

READING #3

Mughal India

Babur, a descendant of Tamerlane, founded a 300-year dynasty in the 1520s, during a time when India was in disarray. He completed conquests in northern India and, under the new Mughal name, formed a central government similar to those of Suleiman in Turkey and Ivan the Terrible in Russia. It would be Babur's grandson Akbar, however, who would achieve grand religious and political goals.

Akbar Ruling from 1556 to 1605, *Akbar* proved to be the most capable of the Mughal rulers. For the first 40 years of his rule, he defeated Hindu armies and extended his empire southward and westward. From his capital in *Delhi*, Akbar established an efficient government and a system of fairly

administered laws. For example, all his people had the right to appeal to him for final judgment in any lawsuit. As Akbar's fame spread, capable men from many parts of Central Asia came to serve him. They helped Akbar create a strong, centralized government and an effective civil service. Paid government officials in charge of specific duties, such as taxation, construction, and water supply, were called *zamindars*. Later, they were given grants of land rather than salaries but were permitted to keep a portion of the taxes paid by local peasants, who contributed one-third of their produce to the government. The system worked well under Akbar. Under the rulers who came after him, though, the *zamindars* began to keep more of the taxes that they collected. With this money, they built personal armies of soldiers and civilians loyal to them.

Akbar was tolerant of all religions. He allocated grants of money or land to Hindus and Muslims. He gave money for a Catholic church in Goa, on the southwest coast of India. He provided land grants for the relatively new religion of *Sikhism*, which developed from Hinduism and, some believe, may have been influenced by the Islamic mysticism known as Sufism. He tried to mediate the conflict between Hindus and Muslims. He gave Hindus positions in his government—*zamindars* of both high and low positions could be Hindu—and he married Hindu wives. He exempted Hindus from the poll taxes paid by all non-Muslims in the empire. Because he enjoyed religious discussions, Akbar invited Roman Catholic priests to Delhi to explain Christianity to him.

Regarded as one of the world's outstanding rulers, Akbar encouraged learning and the growth of art, architecture, and literature. He is also noteworthy for trying (in vain) to prohibit child marriages and *sati*, the ritual in which widows killed themselves by jumping on the funeral pyres of their husbands. He died in 1605 without successfully converting his Hindu and Islamic subjects to the religion called *Din-i-Ilahi*, or "divine faith," which he had created for the purpose of reconciling Hinduism and Islam.

The Mughal Empire under Akbar was one of the richest and best-governed states in the world. Overseas trade flourished during the relatively peaceful period; commerce was carried out mostly by Arab traders, since Indian traders did not care for travel on the Indian Ocean. Traded goods included textiles, tropical foods, spices, and precious stones, all of which were often exchanged for gold and silver. Trade within the borders of the empire was carried on by merchant castes. *Castes* are social groupings in India, usually associated with specific occupations. Members of the merchant castes were allowed to participate in banking and the production of handicrafts.

Shah Jahan Mughal India flourished from Babur's time through the early eighteenth century. Magnificent architectural accomplishments included the *Taj Mahal*, built by *Shah Jahan* (ruled 1627–1658) as a tomb for his wife. Mughal rulers beautified Delhi and had forts built. The craftsmen and builders of Mughal India combined the arts of Islam (calligraphy, illumination of manuscripts, and ceramics) with local arts to create magnificent airy structures distinguished by their decorative geometric designs.

Aurangzeb Shah Jahan's son and successor, *Aurangzeb* (ruled 1658–1707), inherited an empire weakened by corruption and the failure to keep up with the military innovations of external enemies. Nevertheless, Aurangzeb hoped to increase the size of the empire and bring all of India under Muslim rule. Additionally, he wanted to rid the empire of its Hindu influences. In expanding the empire to the south, he drained the empire's treasury and was unable to put down peasant uprisings. Some of these uprisings were sparked by Aurangzeb's insistence on an austere and pious Islamic lifestyle. Under his rule, for example, music was banned. There were revolts as well among the Hindu and Islamic princes. The empire grew increasingly unstable after his death, which allowed the British and French to gain more and more economic power in India. The British would take political power away from the Mughals in the nineteenth century.



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Ming Dynasty

The economy of China, especially the silk industry, continued to grow under the stable and powerful Ming Dynasty. Both the northern capital, *Beijing*, and the southern capital, *Nanjing*, were beautified. In Beijing, members of the royal family lived in the *Forbidden City*, a walled compound of royal palaces.

