The Manchus, however, slowly earned the people's respect. They upheld China's traditional Confucian beliefs and social structures. They made the country's frontiers safe and restored China's prosperity. Two powerful Manchu rulers contributed greatly to the acceptance of the new dynasty.

The first, **Kangxi** (kahng•shee), became emperor in 1661 and ruled for some 60 years. He reduced government expenses and lowered taxes. A scholar and patron of the arts, Kangxi gained the support of intellectuals by offering them government positions. He also enjoyed the company of the Jesuits at court. They told him about developments in science, medicine, and mathematics in Europe. Under his grandson Qian-long (chyahn•lung), who ruled from 1736 to 1795, China reached its greatest size and prosperity. An industrious emperor like his grandfather, Qian-long often rose at dawn to work on the empire's problems. These included armed nomads on its borders and the expanding presence of European missionaries and merchants in China.

**Manchus Continue Chinese Isolation** To the Chinese, their country—called the Middle Kingdom—had been the cultural center of the universe for 2,000 years. If foreign states wished to trade with China, they would have to follow Chinese rules. These rules included trading only at special ports and paying tribute.

The Dutch were masters of the Indian Ocean trade by the time of Qian-long. They accepted China's restrictions. Their diplomats paid tribute to the emperor through gifts and by performing the required "kowtow" ritual. This ritual involved kneeling in front of the emperor and touching one's head to the ground nine times. As a result, the Chinese accepted the Dutch as trading partners. The Dutch returned home with traditional porcelains and silk, as well as a new trade item, tea. By 1800, tea would make up 80 percent of shipments to Europe. **B**

Great Britain also wanted to increase trade with China. But the British did not like China's trade restrictions. In 1793, Lord George Macartney delivered a letter from King George III to Qian-long. It asked for a better trade arrangement,

## History Makers



**Kangxi**  
1654–1722

The emperor Kangxi had too much curiosity to remain isolated in the Forbidden City. To calm the Chinese in areas devastated by the Manchu conquest, Kangxi set out on a series of "tours."

*On tours I learned about the common people's grievances by talking with them. . . . I asked peasants about their officials, looked at their houses, and discussed their crops.*

In 1696, with Mongols threatening the northern border, Kangxi exhibited leadership unheard of in later Ming times. Instead of waiting in the palace for reports, he personally led 80,000 troops to victory over the Mongols.

### MAIN IDEA

#### Making Inferences

**B** Why do you think the kowtow ritual was so important to the Chinese emperor?

including Chinese acceptance of British manufactured goods. Macartney refused to kowtow, and Qian-long denied Britain's request. As the emperor made clear in a letter to the king, China was self-sufficient and did not need the British:

#### PRIMARY SOURCE

There is nothing we lack, as your principal envoy and others have themselves observed. We have never set much store on strange or ingenious objects, nor do we need any more of your country's manufactures.

QIAN-LONG, from a letter to King George III of Great Britain

In the 1800s, the British, Dutch, and others would attempt to chip away at China's trade restrictions until the empire itself began to crack, as Chapter 28 will describe.

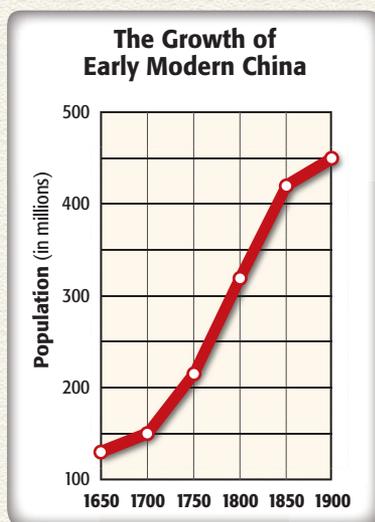
**Korea Under the Manchus** In 1636, even before they came to power in China, the Manchus conquered nearby Korea and made it a vassal state. As a member of the Chinese tribute system, Korea had long existed in China's shadow. Koreans organized their government according to Confucian principles. They also adopted China's technology, its culture, and especially its policy of isolation.

When the Manchus established the Qing dynasty, Korea's political relationship with China did not change. But Korea's attitude did. The Manchu invasion, combined with a Japanese attack in the 1590s, provoked strong feelings of nationalism in the Korean people. This sentiment was most evident in their art. Instead of traditional Chinese subjects, many artists chose to show popular Korean scenes.

## Social History

### China's Population Boom

China's population grew dramatically from 1650 to 1900. General peace and increased agricultural productivity were the causes.



#### SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Graphs

**Comparing** By what percentage did China's population increase between 1650 and 1900?



▲ A Chinese family prepares for a wedding in the 1800s.

## Life in Ming and Qing China

In the 1600s and 1700s, there was general peace and prosperity in China. Life improved for most Chinese.

**Families and the Role of Women** Most Chinese families had farmed the land the same way their ancestors had. However, during the Qing dynasty, irrigation and fertilizer use increased. Farmers grew rice and new crops, such as corn and sweet potatoes, brought by Europeans from the Americas. As food production increased, nutrition improved and families expanded. A population explosion followed.

These expanded Chinese families favored sons over daughters. Only a son was allowed to perform vital religious rituals. A son also would raise his own family under his parents' roof, assuring aging parents of help with the farming. As a result, females were not valued, and many female infants were killed. Although men dominated the household and their wives, women had significant responsibilities. Besides working in the fields, they supervised the children's education and managed the family's finances. While most women were forced to remain secluded in their homes, some found outside jobs such as working as midwives or textile workers.

**Cultural Developments** The culture of early modern China was based mainly on traditional forms. The great masterpiece of traditional Chinese fiction was written during this period. *Dream of the Red Chamber* by Cao Zhan examines upper class Manchu society in the 1700s. Most artists of the time painted in traditional styles, which valued technique over creativity. In pottery, technical skill as well as experimentation led to the production of high-quality ceramics, including porcelain. Drama was a popular entertainment, especially in rural China where literacy rates were low. Plays that presented Chinese history and cultural heroes entertained and also helped unify Chinese society by creating a national culture. 

While China preserved its traditions in isolation, another civilization that developed in seclusion—the Japanese—was in conflict, as you will read in Section 3.



▲ These 12th-century Chinese women work outside the home making silk.

### Vocabulary

A *midwife* is a woman trained to assist women in childbirth.

### MAIN IDEA

### Making Inferences

 What was the effect of the emphasis on tradition in early modern China?

## SECTION 2 ASSESSMENT

**TERMS & NAMES** 1. For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- Ming dynasty
- Hongwu
- Yonglo
- Zheng He
- Manchus
- Qing dynasty
- Kangxi

### USING YOUR NOTES

2. Which of these emperors was most influential? Explain with text references.

Emperor	Facts
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

### MAIN IDEAS

3. How did Beijing become the capital of China?
4. What evidence indicates that China lost interest in contacts abroad after 1433?
5. What did Christian missionaries bring to China?

### CRITICAL THINKING & WRITING

6. **MAKING DECISIONS** Do you think Lord George Macartney should have kowtowed to Emperor Qian-long? Why?
7. **ANALYZING CAUSES** What factors, both within China and outside its borders, contributed to the downfall of the Ming dynasty?
8. **DRAWING CONCLUSIONS** What was Korea's relationship with China under the Qing dynasty?
9. **WRITING ACTIVITY** **CULTURAL INTERACTION** Choose one emperor of China and write a one-paragraph **biography** using the information you listed in your Taking Notes chart and from the text.

### CONNECT TO TODAY WRITING AN ESSAY

Learn more about popular culture in China today. Then write a two-paragraph **expository essay** on some form of popular entertainment in the arts or sports.