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**Ways of the World:  
A Brief Global History**

First Edition

***CHAPTER XIII***

**The Worlds of the Fifteenth Century**

## *The Shapes of Human Communities*



The Waldseemüller Map of 1507  
Ways of the World, First Edition  
Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz/Art Resource, NY

In 1500, the world still had all types of societies, from bands of gatherers and hunters to empires, but the balance between them was different than it had been in 500.

## *Agricultural Village Societies*

1. Predominated in much of North America, in Africa south of the equator, in parts of the Amazon River basin and Southeast Asia



Their societies mostly avoided oppressive authority,  
class inequalities, and seclusion of women typical of other civilizations

All shifted from matrilineal to patrilineal system

## *Agricultural Village Societies*

2. In what is now central New York State, agricultural village societies underwent substantial change in the centuries before 1500
  - a. Iroquois speakers had become fully agricultural (maize and beans) by around 1300
  - b. population growth, emergence of distinct peoples

## *Agricultural Village Societies*

- c. Rise of warfare as key to male prestige (perhaps since women did the farming, so males were no longer needed for getting food)
- d. Warfare triggered the creation of the Iroquois League of Five Nations, based on agreement known as the Great Law of Peace
- e. Some European colonists appreciated Iroquois values of social equality and personal freedom (even for women)

## *Herding Peoples*

1. Turkic warrior Timur (Tamerlane) tried to restore the Mongol Empire ca.1400



## *Herding Peoples*

- a. his army devastated Russia , Persia , and India



## *Herding Peoples*

- b. Timur died in 1405, while preparing invasion of China
- c. his successors kept control of the area between Persia and Afghanistan for a century
- d. Timur's conquest was the last great military success of Central Asian nomads

*So.....What happened to the Mongols?*

- 2. In the following centuries, the steppe nomads' homeland was swallowed up in expanding Russian and Chinese empires



## *Civilizations of the Fifteenth Century: Comparing China and Europe*

By the fifteenth century c.e., a majority of the world's population lived within a major civilization

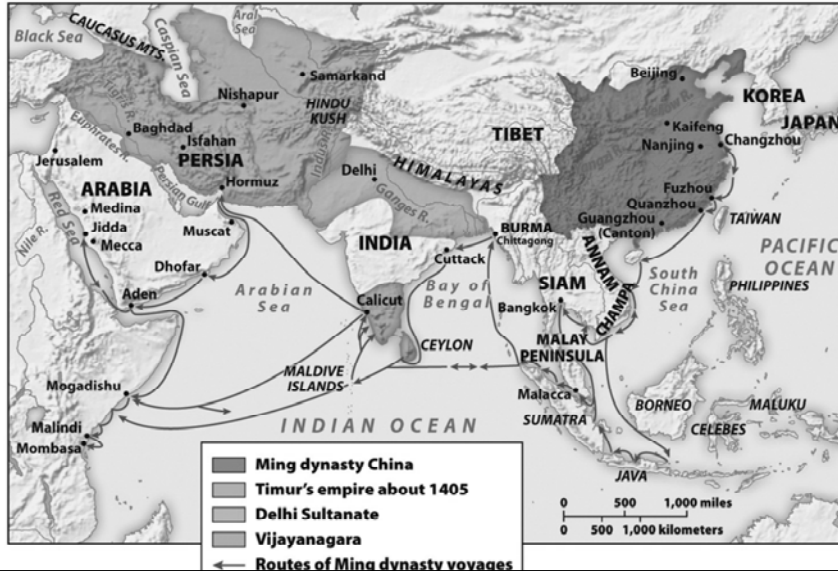


Map 13-2  
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## *Ming Dynasty China*

1. China had been badly disrupted by Mongol rule and the plague



## *Ming Dynasty China*

2. Recovery under the Ming dynasty (1368–1644)
  - a. effort to eliminate all signs of foreign rule
  - b. promotion of Confucian learning
  - c. Emperor Yongle (r. 1402–1422) sponsored an 11,000-volume *Encyclopedia* summarizing all the wisdom of the past
3. reestablished the civil service examination system



## *Connection*

Which of the following was NOT a way in which European maritime voyaging was influenced by long-term cross-cultural encounters?

