The Ming and Qing Dynasties

Preview

- Main Idea / Reading Focus
- The Ming Dynasty
- The Qing Dynasty
- Ming and Qing Culture
- Map: Ming and Qing Dynasties
Main Idea
During the Ming and Qing dynasties, China prospered, but the empire entered a period of isolation in response to increasing European contact.

Reading Focus
- How did the Ming dynasty bring stability, prosperity and isolation to China?
- How did the Manchus of the Qing dynasty rule China?
- What cultural developments occurred during the Ming and Qing periods?
In 1279 the Mongol leader Kublai Khan conquered China and founded the Yuan dynasty. After his death in 1294, the Yuan dynasty weakened. This weakness, combined with Chinese resentment of Mongol rule, made China ripe for rebellion—and the rise of a new dynasty.

**China under Ming Rule**
- 1368, peasant named Zhu Yuanzhang, rebel army, overthrew last Mongol emperor
- Zhu took name **Hongwu**, “vastly martial,” founded Ming dynasty
- **Ming** means “brilliant”; dynasty lasted nearly 300 years, until 1644

**Rebuilding China**
- During this time China’s rulers gained control of Korea, Mongolia, parts of Central, Southeast Asia
- Having expelled Mongols, Hongwu worked to rebuild China
- Reduced taxes, improved trade, agriculture, increased stability

In addition, Hongwu worked to eliminate Mongol influences and revive traditional Chinese values and practices, like Confucian principles.
Values, Traditions

- To obtain government officials educated in Confucian ideas, Hongwu restored, improved civil service examination system
- To root out corruption, increased influence of censors, officials who monitored government

Expanded Power

- Hongwu also greatly expanded power as emperor
- Did away with positions of some high level officials, took over more control of government
- As result, Ming emperors more powerful than in previous dynasties
- Eliminated anyone challenging authority; killed thousands of rivals
Yonglo

- In 1398 Hongwu died
- Following power struggle, son **Yonglo** became emperor
  - Ruled from 1402 until 1424
  - Moved Ming capital to Beijing, in northeast China
  - Built vast imperial city at center of Beijing
  - City complex became known as Forbidden City because most people forbidden from entering
Ming Sea Voyages

Extending Influence

• Yonglo sponsored overseas voyages to extend China’s influence

• Between 1405 and 1433, Zheng He, Chinese Muslim admiral, led seven voyages around Indian Ocean as far as Africa

• Sailed with fleets of as many as 300 ships to show China’s power

Growing Sea Power

• Fleets included trading ships, immense treasure ships

• Zheng He presented gifts from China wherever he went; in return several foreign leaders sent tribute to China’s emperor

• Voyages demonstrated Ming China’s growing sea power

• After 1433 voyages ended

• Resources needed for frontier defenses
The policy to end the voyages was part of a move in Ming China toward isolation from the outside world.

Ming Foreign Relations

- 1500s, move toward isolation gained full force
- Ming heavily restricted foreign trade and travel
- Foreign merchants allowed to trade only at few ports, during certain times
- Policies impossible to enforce; smugglers carried out brisk trade with foreign merchants

Beginning of Isolation

- Arrival of European traders, Christian missionaries influenced decision to isolate China
- Europeans introduced new goods and ideas
- Ming disliked European influences
- Sought to preserve Chinese traditions
### Outside Influences

#### European Influence
- Some Europeans gained influence in China
- One was **Matteo Ricci**, Italian Jesuit priest; arrived 1583

#### European Learning
- Ricci learned Chinese, adopted customs to gain acceptance
- Introduced European learning in math, science

#### Mongol Threat
- Ming also faced renewed Mongol threat to north
- To improve defense, Ming restored China’s Great Wall

#### Great Wall
- Parts of earlier walls repaired, but most construction new
- Much of Great Wall seen today built during Ming period
The Great Wall ran along the northern Ming frontier.
New Asian Empire

Section 3

Ming Economy and Society

Prosperity
• Ming rule brought prosperity to China
• Improved methods of irrigation increased farm production
• Peasants produced huge rice crops in southern river valleys

