

Responses to European Imperialism: Comparing China and Japan

I. Rationale

It can be argued that, in order to understand the state of wealth and development around the globe today, industrialization and imperialism are the two most important topics/concepts in Modern World History. Often these topics are taught in a Euro-centric manner. An examination of China and Japan's differing responses to imperialism (which demanded modernization if not Westernization) can help us understand the very different paths taken by the two countries in the 20th century.

China, long a powerful empire, increasingly closed itself off from non-Chinese cultures in the 19th century. With the loss of the Opium Wars, the Chinese were forced to make concessions to European powers in the Treaty of Nanjing. After centuries of seclusion, Japan, benefitting from the knowledge of China's experience, responded to internal turmoil and external pressure with the Meiji Restoration and attempted rapid modernization and militarization.

II. Overview

These lessons will focus on these essential questions:

- How did China and Japan differ in their responses to European imperialism?
- How did China and Japan meet the unexpected challenge to their identities, generated by Western culture?

Time Frame: 3 days

Day 1: Students will be introduced (through PowerPoint lecture) to two dramatic moments—the signing of the Treaty of Nanjing after Opium Wars in China and the arrival of Matthew Perry's flotilla in Japan—and the essential questions.

Day 2: Students will work in small groups, each examining the background and a set of excerpted documents that show points of view from either China or Japan to identify how that person would respond to the essential question in preparation for a class debate/discussion.

Day 3: Each small group of students will represent one point of view (self-strengthening, reform, rebellion) to debate the best way to meet challenge of imperialism. Students will then compare the two countries responses by creating a Venn diagram.

III. Materials

1. Overview PowerPoint

2. Handout with Documents

Lin Zexu, "Letter to Queen Victoria" (1838)

Treaty of Nanjing (1842)

Fen Guifeng "Adoption of Western Learning"

Emp. Kuang Hsu "Attempted Reforms" (1898)

The Charter Oath of the Meiji Emperor (1868)

Images of the Meiji Emperor in Western Attire (1872)

Imperial Proclamation of War Against Japan (1904)

Letter from Meiji Emperor to President Grant (1872)

3. Internet Sources on three responses/Textbook sources

China: Self-Strengthening, Reform, Revolution

Japan: Seclusion or Restoration

IV. Skill and Content Objectives (including California Standards)

- Students will compare and contrast China and Japan's responses to Western imperial powers.
- WH 10.4: Students analyze patterns of global change in the era of New Imperialism in at least two of the following regions or countries: Africa, Southeast Asia, **China**, India, Latin America and the Philippines.

V. Lesson Plan and Activities

Day 1:

1. Discussion Launching Question: How did China and Japan differ in their responses to European imperialism?
2. Class Activity: PowerPoint Lecture: Dramatic Moments 1842 and 1867
3. Activity: Students work in pairs to examine the document(s) in Student Handout 1 and answer the comprehension questions.

Day 2:

1. Formative-assessment: Students work in pairs/groups on the graphic organizer
 - a. Option 1: You can have students all read a variety of excerpts (like a DBQ)
 - b. Option 2: You can have students each be responsible for a full document.
2. Alternative lesson: Use the online Webquest from USF

Day 3

1. Small Group Activity: Students work in groups of 4 to develop/present their positions in a debate using documents and textbook materials
 - a. Positions:
 - i. Fight the Foreigners/Refuse to Surrender (self-strengthening)
 - ii. Reform the Country/Make Changes (internal reform)
 - iii. Overthrow the Current System (internal revolution)
 - iv. Undecided: Develops 3-5 questions to ask of the other groups
2. Culminating Activity:
 - a. Option 1: Class discussion to wrap up the comparison of the responses
 - b. Option 2: Students will "talk-it-out" between European and Asian perspectives

VI. Other Resources**a. Full Length/Primary Sources—excerpts are in Student Handout 1**

- Letter to Queen Victoria from Lin Tse Hsu (Zexu)
<http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/core9/phalsall/texts/com-lin.html>
- Documents: Treaty of Nanjing” “Placards Placed in Guangzhou”
<http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/china/nanjing.pdf> (also found in the Course Source Packet)
- Charter Oath of the Meiji Emperor (1868)
http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/japan/charter_oath_1868.pdf
- Letter from the Meiji Emperor to President Grant (1872)
http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/japan/meiji_to_grant.pdf
- Images of the Meiji Emperor in Western Attire
http://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/throwing_off_asia_01/toa_vis_02.html

b. Secondary Sources and Useful Websites

- Background Reading on the Opium Wars—Wikipedia
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opium_Wars
- Video/Audio from Harvard Extension
http://cm.dce.harvard.edu/1999/01/83101/L23/seg1/index_FlashSingleAudioOnly.htm
- Background Essay
<http://lakesideblogs.com/acrawford/China%20and%20Japan%20Respond%20to%20the%20West%20-%20Introductory%20Essay.pdf>
- Chapter 77: The Debate over Seclusion and Restoration (Course Packet)
http://books.google.com/books?id=hdNsVCZw1JAC&lpg=PA340&ots=UglZ_CRsRo&dq=chapter%2077%20the%20debate%20over%20seclusion%20and%20restoration&pg=PA340#v=onepage&q=chapter%2077%20the%20debate%20over%20seclusion%20and%20restoration&f=true

c. Premade Lessons and Handouts

- Webquest on China from University of Southern Florida
http://www.coedu.usf.edu/main/departments/seced/webq/social%20studies/history/jb_erringer/webquest.htm
- Reverse DBQ Activity
<http://www.asian-studies.org/EAA/Opening-of-the-East.pdf>
- Mindsparks: Debating the Documents (the real activity must be purchased)

http://books.google.com/books?id=oE9KU5ifFXEC&printsec=frontcover&source=google_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false

d. Supplementary Materials to Research the Three Positions

- Self-Strengthening/Adoption of Western Learning
http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/china/feng_guiifen_western_learning.pdf
Alternative: http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/china/yanfu_learning_west.pdf
- Chinese emperor Guanxou presents reforms in 1898
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/eastasia/1898kuantsu.asp>
- *Chinese emperor Guanxou: Abolition of the Examination System
<http://www.milestonedocuments.com/documents/view/emperor-guangxus-abolition-of-the-examination-system>
- *Sun Yat Sen “The The People’s Principles” (revolution)
<http://www.milestonedocuments.com/documents/view/sun-yat-sen-the-three-principles-of-the-people>
- **Later Document: Sun Yat Sen “The Principle of Democracy”
http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/cup/sun_yatsen_democracy.pdf