- a. European competition with the Chinese Ming Empire to construct the largest and most sophisticated fleet in the world
- b. The market for Asian products in Europe created through long-distance trade
- c. Religious and military competition with the Islamic World, which inspired western Europeans to seek to contact by sea with potential Christian allies whom they hoped to convince to join their crusading struggle
- d. Europeans drawing on technological developments in ship design elsewhere in Eurasia to improve their ships

## *Ming Dynasty China*

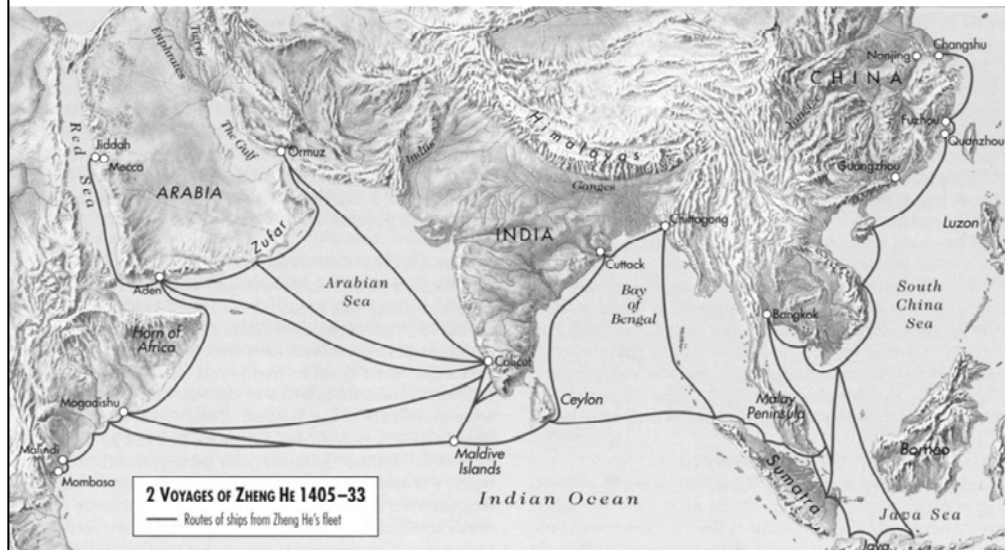
4. Created a highly centralized government
  - a. great power was given to court eunuchs
  - b. state restored land to cultivation, constructed waterworks, planted perhaps a billion trees
  - c. was perhaps the best-governed and most prosperous civilization of the fifteenth century

## *Ming Dynasty China*

### 5. Maritime ventures

- a. Chinese sailors and traders had become important in the South China Sea and in SE Asian ports in the 11<sup>th</sup> century
- b. Emperor Yongle commissioned a massive fleet; launched in 1405 under command of Zheng He
- c. Fleet sought to enroll distant peoples and states in Chinese tribute system but did not seek to conquer new territories or establish settlements

# Ming Dynasty China

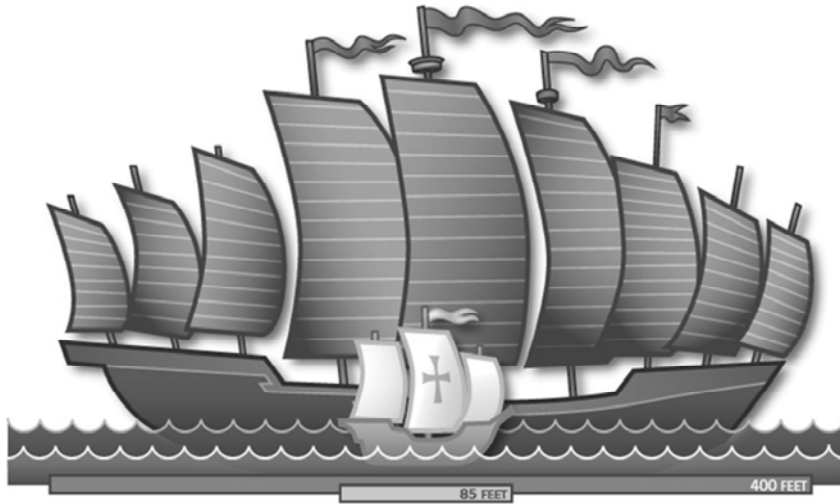




## *Ming Dynasty China*



## *Ming Dynasty China*



## *Ming Dynasty China*

- d. Chinese government abruptly stopped the voyages in 1433
- e. Chinese merchants and craftsmen continued to settle and trade in Japan , Philippines , Taiwan , and Southeast Asia, but without government support

Biggest mistake in the history of China – Look inward miss the Industrial Revolution

