20-1 The Ming & Qing Dynasties
During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, China prospered, but the empire entered a period of isolation in response to increasing European contact.
The Ming Dynasty

- 1279 - Mongol leader Kublai Khan conquered China and founded the Yuan Dynasty.
- After the death of Khan, China became ripe for rebellion and led to the Ming Dynasty.
- Hong Wu, “vastly martial” - founder of the Ming Dynasty - overthrew the last of the Mongol emperor in 1368.
- Worked to rebuild China.
- Reforms - reduced taxes and improved agriculture and trade and at the same time restored traditional Chinese practices, such as Confucianism and civil service examinations for government positions.
Yong Le - successor of Hong Wu - moved Ming Capital to Beijing, a city northeast of China.

The Forbidden City - a vast imperial city surrounded by high walls.
The Forbidden City/Imperial City

- Created to show people how powerful & prestigious the dynasty was
- Called the Forbidden City because it was off limits to commoners
Zheng He (JUHNG-HUH) - 1405 and 1433 - Chinese Muslim Admiral, led seven voyages around the Indian Ocean as far as Africa.

He sailed with a fleet of 300 ships. (included trading ships called junks as well as immense treasure ships, each 400 feet long.

He voyages demonstrated China’s growing sea power.
Admiral Zheng He’s Voyages

- **First Voyage**: 1405-1407 [62 ships; 27,800 men].
- **Second Voyage**: 1407-1409 [Ho didn’t go on this trip].
- **Third Voyage**: 1409-1411 [48 ships; 30,000 men].
- **Fourth Voyage**: 1413-1415 [63 ships; 28,500 men].
- **Fifth Voyage**: 1417-1419
- **Sixth Voyage**: 1421-1422
  - Emperor Zhu Gaozhi cancelled future trips and ordered ship builders and sailors to stop work.
- **Seventh Voyage**: 1431-1433
  - Emperor Zhu Zhanji resumed the voyages in 1430 to restore peaceful relations with Malacca & Siam
  - 100 ships and 27,500 men; Cheng Ho died on the return trip.
1498 -- Da Gama reached Calcutta, China's favorite port.
Foreign Relations - policy to end voyages led to a period of isolationism from the outside world.

Why? The arrival of Europeans and Christians interfered with traditional Chinese practices that were already ruined by the Mongol Empire.

Metteo Ricci - Italian Jesuit priest who learned Chinese and adopted many Chinese customs.

In exchange, he introduced mathematics and science from Europe.
Ming Decline

- In late 1500s, Ming Dynasty began to weaken.
- High taxes, weak leaders, and crop failures created harsh economic times.
- Manchu - a people from Manchuria swept into Beijing and took the capital.
- The last Ming emperor killed himself to avoid capture.
- The Manchu then formed their own dynasty and gave it a Chinese name - Qing.
The Qing Dynasty, 1644–1911, became the last dynasty in 3,500 years of imperial rule in China.

Under Manchu rule, China again grew prosperous and expanded to its largest size in history.
China under Qing Rule

- To win the support of opposition to many Chinese, the Manchu showed respect for their Chinese customs and maintained Confucian traditions.
- Civil Service and government positions were distributed equally among Chinese and Manchu.
- Kangxi (KAHNG-SHEE) and his grandson Qianlong (CHEE-UHN-LUNG) - reduced taxes for peasants and expanded the empire into parts of Central Asia.
- Agricultural production and population rose and the economy thrived due to better transportation and growing domestic and foreign markets.
Qing Foreign Relations

- 1793- Lord George Macartney tried to change China’s isolationist policies.
- He came to China to discuss expanding trade.
- Emperor Qianlong thought British goods were inferior and demanded that he kowtow (kneel)’ Macartney refused.
- At that time, China was one of the more advanced civilizations in the world.
China’s isolationism and refusal to enter the world market eventually toppled the Qing Dynasty – and imperial rule.
Ming and Qing Culture

- Under the two empires, China made many developments in the arts and literature.
- Ming artisans produced exquisite blue and white porcelain. Valuable trading item.
- Rising literacy rates contributed to the growth or popular fiction.