



Comparative Perspectives: Japan, China, & Russia

THE EARLY MODERN WORLD (1450 – 1750)

Similarities & Differences 1500 - 1750

- Expansion
 - Qing largest of all Chinese Dynasties, incorporated Mongolia. Land based empire.
 - Russia stretched from Europe to the Pacific & added Alaska. Land based empire.
 - Japan did not expand and is not really considered an **empire** (although it had a similar population and size to France, it had no colonies, etc.)



- Government

- Japan was much more decentralized than China or Russia. Both Russia and China had leaders who were trying to consolidate power.
- Politically all changed. Russia replaced the Mongols for a tsar, the Qing replaced the Ming in China, and in Japan civil wars led to a military then civil state.

- Military

- Japan & Russia underwent innovative changes like the adoption of gunpowder. Russia even built a navy of warships. China (the origin of gunpowder) continued to rely on its size than keep up with military innovations (somewhat surprising given Kangxi's openness).

- Contacts (internal & external)
 - China and Russia brought in new people to their domains, and both tolerated diversity – but still promoted assimilation with Orthodox Christianity (Russia) and Confucianism (China).
 - Japan remained culturally homogenous.
 - China & Russia accepted European ideas (Peter went to Europe to learn! Kangxi welcomed Jesuits!) Japan implemented a policy of restricting foreign contacts.



- Economics

- In Japan increased commerce occurred, rice exchanges appeared, and the economy grew.
- China continued to export silk & porcelain, received lots of silver in return.
- Russia depended upon agriculture worked by serfs, but also had growing trade with the West.

- Society

- In Japan, the samurai class becomes more refined, economic growth brought social changes. There were hierarchal societies in both China and Russia, serfdom in Russia, peasants in China.

- WE ARE NOW FINISHED WITH UNIT 4. BUT WHY IS THIS A GOOD “BREAKING” POINT?
 - Europe is relatively on top. Islamic empires are in decline, Japan & China have issues, Africa is weak, the Americas are colonized. It is now their moment.

Who would have thought given the state of Europe in 1450?

Good thing for that

Renaissance, sea exploration, and slavery. Not to mention everyone else's demise.

To be continued . . .