Chapter 22
Eastern Eurasia
1500–1800
Japanese Reunification
Civil War and the Invasion of Korea and Manchuria, 1500–1603

In the twelfth century, with imperial unity dissolved, Japan came under the control of a number of regional warlords called *daimyo*

Each *daimyo* had their own castle town, a small bureaucracy, and an army of warriors, the *samurai*

A long civil war would bring the separate Japanese islands under the control of different warlords
Warfare among the daimyo was common, and in 1592 the most powerful of these warlords, Hideyoshi, chose to lead an invasion of Korea.
After Hideyoshi's death in 1598, the Japanese withdrew their forces and, in 1606, made peace with Korea.
The Tokugawa Shogunate, 1603–1800

- After Hideyoshi’s death, Japanese leaders brought civil wars to an end.
- A more centralized government would be established.
- A new shogun, Tokugawa Ieyasu, brought all the local lords under the administration of his military government the Tokugawa Shogunate in 1600.
Japan and the Europeans

- Jesuits came to Japan in the late 1500s
- They had limited success in converting the regional lords, however, they did make a significant number of converts among the farmers of southern and eastern Japan
- A rural rebellion in this area in the 1630s was blamed on Christians
- Tokugawa Shogunate responded with persecutions, a ban on Christianity, and, in 1649, the closing of the country
The closed country policy was intended to prevent the spread of foreign influence, but not to exclude knowledge of foreign cultures. A small number of European traders, mainly Dutch, were allowed to reside on a small island near Nagasaki. Japanese who were interested in the European knowledge that could be gained from European books developed a field known as “Dutch studies.”
Some of the problems of the late Ming may be attributed to a drop in annual temperatures between 1645 and 1700. This may have contributed to the agricultural distress, migration, disease, and uprisings of this period. Climate change may also have driven the Mongols and the Manchus to protect their productive lands from Ming control and to take more land along the Ming borders.
The flow of New World silver into China in the 1500s and early 1600s caused inflation in prices and taxes that hit the rural population particularly hard.
In addition to these global causes of Ming decline, there were also internal factors particular to China.

These included disorder and inefficiency in the urban industrial sector (such as the Jingdezhen ceramics factories), no growth in agricultural productivity, and low population growth.
Ming Collapse and the Rise of the Qing

- The Ming also suffered from increased threats on their borders:
  - To the north and west, there was the threat posed by a newly reunified Mongol confederation,
  - In Korea the Ming incurred heavy financial losses when it helped the Koreans to defeat a Japanese invasion.
  - Rebellions of native peoples rocked the southwest, and Japanese pirates plagued the southeast coast.
Rebel forces led by Li Zicheng overthrew the Ming in 1644, and the Manchu Qing Empire then entered Beijing, restored order, and claimed China for its own.

A Manchu imperial family ruled the Qing Empire.

However, the Manchus were only a small proportion of the population, and thus depended on diverse people for assistance in ruling the empire.

Chinese made up the overwhelming majority of the people and the officials of the Qing Empire.
Trading Companies and Missionaries

Europeans were eager to trade with China.

Enthusiasm for international trade developed slowly in China, particularly in the imperial court.

Over the course of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese, Spanish, and Dutch gained limited access to Chinese trade.

By the seventeenth century, the Dutch East India Company had become the major European trader in the Indian Ocean.
Catholic missionaries accompanied Portuguese and Spanish traders, and the Jesuits had notable success converting Chinese elites.

The Jesuit Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) used his mastery of Chinese language and culture to gain access to the imperial court.
Emperor Kangxi (r. 1662–1722)

Kangxi (r. 1662–1722) took formal control over his government in 1669 (at the age of sixteen) by executing his chief regent.

Kangxi was an intellectual prodigy and a successful military commander who expanded his territory and gave it a high degree of stability.
During the Kangxi period the Qing were willing to incorporate ideas and technology from Mongolian, Tibetan, Korean, and Chinese sources.

The Qing also adapted European knowledge and technology—mapmaking, astronomy, and anatomical and pharmaceutical knowledge—taught by the Jesuits who frequented Kangxi’s court.
The Jesuits were also affected by their contact with China.