Growth of Crops, Population
• 1500s, new crops like corn, sweet potatoes from Americas reached China
• These crops further increased farm output
• Stability, plentiful food led to substantial population growth

Growth of Cities, Industries
• As population grew, so did cities
• Industries like manufacture of porcelain, silk expanded in response to growing European demand
• At same time, China remained mainly agricultural society
New Asian Empire

Section 3

Ming Decline

Reasons for Decline
• Late 1500s, Ming Dynasty began to decline
• Weak rulers took throne, corruption increased under their rule
• Defense efforts drained treasury; rulers raised taxes
• 1600s, high taxes, crop failures led to famine, hardship; rebellions broke out

The Manchu
• Ming China weakened; the Manchu, a people to northwest in Manchuria, saw their chance
• 1644, Manchu swept into Beijing, took capital
• Last Ming emperor killed himself to avoid capture
• Manchu formed own dynasty; gave it Chinese name—Qing
Analyze

What were some of the strengths and weaknesses of the Ming dynasty?

Answer(s): strengths—increased stability and prosperity; weaknesses—isolation from foreign influence, weak rulers in the late 1500s
### The Qing Dynasty

The Qing Dynasty became the last dynasty in 3,500 years of imperial rule in China. Under the Qing Dynasty’s Manchu rulers, China again grew prosperous and expanded to its largest size in history.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Resistance</strong></th>
<th><strong>New Government</strong></th>
<th><strong>Restrictions</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| - As foreigners, Manchu initially faced resistance from Chinese subjects | - Manchu rulers carried over much Ming government structure  
- Continued civil service exam system  
- Government positions distributed equally among Chinese, Manchu officials | - The Manchu remained separate  
- Manchu not allowed to marry Chinese  
- Women forbidden to bind feet  
- Men had to wear hair in Manchu style |
Qing China flourished under two outstanding emperors, Kangxi and his grandson Qianlong.

**Kangxi**
- Ruled from 1662 to 1722; reduced taxes for peasants, expanded empire into parts of Central Asia
- Intellectual, supported arts, entertained Jesuit priests at court
- Enjoyed learning about European advances in science, other areas

**Qianlong**
- Ruled from 1736 to 1796, brought Qing dynasty to height
- Expanded empire to largest size by conquering Taiwan, Mongolia, Tibet
- Agricultural production continued to rise, population boomed
- Economy thrived, benefiting from improved transportation, foreign and domestic markets
Qing Foreign Relations

- Qianlong continued Ming policy of isolation, restricting foreign trade
- Like Chinese, Manchu saw Chinese civilization, products, as superior, expected foreigners to trade on China’s terms
- Accepting terms, Dutch began thriving trade in Chinese goods
- Obtained Chinese porcelain, silk, along with tea—which soon became main Chinese export to Europe

Trade Restrictions

- Other Europeans tried to change China’s trade restrictions
- 1793, British Lord George Macartney came to China to discuss expanding trade
- Chinese found goods he brought inferior to their own products

Isolation Held China Back

- Chinese demanded Macartney kowtow to Qianlong; he refused to kneel to emperor, was sent away
- China was one of most advanced civilizations, but isolation prevented Chinese from keeping up with European advances
How did cultural differences hamper trade relations between the British and the Chinese during the Qing period?

**Answer(s):** The British official who came to trade did not perform a traditional gesture of respect to the emperor, and was sent away.
Under Ming and Qing rule, the Chinese made many developments in the arts and literature.

**Porcelain and Fiction**
- Ming artisans produced exquisite blue and white porcelain
- Beauty, superb quality made it valuable trade item, especially in Europe
- During Ming period, rising literacy rates contributed to growth of popular fiction

**Short Stories and Novels**
- Short stories became more popular; first Chinese novels published
- 1700s, Qing writer Cao Zhan wrote *Dream of the Red Chamber*
- Considered China’s greatest novel; examines decline of an upper class Chinese family
Analyze

How did literature change during the Ming period?

Answer(s): Popular fiction was written in everyday language; short stories became popular.