

LESSON 3

The Kingdoms of Korea and Southeast Asia

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What factors help unify a kingdom or dynasty?
- How can external forces influence a kingdom or dynasty?

READING HELPDESK

Academic Vocabulary

- archipelago
- network
- impose

Content Vocabulary

- **isolationist**
- **mainland states**
- **bureaucracy**

TAKING NOTES

Key Ideas and Details

Organizing As you read, use a chart like the one below to list and organize information about the kingdoms of Korea and Southeast Asia.

Korea	
Mainland states: Burma, Thailand, and Cambodia	
Vietnam	
Indonesian archipelago	
Malay Peninsula	

IT MATTERS BECAUSE

Beginning in the fourteenth century, the powerful Yi dynasty created a stable state in Korea. In Southeast Asia, Muslim merchants, attracted to the growing spice trade, established a workable trade network. In the sixteenth century, however, the Portuguese seized control of the spice trade, eventually attracting English and Dutch competition.

Korea: The Hermit Kingdom

GUIDING QUESTION *What characterized Korea's culture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries?*

The Yi dynasty in Korea began in 1392 when Yi Sŏng-gye (YEE • sung • jay), a renowned military strategist, ascended the throne by overthrowing the Koryo dynasty. Lasting for five centuries, the Yi dynasty was one of the world's longest-lasting monarchies.

From their capital at Hanseong (modern-day Seoul), Yi rulers consolidated their rule of Korea by adopting the Chinese example of a strong bureaucratic state. They patterned their society after the Chinese to the north but maintained their distinctive identity.

One distinctive Korean characteristic was its alphabet—Hangul. The first Korean and Japanese writing systems developed from Chinese characters, or symbols. Unlike Chinese, which uses thousands of symbols, the Korean Hangul is phonetically based. One symbol stands for each sound, similar to the English alphabet. Hangul is still largely the standard writing system in present-day Korea.

The Yi dynasty also experienced serious problems. During the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, internal conflicts within the royal court weakened the dynasty. Japanese and Chinese invasions also devastated Korea.

A Japanese force under Toyotomi Hideyoshi invaded Korea in the late sixteenth century. Hideyoshi wanted to use Korea as the transit route for his conquest of China. Korean forces defeated the

Japanese invaders, but victory came at a high price. Korean farmlands were devastated, and villages and towns were burned. The Japanese also killed or kidnapped skilled workers.

Korea was still recovering from the Japanese invasions when the Manchus attacked in the 1620s and 1630s. Korea recovered, however, and then began to experience a long period of peace.

In response to these events, the Korean rulers sought to limit contact with foreign countries and tried to keep the country isolated from the outside world. The country remained largely untouched by European merchants and Christian missionaries. Due to its **isolationist** practices, Korea received the name "Hermit Kingdom."

READING PROGRESS CHECK

Explaining Why was Korea called the "Hermit Kingdom?"

isolationist a policy of national isolation by abstention from alliances and other international political and economic relations

Kingdoms in Southeast Asia

GUIDING QUESTION *What factors influenced the emerging kingdoms in Southeast Asia beginning in the sixteenth century?*

In 1500 mainland Southeast Asia was a relatively stable region. Throughout the region, from Burma in the west to Vietnam in the east, kingdoms with unique ethnic, linguistic, and cultural characteristics were being formed.

Nevertheless, conflicts erupted among the emerging states on the Southeast Asian mainland. One such conflict, over territory between the Thai and the Burmese, was bitter until a Burmese army sacked the Thai capital in 1767. The Thai then created a new capital at Bangkok, farther to the south.

GEOGRAPHY CONNECTION

Southeast Asia had a variety of kingdoms in the 1500s.

- HUMAN SYSTEMS** *Why was Islam present on the Indonesian islands?*
- THE WORLD IN SPATIAL TERMS** *What was the main style of kingship on the mainland?*



Across the mountains to the east, the Vietnamese had begun their “March to the South.” By the end of the fifteenth century, they had subdued the rival state of Champa on the central coast. The Vietnamese then gradually took control of the Mekong Delta from the Khmer—the successor of the old Angkor kingdom. By 1800, the Khmer monarchy had virtually disappeared.

The situation was different in the Malay Peninsula and the Indonesian **archipelago**. Muslim merchants, who were attracted to the growing spice trade, gradually entered the area. The creation of an Islamic trade **network** had political results as new Islamic states arose along the spice route. The major impact of this trade network, however, came in the fifteenth century with the new Muslim sultanate at Melaka. Melaka owed its new power to its strategic location on the Strait of Malacca and to the rapid growth of the spice trade itself. Within a few years, Melaka had become the leading power in the region.