## *European Comparisons: State Building and Cultural Renewal*

1. A similar process of demographic recovery, consolidation, cultural flowering, and European expansion took place in Western Europe

2. Population

3. State building

2. European population began to rise again ca. 1450
3. State building, but fragmented, with many independent and competitive states

*European Comparisons: State  
Building and Cultural Renewal*

*The Renaissance*

reclamation of classical Greek traditions

Began in the commercial cities of Italy  
ca. 1350–1500

## *European Comparisons: State Building and Cultural Renewal*

- b. “returning to the sources” as a cultural standard to imitate
- c. turn to greater naturalism in art (e.g., Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Michelangelo)
- d. “humanist” scholars explored secular topics in addition to *religious* matters (e.g., Niccolò Machiavelli’s *The Prince*)

### **Back to the sources**

Portrait of Erasmus of Rotterdam

The humanists' close study of Latin literary texts soon enabled them to discern historical differences

in the writing styles of different periods.

### *European Comparisons: Maritime Voyaging*

1. Portuguese voyages of discovery began in 1415
2. 1492: Columbus reached the Americas
3. 1497–1498: Vasco da Gama sailed around Africa to India

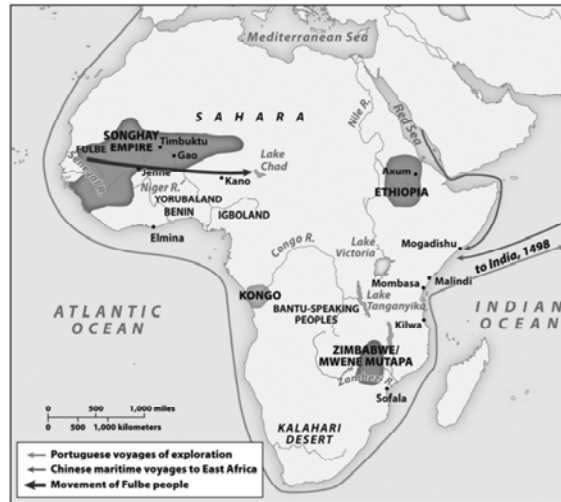
### *European Comparisons: Maritime Voyaging*

4. European voyages were very small compared to Chinese ones
5. Unlike the Chinese voyages, Europeans were seeking wealth, converts, allies in Crusades against Islam



## *European Comparisons: Maritime Voyaging*

### 6. Europeans used violence to carve out empires



Map 13-3  
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### *European Comparisons: Maritime Voyaging*

7. Chinese voyages ended; European ones kept escalating
  - a. No overarching political authority in Europe to end the voyages
  - b. Rivalry between states encouraged more exploration

### *European Comparisons: Maritime Voyaging*

- c. Much of European elite interested in overseas expansion
- d. China had everything it needed; Europeans wanted the greater riches of the East
- e. China 's food production could expand internally;  
European system expanded by acquiring new lands

# *Civilizations of the Fifteenth Century: The Islamic World*



Map 13-4  
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11. Fill in the chart. (Original: pp. 380-382; With Sources: pp. 586-589)		
	OTTOMAN EMPIRE	SAFAVID EMPIRE
POLITICAL		
RELIGION		

*Handout - STOP - Student to complete*

11. Fill in the chart. (Original: pp. 380-382; With Sources: pp. 586-589)		
	SONGHAY	MUGHAL
POLITICAL		
RELIGION		

*Handout - STOP - Student to complete*

## *In the Islamic Heartland: The Ottoman and Safavid Empires*

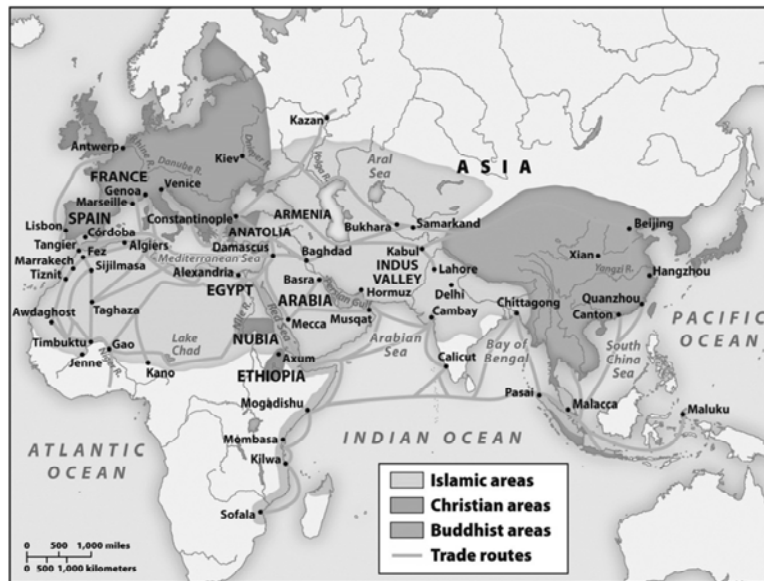
1. Ottoman Empire lasted from fourteenth to early twentieth century
2. Ottoman aggression toward Christian lands
3. Safavid Empire emerged in Persia from a Sufi religious order
4. Sunni Ottoman Empire and Shia Safavid Empire fought periodically between 1534 and 1639