They revised their religious teaching in order to allow Chinese converts to practice Confucian ancestor worship.

They transmitted to Europe Chinese technology including an early form of inoculation against smallpox and the management techniques of the huge imperial porcelain factories.
Chinese Influences on Europe

The exchange of ideas and information between the Qing and the Jesuits flowed in both directions.

The wealth and power of the Qing led to a tremendous enthusiasm in Europe for Chinese things such as silk, tea, porcelain, other decorative items, and wallpaper.

Jesuit descriptions of China also led Europeans such as Voltaire to see the Qing emperors as benevolent despots or philosopher-kings from whom the Europeans could learn.
The Russian Empire

In the 1650s the expanding Russian Empire met the expanding Qing Empire in Mongolia, Central Asia, and along the Amur.

Treaties between the two powers in 1689 and 1727 had the effect of weakening the Mongols and of focusing Russian expansion eastward toward the Pacific coast and across to North America.
Russian Society and Politics to 1725

As the empire expanded it incorporated a diverse set of peoples, cultures, and religions. This often produced internal tensions.

The Cossacks belonged to close-knit bands and made temporary alliances with whoever could pay for their military services.
Despite the fact that the Cossacks often performed important services for the Russian Empire, they managed to maintain a high degree of autonomy.
Threats and invasions by Sweden and Poland and internal disputes among the Russian aristocracy (boyars) in the seventeenth century led to the overthrow of the old line of Muscovite rulers and the enthronement of Mikhail Romanov in 1613.

The Romanov rulers combined consolidation of their authority with territorial expansion to the east.
As the power of the Romanov rose, the freedom of Russian peasants fell.

In 1649 Russian peasants were legally transformed into serfs.
Peter the Great (1689–1725)

- Peter the Great fought the Ottomans in an attempt to gain a warm-water port on the Black Sea and to liberate Constantinople (Istanbul) from Muslim rule, but did not achieve either goal.
- Peter was more successful in the Great Northern War, in which he broke Swedish control over the Baltic and established direct contacts between Russia and Europe.
Following his victory in the Great Northern War, Peter built a new capital, St. Petersburg. This was to contribute the Westernization of the Russian elites and demonstrate to Europeans the sophistication of Russia.

The new capital was also intended to help break the power of the boyars by reducing their traditional roles in the government and in the army.
Peter wanted to use European technology and culture in order to strengthen Russia and to strengthen the autocratic power of his government;

He was not interested in political liberalization.

As an autocratic ruler, Peter brought the Russian Orthodox Church under his control, built industrial plants to serve the military.

He also increased the burdens of taxes and labor on the serfs, whom the Russian Empire depended upon for the production of basic food staples of Russia.
Consolidation of the Empire

- Russian expansion in Alaska and the American northwest was driven by the search for furs, which British and American entrepreneurs had also been interested in.
- Control of the natural resources of Siberia put the Russians in a position to dominate the fur and shipping industries of the North Pacific.
During the reign of Catherine the Great (r. 1762–1796), Russia was the world’s largest land empire, built on an economic basis of large territory, agriculture, logging, fishing, and furs.
Comparative Perspectives
Political Comparisons

- Between 1500 and 1800, China and Russia grew dramatically, both in territory controlled and population.
- In comparison to Russia and China, the seaborne trading empires of the Portuguese, Dutch, French, and English had less territory, tighter administrations, and much more global sweep.
Despite being headed by an emperor, Japan's size, homogeneity, and failure to add colonies disqualify it from being called a true empire.

Japan and Russia made greater progress in improving their military than did the Chinese.

Of Japan, Russia, and China, Russia did the most to build up its imperial navy.
Cultural, Social, and Economic Comparisons

As they expanded, both China and Russia pursued policies that tolerated diversity, while promoting cultural assimilation.

While both Russian and Chinese leaders were willing to use foreign ideas and technologies, they tended to see their own culture as superior.

Both China and Russia had hierarchical and oppressive social systems.

Merchants occupied a precarious position in both China and Japan.