The Ming Dynasty was conservative in the sense that it wanted to return to beliefs and customs from China's past, erasing the influence of the Mongol rulers under the Yuan Dynasty. For example, Mongol dress and names were discouraged, and rulers promoted the ancient ways of thinking and living of Confucianism.

of Confucianism. The Ming Dynasty also brought back the traditional civil service exam, improved education by establishing a national school system, and reestablished the bureaucracy, which had fallen into disuse under the Mongols. Europeans began to learn about and admire the civil service system, and in the eighteenth century it became a model for some European bureaucracies. (For more about Confucianism, see pages 100–101.)

The Ming Dynasty also expanded the size of China, conquering lands in Mongolia and Central Asia. It would not hold them for long, however; in the 1440s, Mongol armies defeated Ming forces and even took the Ming emperor

prisoner. In reaction to renewed Mongol power, China's leaders looked to the Great Wall of China. The Wall had not been maintained under Mongol rule, but under the Ming Dynasty it was restored and expanded to help keep out invaders from the north. (Test Prep: Create a chart comparing the Ming and Yuan dynasties. See pages 246–247.)

The Voyages of Zheng He In 1405, the Ming emperor Yongle sent a Muslim admiral, *Zheng He* (1371–1433), on the first of seven great voyages. Zheng traveled to Indonesia, Ceylon, and other coastal areas on the Indian Ocean, to Arabia, and to the east coast of Africa as well as to the Cape of Good Hope. The main purpose of the voyages was to display the might of the Ming Dynasty to the rest of the world and to receive tribute from them. Zheng's fleet was certainly impressive: at its height, his fleet included more than 300 ships with crews totalling about 25,000 people. In contrast, about a century later, the European explorer Ferdinand Magellan would command only five ships.

The expeditions won prestige for the Chinese government and opened up new markets for Chinese goods. Zheng He and his crew returned to China with exotic treasures, such as the first giraffe the Chinese had ever seen. They also brought back a new understanding of the world beyond China's borders. The voyages inspired some Chinese people to immigrate to the ports that the expedition had visited in Southeast Asia and elsewhere.

Zheng He's voyages stirred controversy, though. Confucianism promoted a stable, agrarian lifestyle, and scholars worried that greater interaction and trade with foreign cultures threatened China's social order. Some critics simply looked down upon other cultures, deeming them barbaric and vastly inferior to Chinese culture. Emperor Yongle's successor, his son Zhu Gaozhi, thought the expeditions were too expensive.

He not only ended Zheng He's travels but he also discouraged all Chinese from sailing away from China. To emphasize his point, he made building a ship with more than two masts a punishable offense.

The voyages had one positive short-term result: they put a stop to pirate activities off the coast of China and in Southeast Asia. However, after China stopped sending armed merchant ships into the ocean, the pirate activities resumed, especially on the China Sea.

Japan

Military leaders known as shoguns ruled Japan in the emperor's name from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries. But then conflicts between landholding aristocrats called *daimyo* left Japan in disarray. Each daimyo had his own army of warriors known as samurai, ambition to conquer more territory, and power to rule his fiefdoms as he saw fit. Finally, just as gunpowder weapons enabled the rise of new empires in Turkey, Persia, and India, gunpowder weapons helped a series of three powerful daimyo to gradually unify Japan. (Test Prep: Write a paragraph connecting Shogun rule with the rule of the daimyo. See page 193.)

Powerful Daimyo The first of these powerful daimyo was *Oda Nobunaga*. Armed with muskets purchased from Portuguese traders, Nobunaga and his samurai took over *Kyoto* in 1568. He then began to extend his power, forcing daimyo in the lands around *Kyoto* to submit. Nobunaga had unified about one-third of what is today Japan when he was assassinated in 1582.

Nobunaga's successor, *Toyotomi Hideyoshi*, continued expanding the territory until most of what we now know as Japan was under his control. After his death in 1598, the center of power shifted to the city of *Edo* (Tokyo),

controlled by the daimyo *Tokugawa Ieyasu* (ruled 1600–1616), who was declared shogun in 1603. His successors would continue to rule Japan into the mid-nineteenth century, in an era known as the *Period of Great Peace*.