Ottoman Janissaries  
Ways of the World, First Edition  
Austrian National Library picture archive, Vienna: Cod. 8626, fol. 11r

1. Ottoman Empire lasted from fourteenth to early twentieth century
  - a. huge territory: Anatolia, eastern Europe, much of Middle East, North African coast, lands around Black Sea
  - b. sultans claimed the title “caliph” and the legacy of the Abbasids
  - c. effort to bring new unity to the Islamic world
2. Ottoman aggression toward Christian lands
  - a. fall of Constantinople in 1453
  - b. 1529 siege of Vienna
  - c. Europeans feared Turkish expansion
3. Safavid Empire emerged in Persia from a Sufi religious order
  - a. empire was established shortly after 1500
  - b. imposed Shia Islam as the official religion of the state
4. Sunni Ottoman Empire and Shia Safavid Empire fought periodically between 1534 and 1639

## *On the Frontiers of Islam: The Songhay and Mughal Empires*



Map 13-6  
Ways of the World, First Edition  
© 2000 by Glencoe/McGraw-Hill

1. Songhay Empire rose in West Africa in the second half of the fifteenth century
  - a. Islam was limited largely to urban elites
  - b. Sonni Ali (r. 1465–1492) followed Muslim practices, but was also regarded as a magician with an invisibility charm
  - c. Songhay Empire was a major center of Islamic learning/trade
2. Mughal Empire in India was created by Turkic group that invaded India in 1526
  - a. over the sixteenth century, Mughals gained control of most of India
  - b. effort to create a partnership between Hindus and Muslims
  - c. Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagara continued to flourish in the south



The age of these four great Muslim empires is sometimes called a “second flowering of Islam.”

1. New age of energy, prosperity, and cultural brilliance
2. Spread of Islam to new areas, such as Southeast Asia

1. new age of energy, prosperity, and cultural brilliance
2. spread of Islam to new areas, such as Southeast Asia
3. rise of Malacca as a sign of the times—became a major Muslim port city in the fifteenth century
  - a. Malaccan Islam blended with Hindu/Buddhist traditions
  - b. was a center for Islamic learning

## *Civilizations of the Fifteenth Century: The Americas*



Map 13-3  
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Both the Aztec and the Inca empires were established by once-marginal peoples who took over and absorbed older cultures, and both were destroyed by Spanish conquistadores and their diseases.

## *The Aztec Empire*

1. The Mexica were a seminomadic people who migrated southward from northern Mexico
  - a. Established themselves on an island in Lake Texcoco by 1325
  - b. Built themselves up and established capital city of Tenochtitlán

2. Triple Alliance (1428): Mexica and two other city-states united
  - a. launched a program of military conquest
  - b. conquered much of Mesoamerica in under a century
  - c. Aztec rulers claimed descent from earlier peoples

## *The Aztec Empire*

3. Aztec Empire was a loosely structured,  
unstable conquest state

- a. Population of 5–6 million
- b. Conquered peoples paid regular tribute
- c. Tenochtitlán had 150,000–200,000 people
- d. Local and long-distance trade on a vast scale



The Meeting of Two Worlds  
Ways of the World, First Edition  
Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz/Art Resource, NY

## *The Aztec Empire*

4. Trade included slaves, many intended for sacrifice
  - a. Human sacrifice much more prominent in Aztec Empire than in earlier Mesoamerica

## *The Inca Empire*

1. Quechua speakers established the Inca Empire along the length of the Andes
  - a. empire was 2,500 miles long
  - b. around 10 million subjects
2. Inca Empire was more bureaucratic, centralized than the Aztecs
  - a. emperor was an absolute ruler regarded as divine
  - b. state theoretically owned all land and resources

