Absolutism
Divine Right Monarch

**Def:** A king/queen who is subject to no earthly authority, deriving the **right** to rule directly from God.
Both: Built monumental architecture; centralized authority by reducing power of the nobility; spent heavily on the military.
Absolutism in France

LOUIS XIV (r. 1643 – 1715)

• Revoked the *Edict of Nantes* – wanted Huguenots (French Protestants) destroyed.
• Ended feudalism in France by forcing nobles to live at the Palace.
• “The Sun King”
• “L’état c’est moi” – The State is I
Versailles: Symbol of Power, Tool of Absolutism, Theater State
Absolutism in France

Louis’ Legacy

- **Positive**: Art and literature thrived; France was Europe’s military leader.
- **Negative**: Bankruptcy caused by wars and the building of the Palace of Versailles.
Absolutism in Russia

• Ivan the Terrible came to power in 1533

• Ivan spent his childhood fighting off the boyars, landowning nobles, who were attempting to take his power.

• At 16 he seized all power and became czar.
Absolutism in Russia

• After Ivan’s death, his son came to power and died soon after.

• In 1613 Michael Romanov was chosen as the next czar and began the 300 year Romanov dynasty.
## Absolutism in Russia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RUSSIA</th>
<th>THE WEST</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Serfdom until the mid 1800s.</td>
<td>• Serfdom relaxed; other forms of coerced labor.</td>
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<td>• Geographically isolated.</td>
<td>• Lots of contact via trade.</td>
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<td>• Eastern Orthodoxy.</td>
<td>• Christianity &amp; Protestantism.</td>
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Absolutism in Russia

**Peter the Great** takes power with a goal of *westernization*:

- Built St. Petersburg (closer to Europe)
- Russian Orthodox Church under state control
- Reduced the power of the boyars (cut beards/wear western fashions)
- European officers were brought in to modernize the army
- Get a warm water port
- To pay for the changes he increased taxes
Absolutism in Europe

Spain → Ferdinand & Isabella

England → Elizabeth I

Prussia – Frederick William

Ottoman sultans, Safavid shahs rule in this same fashion!
Ming Dynasty (1368-1644)

- Zhu Yuanzhang defeated the Mongols (Ming means “bright”) and moved the capital to Nanjing.
- Used Confucianism to reestablish Chinese traditions (Mongols ignored civil service).
Ming Dynasty (1368-1644)

- Yongle seized power and moved capital back to Beijing, enlarged the Forbidden City, and funded the voyages of Zheng He.
Ming Dynasty (1368-1644)

Admiral Zheng He

- Muslim, trusted with a series of state voyages throughout the Indian Ocean
- Trade connections fell short of expectations; voyages abruptly ended and money was used to complete Great Wall!

Each ship was 400 feet long, 160 feet wide.
Ming Dynasty (1368-1644)

Why ended?

• Confucianism promoted agrarian lifestyle; foreign contact would destabilize China; too expensive; spend the money domestically
Ming Dynasty (1368-1644)

Achievements
• Reestablished the exam system, but commerce suffered
• Tribute system (a continuity!) and porcelain trade brought great wealth!
Ming Dynasty (1368-1644)

Decline

- Corruption of the court officials and natural disasters caused rebellions.
- Aggressive military expansion of the Manchus.
- Manchu rebel Li Zicheng entered Beijing in 1644; as he did the last Ming emperor killed himself.

Li Zicheng’s temporary palace
Qing Dynasty (1644-1911)

- 2nd foreign dynasty! Ruled by Manchus.
- Men had to wear *queues* (braids)
- Manchus put their people in positions of power but maintained civil service exam
Qing Dynasty (1644-1911)

Emperor Kangxi

• Stability and expansion
• Protectorate over Tibet
• Jesuits were protected because they learned Chinese and taught science.
Qing Dynasty (1644-1911)

Emperor Qianlong

- **Conquest**
  - Xinjiang (mass killing of locals)
  - Dalai Lama installed in Tibet
  - Forced Nepal to submit to Chinese rule
  - Campaigns against Burma and Vietnam failed
Qing Dynasty (1644-1911)

- Due to conquest, $ was needed so privileges were sold to Europeans.
  - Canton System: European trade restricted to coastal city, taxed all goods strictly

- 1793 – Mission under Lord Macartney requested trade restrictions lifted, China dismissed request.
Decline

- Anger over European influence
- *White Lotus Rebellion* – Qing suppressed it but 100,000 were killed.
- LAST IMPERIAL DYNASTY!
Tokugawa Japan

- 12-15th c – Japan ruled by *shoguns*
- Japan gradually unified under powerful daimyo with gunpowder weapons
- **Tokugawa Shogunate** – completed Japan’s political unification
Tokugawa Japan

- Called the Era of Great Peace
- Capital city moved to Edo (Tokyo)
- Economic growth encouraged a new merchant-class culture
- Position of samurai deteriorated
Tokugawa Japan

• Art and literature flourished – haiku poetry

• Rise of kabuki theater: emphasis on violence, government sought to oppress it, women could not act

• Reflects the transition from military to civil society

Social Pyramid in Tokugawa Japan

Kabuki Theater
Tokugawa Japan

- Jesuit missionaries converted many Japanese to Christianity.
- Toyotomi Hideyoshi prohibited any more Christian activity in his land, and the Jesuits were forced to leave the country within 20 days.
- Revolts led to the persecution of Japanese Christians.
- Japan soon prohibited foreign trade altogether, except from the Dutch in Nagasaki Harbor.

Persecution of Japanese Christians.

Jesuit missionary Francis Xavier
• A tribute state to China
• A model Confucian state (civil service exam) but dominated by the yangban (civil/military elite families)
• Interacted with China, but fairly isolated from other countries → Hermit Kingdom

North Korea is still called the Hermit Kingdom
Trends on the Eve of Exploration

• Imperial expansion relied on gunpowder weapons.
• Political & religious disputes led to rivalries (Reformation, Ottomans/Safavids).
• Bureaucratic elites and/or military professionals emerge (devshirme, samurai).
• Religious ideas predominate (divine right monarchy, Islam).
• Monumental architecture demonstrates state's power (St. Petersburg, Versailles).
• Tax collection systems (zamindars, Ming taxes in currency).
• Rift in Church similar to Shia/Sunni split.