Tokugawa Government The *Tokugawa Shogunate* set about reorganizing the governance of Japan in order to centralize control over what was essentially a feudal system. Japan was divided into 250 *hans*, or territories, each of which was controlled by a daimyo who had his own army and was fairly independent. However, the Tokugawa government required that daimyo maintain residences both in their home territory and also in the capital; if the daimyo himself was visiting his home territory, his family had to stay in Tokyo, essentially as hostages. This kept the daimyo under the control of the shogunate, reducing them to landlords who managed the *hans*, rather than independent leaders.

Social Changes As civil wars ended in Japan, the samurai warrior class declined in importance and many became unemployed. Some became *ronin*, samurai without masters. Some roamed the countryside, often becoming bandits. The government urged samurai to become bureaucrats, even though that profession did not pay as well as being a samurai had in the past.

Despite their unemployment, the traditional warrior class, including the daimyo, samurai, and ronin, remained near the top of the social pyramid in Japan, below only the emperor and the court. Below the warrior class, interestingly, were peasants and farmers, with artisans and merchants below them. Influenced by Confucian ideas, people viewed merchants as parasites because they made their profits from the work of others. Despite their low rank, some merchants became quite wealthy—wealthier than the daimyo, many of whom were becoming poorer as they lost power. Merchants and daimyo built lavish houses in the city of *Edo*. The very bottom rung of society was occupied by the *Eta*, a class comparable to the untouchables in India. The *Eta* were ostracized because they performed unclean jobs, such as executioner and butcher. Tightly regulated by the Japanese government, the *Eta* would not be emancipated until 1871. (Test Prep: Writing section paragraph comparing Japan's class system to India's caste system.)

Silk production flourished during the period of stability and the silver mine in *Iwami Ginzan*, one of the largest in the world, played an important role in trade. The use of banking and paper money also spurred commercial development. Agricultural production increased dramatically during the period, resulting in surplus crops of rice and cotton. Although the government restricted foreign trade, Chinese, Dutch, and Korean traders did well in Japan.

Arts and Literature During the prosperous Tokugawa Shogunate, Japanese arts and literature prospered. Wealthy merchants and daimyo spared no expense in constructing and decorating their residences. The Japanese refined the Chinese method of making woodblock prints. Arguably the most important contributor to literature of this period was the great poet *Matsuo Basho* (1644–1694), who developed and elevated the brief *haiku* form of poetry. Meanwhile, the stylized dance-drama called *kabuki theater* became extremely popular with audiences, who would often spend entire days

watching performances. Fiction flourished as well. The stories of Ihara Saikaku, such as his *Five Women Who Loved Love* (1686), a collection of racy and down-to-earth stories about the exploits and adventures of five separate women, were very popular, particularly with the merchant class.

Contact with Europeans European traders were initially welcomed when they arrived in Japan in the mid-sixteenth century. Christian missionaries were also tolerated at first. However, the thousands of new converts to Christianity were not especially tolerant of their old religions, and they were responsible for destroying some Buddhist shrines. In response, the then-regent Hideyoshi banned Christian worship in 1587, and missionaries were subsequently expelled. By the 1630s, nearly all foreigners were expelled from the country, and foreign books were prohibited. Japanese people could not travel abroad, and—as occurred in China—a ban on the construction of large ships was made official. The Japanese thought that they were through with

the “uncouth” Europeans, but the Europeans would return in the nineteenth century. (For more about Japan’s experiences with the West, see the next chapter.)

Transregional Trade Networks

St. Augustine’s work in Roman North Africa illustrates the spread of Christianity to all parts of the Roman Empire and beyond. Christians also brought their religion to Mesopotamia, Persia, and India and even into Central Asia by way of the trade route connecting communities in Europe and Asia called the *Silk Roads*. The overland roads were *transregional* in that they connected regions

of various civilizations over long distances. They took several different routes, depending upon the climate, the friendliness of the territories being crossed, and the number of bandit attacks in a given period. Most of the traders took routes through Central Asian cities such as Samarkand and Tashkent. Some went through Indian cities such as Pataliputra and into the city of Kathmandu in Nepal. Traders often paid a portion of the goods as tribute to local lords to allow safe passage through their territories. Overland routes from China separated at the desert town of Dunhuang, one going north, one straight west, and one to the south. The routes overland generally converged at Constantinople, and from there goods went to Rome either overland or by sea. (Test Prep: Create a chart of the spread of Christianity with the spread of Zoroastrianism and the

Sea Routes Rome also conducted extensive trade to the east across water. Maritime commerce continued across the Indian Ocean as monsoons permitted. Up the Red Sea, after touching at Africa, goods at last reached the port of Rome at Ostia.