- c. around 80 provinces, each with an Inca governor
- d. subjects grouped into hierarchical units of people (10, 50, 100, 500, etc.), at least in the central regions
- e. inspectors checked up on provincial officials
- f. population data was recorded on *quipus* (knotted cords)
- g. massive resettlement program moved much of the population



## *Comparison*



*In comparison to Ming Dynasty China, the Incan Empire*

- a. lacked a political ideology that gave divine sanction to the emperor's rule.
- b. relied more on long-distance cross-cultural trade.
- c. ruled over a more populous empire numbering some 100 million subjects.
- d. played a more important role in both the production and distribution of goods.



## *Change*

All EXCEPT which of the following is an important change that separates the fifteenth century from the modern era that emerged after 1500?

- a. The linking for the first time of the Pacific, American, and Afro-Eurasian zones of interaction after 1500
- b. Industrialization rooted in a sustained growth of technological innovation after 1500
- c. The growing prominence of European peoples on the world stage after 1500
- d. The emergence of less powerful and less intrusive states after 1500



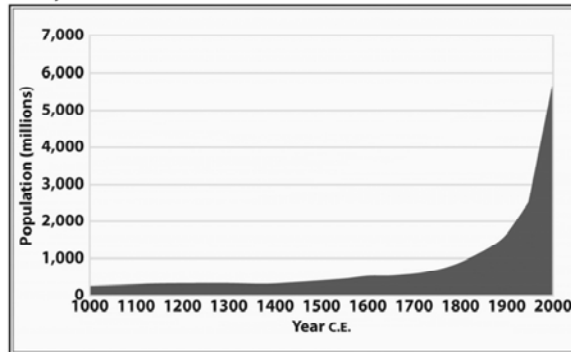
***A Preview of Coming Attractions: Looking Ahead to  
the Modern Era (1500–2000)***

“Modern” human society emerged first in Europe in the  
nineteenth century and then throughout the world.

core feature: industrialization

## *A Preview of Coming Attractions: Looking Ahead to the Modern Era (1500–2000)*

Snapshot **World Population Growth, 1000–2000<sup>19</sup>**



Snapshot 13-1  
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C. The prominence of European peoples on the global stage grew over the last 500 years.

1. after 1500, Western Europe became the most innovative, prosperous, powerful, imitated part of the world
2. spread of European languages and Christian religion throughout the world
3. initiated the Scientific Revolution and the Industrial Revolution
4. origin of modern *-isms*: liberalism, nationalism, feminism, socialism
5. rest of the world was confronted by powerful, intrusive Europeans

11. Fill in the chart. (Original: pp. 380-382; With Sources: pp. 586-589)		
	OTTOMAN EMPIRE	SAFAVID EMPIRE
POLITICAL	<p>Turkic Ottomans claimed the legacy of the earlier Abbasid Empire and sought to bring a renewed unity to the Islamic world. They also saw themselves as successors to the Roman Empire. In 1529, they laid siege to Vienna in the heart of Central Europe to expand their empire and Islam.</p> <p>Politically cohesive</p> <p>Periodic military conflict erupted between these 2 empires, reflecting both territorial rivalry and sharp religious differences.</p>	<p>East of the Ottoman Empire, this Islamic state was created by a Turkic leader who was from a Sufi religious order. By 1550, the Safavid Empire decided to forcibly impose a Shia version of Islam as the official religion of the state.</p> <p>Politically cohesive</p> <p>Military power</p>
RELIGION	<p>Islam--Sunni</p> <p>Other religions tolerated</p> <p>The seizure of Constantinople in 1453 marked the end of Christian Byzantium.</p>	<p>Islam—Shia</p> <p>By 1500, the empire decided to forcibly impose a Shia version of Islam as the official religion of the state.</p>

*Handout/KEY*

11. Fill in the chart. (Original: pp. 380-382; With Sources: pp. 586-589)

	SONGHAY	MUGHAL
POLITICAL	A monarch—Sonni Ali—who gave alms and fasted during Ramadan in proper Islamic style. It was a substantial Islamic state on the African frontier of a still expanding Muslim world Military power	Created by an Islamized Turkic group. Had inclusive policies to accommodate the Hindu subjects Military power
RELIGION	Islam was a growing faith in Songhay but it was limited largely to urban cities.	Islam and Hindu Provided religious autonomy for Christians

*Handout/KEY*