Exploration vs. Isolationism

Lecture notes

Class thoughts- why might a country practice exploration or isolationism?

 Exploration: power, extend land holdings, spices/riches, religion, adventure,

 trade routes

 Isolationism: fear, avoid outside influences

Explorers: European countries- Spain, France, Portugal, Netherlands, England

Isolationists: China and Japan

Renaissance encouraged adventure

Technology allowed exploration: the caravel- triangular sails allowed sailing

 against the wind.

 Astrolabe, sextant and compass- could determine location

Portugal led the way

 Prince Henry- spices, gold in Africa

 Wanted route to Asia

 Spread Christianity

 Opened first navigation school

 Diaz and Vasco da Gama- around tip of Africa

Spain

 Columbus looked for sea route to Asia

 Found Caribbean

Spain and Portugal thought Columbus had reached Asia

Fought over rights

Treaty of Tordesillas- divided claims between Spain and Portugal when Pope

 did not get their cooperation

 Spain-west of Atlantic

 Portugal- east of Pacific and Brazil

Spain – Philippines

Netherlands- declared independence from Spain and sought own trade power

 Dutch East India Company overpowered English East India Company

 Then took some control from Portugal

 Controlled Indian Ocean trade

 French and English East India Companies got some of India

**Europe headed East to China and Japan**

China wanted Europe to pay tribute as recognition of China’s power

 China feared Europeans would disrupt their lives- had explored prior

 to 1933- then withdrew into isolationism

 China wished to follow Confucianism

Country limited trade

 Only with China’s government

 Only through three coastal ports

 Opposed Europeans bringing Christianity and technology

 China went through period of collapse and rebuilding- continued isolation

 policies through both

 Dutch traded- willing to pay tribute

 English didn’t like policies. King George III wrote letter to Qiang-Long

Japan:

North and south struggled against each other- Shoguns fought

 European trade allowed during this Warring States period.

 Portuguese brought muskets and cannons

 Also started trying to convert Japanese to Christianity- welcomed at

 first but eventually too many conversions. Attempt to

 overthrow government linked to Christians.

 1612- started to force out Christians

 by 1637- Christians were actively persecuted

 they wore out their welcome

Samurai gained control of feudal estates

Unification finally gained around 1600- Tokugawa ruled by law rather than sword

 Plenty of food, culture flourished, Confucian values like China

By 1639- closed country policy- trade ended with Europe

 Nagasaki- only port left open

Japanese not even allowed to leave country- did not want any more western ideas