Although pirates were a constant problem, the waters of the Mediterranean were more easily navigated than those of an ocean because of smaller distances and numerous island stopping places. The Romans lacked sophisticated navigational equipment, but they still made truly amazing trips as far north as the Scylli Islands (the British islands most southerly from the coast of Wales), from which Roman ships brought back tin.

New Technology and New Goods A major advancement that made its way westward from Central Asia was the *stirrup* for mounted warriors. Stirrups provided greater stability for riders, which made horses easier to ride and control and, hence, more useful. Other goods—silks and spices and especially gold—were much prized by the upper classes of the Roman Empire. Not only did China grow wealthy from trade with Rome, but other cities along the Silk Roads (and increasingly on the trans-Saharan routes across northern Africa) also benefited from that trade. The markets of Samarkand, for example, introduced new fruits and vegetables, as well as rice and citrus products from Southwest Asia, to Europe. In East Africa, a large variety of imports and exports overlapped, suggesting a healthy trading economy. (Test Prep: Write a

Trade in Goods and Ideas Despite the invasions and foreign control, India became an important trading crossroads during this period. Silk and other goods from China passed overland through northern India to the Mediterranean Sea. Indian merchants obtained spices and gemstones from kingdoms in Southeast Asia. They traded these items, plus Indian textiles and other merchandise, with the Romans and other peoples along the Mediterranean Sea.

In addition to overland routes, goods were carried in ships from ports along India's west coast to ports on the Red Sea and along the Persian Gulf. From there, traders went overland to Egypt or to the Mediterranean Sea. These *Indian Ocean sea lanes* also connected Indian ports with East Africa and Indonesia. Mauryans even had regular trading relations with the Romans.

Conquest and trade brought new cultures and ideas into India. For example, Indian art styles were influenced by Greek and Roman art. The statues called *Gandhara Buddhas* uniquely combined Greek and Roman artistic traditions with native Indian art.

Silk Roads Trade Traders moved Chinese products west along a series of routes that became known as the *Silk Roads*. This trade brought China into contact with the Roman Empire. The Silk Roads would also eventually bring Buddhism into China from Central Asia.

Silk production increased greatly during Emperor Wudi's rule. Because Chinese silk was of such high quality, silk and silk garments could be sold as far away as the Roman Empire, Mesopotamia, Persia, and India.

Paper, Calendar, and Farming Chinese science and technology prospered under Han rule. The Chinese invented paper around 100 C.E. and calculated the current calendar year of 365.25 days. Improvements to the iron plow and developing a yoke that did not put pressure on an animal's windpipe made farming more productive.

Capital Cities The city of *Chang'an* was the capital of the Han Empire as well as its cultural center. Surrounded by a wall, the city had parks, many homes, and some palaces. Chang'an served as the eastern end of the Silk Roads. Many of its residents were bureaucrats and people who served bureaucrats. Later in the Han dynasty, because of civil unrest in Chang'an, the capital city was moved to Luoyang in eastern China.

Disease, Inequality, and Unrest The Pax Sinica did not last. One problem for the late Han dynasty was the spread of diseases, which came to China along the Silk Roads with the movement of traders and other migrants. Smallpox, measles, and bubonic plague were the most destructive of these epidemic diseases, which reduced the population of China by as much as one-fourth.

India and China Trade

While the Himalayas separated the centers of civilization in South and East Asia, the eastern Indian Ocean and the South China Sea connected them. These routes were part of a vast trading network linking most of Afro-Eurasia. Sailors in Indian Ocean made several technological advances that facilitated trade. The astrolabe and improvements to the compass allowed sailors to navigate more precisely. The sternpost rudder enabled them to control the direction of a ship more accurately. Determining monsoon patterns helped them to plan their trips more safely and use winds more effectively. This network would make possible the spread of religion, technology, and goods to shape the next period in human history.

the kingdoms of Ghana and Mali.

