

Imperialism in the Far East
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Overview

This lesson will take one to two class periods to implement and will be incorporated into a larger unit on imperialism from 1800 through 1914. In this lesson students will come to understand the economic, political and social motivations for Japanese industrialization in the 19th century and its impending implications for China, Taiwan and Korea in the 20th century. Students will be provided with a worksheet that includes a basic history of Japan, China, Korea and Taiwan during the Age of Imperialism. Embedded in strategic locations are a photograph and several political cartoons that will ask the students to use what they have learned from the reading/unit and apply it to make conclusions based on the illustrations provided. Conclusions students will make will include answers to the following: 1.) Why did Japan industrialize?, 2.) How were Japan's industrialization and imperialism linked?, 3.) Why was Japan able to colonize Korea, Taiwan and parts of China?, 4.) Which nations "got a slice" of China and why did this happen? and 5.) During the new Age of Imperialism Europeans and Americans often cited Social Darwinism and Kipling's concept of *the white man's burden* as justifications for imperialism. How did the Japanese "import" these ideas to justify their own brand of imperialism?

Goals/Objectives

This lesson will assist students achieving the following goals from the Modern World History Ohio Model Curriculum for Social Studies (Revised November, 2011):

By the early 20th century, many European nations as well as Japan extended their control over other lands and created empires. Their motivations had economic, political and social roots.

The political motivations for imperialism included the desire to appear most powerful, bolster nationalistic pride and provide security through the building of military bases overseas.

The economic motivations were tied to production and consumption of goods. There was a need for new markets, raw materials and outlets for population growth.

The social roots for imperial expansion included the vision of some that it was "the white man's burden" to civilize those perceived as uncivilized. There also were humanitarian concerns and religious motivations.

Japanese leaders wanted to exert the power of Japan and confront Western imperialism by engaging in imperialist actions. Japan used its military might to establish footholds in Taiwan, China and Korea.

European powers used spheres of influence to establish economic control in China.

Materials:

- 1.) Activity Handout

Resources:

- 1.) Ebrey, Patricia, Anne Walthall and James Palais: Modern East Asia; A Cultural, Social, and Political History
- 2.) Goro, Shiba: Remembering Aizu
- 3.) Kang, Hildi: Under the Black Umbrella

Procedures:

This lesson may be implemented in a variety of ways, depending upon one's time constraints and teaching style. For instance, it may be completed in a whole-class setting, in which the class reads the selection together and discussed answer to the questions. Alternatively, the assignment could be given as a homework assignments and discussed by the class group the following day(s). Further, it could be completed by small groups of students in class with a class discussion occurring when all groups have completed the assignment.

Imperialism in the Far East: China, Japan, Korea and Taiwan

Like the countries in South Asia, Southeast Asia and Africa, the nations of the Far East (east Asia) faced a growing challenge from the military superiority of the West in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The Tokugawa shogunate had ruled Japan for two centuries and implemented an isolationist foreign policy to cut off the island nation to foreigners. Below is a painting that depicts the landing of American **Commodore Matthew Perry** in Edo (now Tokyo) Bay at Yokohama in 1854. The Japanese soon agreed to the **Treaty of Kanagawa**, which opened two ports to American trade. Similar trade agreements were soon signed by Japan with several European nations. Analyze the painting and explain why Perry's landing had the impact that it did. Be sure to point out as much as you can about the image. Finally, write a creative title for the piece.



Many in Japan resented the government's new foreign policies. In fact, they supported the overthrow of the government in 1868 and brought to power **Emperor Mutsuhito** who called his reign the **Meiji (Enlightened) Restoration**. It was during his reign that Japan was transformed into a modern industrial and military power. The Japanese came to realize that the Western powers had acquired colonies with sources of raw materials, inexpensive labor and markets for manufactured goods. To compete, Japan would have to expand, as well.

Japan soon forced Korea to open its ports to trade, causing tension with China, which had long controlled Korea. In the resulting **Sino-Japanese War** of 1894, Japan proved victorious. As a result, China **ceded Taiwan** to Japan. Japan's activity in Korea also infuriated the Russians. Ultimately, the two nations also went to war. Japan humiliated Russia in the **Russo-Japanese War** (1904-1905), proving it had become one of the great powers. Although suspicious of Japan, the U.S. allowed Japan to **annex Korea** in 1910, in return for recognition of U.S. authority in the Philippines.

How do you believe the Japanese justified their imperialism in Korea, Taiwan and China?

What event above is being depicted in the cartoon to the right? Explain.



Jap the Giant-Killer.



Study the cartoon to the left. Where did Japan go next in its search for colonies? Explain the meaning of the cartoon in your answer to this question.

Like Japan, China had restricted European merchants' ability to trade in their country, limiting them to one port. Needless to say, Europeans did not like this arrangement. For example, the British imported more goods from China (mainly tea, silk and porcelain) than they exported (mainly cotton), creating an **unfavorable balance of trade**. Britain soon began trading highly addictive opium, grown in India, with the Chinese. As a result, the British gained the upper hand in trade with China. The Chinese government outlawed the opium trade, tried to appeal to **Queen Victoria** and blockaded ships carrying the drug. In the resulting **Opium War**, the **Qing Dynasty** was no match for the British navy and was forced to ask for peace. The **Treaty of Nanjing (1842)** opened five Chinese ports to British trade and China gave Britain the island of **Hong Kong**, among other concessions. Other European countries and the United States were soon given the same trade rights as Britain, opening China to Western influence.

The competing nations of Japan, Britain, France, Russia and Germany soon developed "**spheres of influence**" in China or areas where each imperial power had exclusive trading rights. As a result, in 1900, many in China (known as "boxers" because of their exercise of shadowboxing or boxing an imaginary opponent) began to resent foreign influence in their country and began to attack and kill foreigners. **The Boxer Rebellion** was eventually stopped by British, French, German, Russian, American and Japanese troops.

Use what you just read about China above to explain the cartoon to the right. Be sure to include who you think each of the people represent in the piece and label them.

What would make a good title for the cartoon and why?



1.) Why did Japan industrialize?

2.) How were Japan's industrialization and imperialism linked?

3.) Why was Japan able to colonize Korea, Taiwan and parts of China?

4.) Which nations "got a slice" of China and why did this happen?

5.) During the new Age of Imperialism Europeans and Americans often cited Social Darwinism and *the white man's burden* as justifications for imperialism. How did the Japanese "import" these ideas to justify their own brand of imperialism?