Religious beliefs changed in Southeast Asia during the period from 1500 to 1800. Particularly in the non-mainland states and the Philippines, Islam and Christianity began to attract converts. Buddhism advanced on the mainland, becoming dominant from Burma to Vietnam. Traditional beliefs, however, survived and influenced the new religions.

The political systems in Southeast Asian states evolved into four main types. Buddhist kings, Javanese kings, Islamic sultans, and Vietnamese emperors adapted foreign models of government to suit their particular local circumstances.

The Buddhist style of kingship became the chief form of government in the **mainland states** of Burma, Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia. In the Buddhist model, the king was considered superior to other human beings and served as the link between human society and the universe.

The Javanese style of kingship was rooted in the political traditions of India and shared many characteristics of the Buddhist system. Like Buddhist rulers, Javanese kings were believed to have a sacred quality. They maintained the balance between the sacred world and the material world. The royal palace was designed to represent the center of the universe. Its shape was like rays spreading outward to the corners of the Javanese realm.

Islamic sultans ruled on the Malay Peninsula and in the small coastal states of the Indonesian archipelago. In the Islamic pattern, the head of state was a sultan. Viewed as a mortal, he still possessed some special qualities. He was a defender of the faith and staffed his **bureaucracy** (nonelected government officials) mainly with aristocrats.

archipelago a chain of islands

network an interrelated or interconnected group or system

mainland states part of the continent, as distinguished from peninsulas or offshore islands

▼ This print depicts the port of Batavia (now Jakarta) on the island of Java in the Dutch East Indies.

► **CRITICAL THINKING**

Identifying Central Issues Why did the Dutch East India Company establish its headquarters at Batavia?



In Vietnam, kingship followed the Chinese model. Like the Chinese emperor, the Vietnamese emperor ruled according to the teachings of Confucius. Confucius believed that a ruler should treat subjects with love and respect. The ruler was seen as an intermediary between Heaven and Earth. The emperor was appointed by Heaven to rule by his talent and virtue.

READING PROGRESS CHECK

Drawing Conclusions How did religion influence the forms of government in the kingdoms of Southeast Asia?

bureaucracy an administrative organization that relies on nonelective officials and regular procedures

Europeans and the Spice Trade

GUIDING QUESTION How did the arrival of Europeans affect Southeast Asia beginning in the sixteenth century?

Since ancient times, spices had been highly valued. They were used as flavorings, medicines, and as food preservers. After bad harvests and in winter, meat preserved with salt and pepper kept many people from starving. Ginger, cloves, cinnamon, and nutmeg were also in high demand. European countries competed to find a sea route to the Indies. In particular, that hunt was for Melaka, the fabled gateway to the Spice Islands. Portugal found that gateway.

When Vasco da Gama and his crew came ashore at Calicut in 1498, they shouted, "For Christ and spices!" Most important were the spices. In 1511 the Portuguese seized Melaka and soon occupied the Moluccas. Known to Europeans as the Spice Islands, the Moluccas were the main source of spices that first attracted the Portuguese to the Indian Ocean. The Portuguese, however, lacked the military and financial resources to **impose** their authority over broad areas. They set up small settlements along the coast and used them as trading posts during travel to and from the Spice Islands.

impose to establish or apply

The situation changed with the arrival of the English and Dutch (Netherlands) traders, who were better financed than the Portuguese. The shift in power began in the early 1600s when the Dutch seized a Portuguese fort in the Moluccas and gradually pushed the Portuguese out of the spice trade.

During the next 50 years, the Dutch occupied most Portuguese coastal forts along the trade routes throughout the Indian Ocean. They drove the English traders out of the spice market. England was left with a single port on the southern coast of Sumatra.

READING PROGRESS CHECK

Drawing Conclusions If the mainland states had been rich in spices like the Moluccas were, would they have faced the same fate? Explain your answer.

LESSON 3 REVIEW

Reviewing Vocabulary

- 1. Describing** Write a paragraph about the trading networks in the mainland states and archipelagos of Southeast Asia.

Using Your Notes

- 2. Explaining** Use your notes to write a paragraph describing the governments of Korea and Southeast Asia.

Answering the Guiding Questions

- 3. Making Generalizations** What characterized Korea's culture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries?

- 4. Identifying the Central Issues** How did Korea and the kingdoms of Southeast Asia respond to contact with foreign nations?

- 5. Identifying Cause and Effect** How did the arrival of Europeans affect Southeast Asia between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries?

Writing Activity

- 6. Informative/Explanatory** Write a paragraph comparing and contrasting Portuguese and Dutch activities in the spice trade in Southeast Asia. Be sure to link to specific facts and dates.