Indian Ocean Trade Trade has a long history on the East Coast of Africa. Coastal cities such as Kilwa (in modern Tanzania), Malindi (in modern Kenya), and Mogadishu (in modern Somalia) traded among themselves from the time the Bantu-speaking peoples brought agriculture to the region about 2000 B.C.E. International trade also had existed there for centuries, before the founding of Islam: merchants from India, Southeast Asia, and Persia all made contact with coastal cities of Africa via the Indian Ocean. Greek and Roman mariners as well had traveled down the Red Sea to trade with the region.

Foreign Trade As discussed in earlier chapters, interregional trade along the Silk Roads created many intercultural connections during the Classical Era. After the collapse of classical civilizations such as the Roman and Han empires, activity on the Silk Roads declined dramatically. However, by the eighth and ninth centuries, Arab merchants from the Abbasid Empire revived the land route of the Silk Roads as well as sea routes in the Indian Ocean. Tang China had much to offer the newly revived global trade network, including the compass, paper, and gunpowder. China exported porcelain, tea, and silk. From other parts of Asia, China imported cotton, precious stones, pomegranates, dates, horses, and grapes. These luxury goods appealed to the upper class of Chinese society, whose members reveled in their country's newfound affluence.

To manage the increasing trade, China developed new financial systems. Because copper coins became too unwieldy to transport for everyday transactions, the government developed a system of credit known as *flying cash*. This allowed a merchant to deposit *paper money* under his name in one location and withdraw the same amount at another location. Merchants and tax collectors used abacuses to calculate their transactions. The system of flying cash became the model for the banks of the modern era. Later, Chinese governments would prohibit private individuals and businesses from making paper money, reserving that right for themselves.

Advances in naval technology allowed China to control trade in the South China Sea. Chinese scientists developed the *magnetic compass* and improved the *rudder*, both of which helped aid navigation and ship control along the seas. The Chinese *junk*, developed in the Han Dynasty, was a boat similar to the Southwest Asian dhow (discussed in Chapter 8), had multiple sails and was as long as 400 feet—at least triple the size of the typical Western European ship of its time. The hull of a junk was divided into compartments. The walls making these divisions strengthened the ship for rough voyages at sea and made sinking less likely.

Trade in the Indian Ocean Basin Although the Indian Ocean trade had existed as early as 200 B.C.E., the expansion of Islam connected more cities than ever before. Trading partners existed in East Africa, East and Southeast Asia, and South Asia. Muslim Persians and Arabs were the dominant seafarers and were instrumental in transporting goods to port cities across the Indian Ocean. Cities on the west coast of India, such as *Calicut*, Quilon, and Cambay, became thriving centers of trade due to interactions with merchants from East Africa and Southwest Asia.

Calicut, especially, became a bustling port city for merchants in search of spices from southern India. Foreign merchants from Arabia and China met in Calicut to exchange goods from the West and the East, respectively. Local rulers welcomed the presence of Muslim and Chinese merchants, as it brought the city wealth and prominence in the Indian Ocean Basin.

Specialized Products As the Indian Ocean trade grew, so did the demand for specialized products. Every region involved in the trade had something special to offer their trading partners.

- India became known for the high quality of its fabrics, particularly cotton. In addition, merchants traveled to India in search of meticulously woven carpets as well as high-carbon steel (used for knives and swords), tanned leather, and artisan-crafted stonework. Merchants also sought pepper from India's southern coastal cities.
- Modern-day Malaysia and Indonesia became known as the *Spice Islands* because of the fragrant nutmeg, cinnamon, cloves, and cardamom they exported.
- Slaves, ivory, and gold came from the Swahili coastal cities of Mombasa, Mogadishu, and Sofala.
- China exported silks, and Chinese porcelain became coveted worldwide, which is why people in the West still refer to their fancier dishes as "fine china."
- From Southwest Asia came horses, figs, and dates.

Monsoon System and Sailing Technology Knowledge of *monsoon winds* was essential for trading in the Indian Ocean. In the winter months, winds originated from the northeast, while in the spring and summer, they blew from the southwest. Thus, merchants had to time their voyages carefully, often remaining in port cities for months at a time, depending on when favorable winds would come their way. As a natural consequence, these merchants interacted with the surrounding cultures and peoples of the region. In fact, many Arab and East African merchants stayed in western Indian port cities permanently because they married the women they met there. Thus, these merchants from the Dar al-Islam were the first to bring Islam to southern Asia, not through missionary work or conquest, but through intermarriage. Their children would generally be brought up as Muslims.