

5 Western Powers Rule Southeast Asia

TERMS & NAMES

- Pacific Rim
- King Mongkut
- Emilio Aguinaldo
- annexation
- Queen Liliuokalani

MAIN IDEA

Demand for Asian products drove Western imperialists to seek possession of Southeast Asian lands.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

Southeast Asian independence struggles in the 20th century have their roots in this period of imperialism.

Traditional-style boats anchor in modern Singapore harbor. High-rise buildings of the 20th century mark Singapore as a major city. Today Singapore is a successful trading nation on the Pacific Rim.

SETTING THE STAGE Just as the European powers rushed to divide Africa, they also competed to carve up the lands of Southeast Asia. These lands form part of the **Pacific Rim**, the countries that border the Pacific Ocean. Western nations desired the Pacific Rim lands for their strategic location along the sea route to China. Westerners also recognized the value of the Pacific colonies as sources of tropical agriculture, minerals, and oil.

Western Rivalries for Pacific Rim Lands

Early in the 19th century, the Dutch East India Company established control over most of the 3,000-mile-long chain of Indonesian islands. As the European powers began to appreciate the value of the area, they challenged each other for their own parts of the prize. The British established a major trading port at Singapore. The French took over Indochina on the Southeast Asian mainland. The Germans claimed New Guinea and the Marshall and Solomon islands.

Plantation Products Spur Competition The lands of Southeast Asia were perfect for plantation agriculture. The major focus was on sugar cane, coffee, cocoa, rubber, coconuts, bananas, and pineapple. As these products became more important in the world trade markets, European powers raced each other to claim lands.

Dutch Expand Control The Dutch East India Company, chartered in 1602, actively sought lands in Southeast Asia. It seized Melaka from the Portuguese and fought the British and Javanese for control of Java. The discovery of oil and tin on the islands and the desire for more rubber plantations prompted the Dutch to gradually expand their control over Sumatra, Borneo, Celebes, the Moluccas, and Bali. Finally the company ruled the whole island chain of Indonesia, then called the Dutch East Indies.

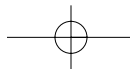
Management of plantations and trade brought a large Dutch population to the islands. In contrast to the British, who lived temporarily in India but retired in Britain, the Dutch thought of Indonesia as their home. They created a rigid social class system. The Dutch were on top, wealthy and educated Indonesians came next, and plantation workers resided at the bottom. The Dutch also forced farmers to plant one-fifth of their land in specified export crops.

British Take the Malayan Peninsula To compete with the Dutch, the British sought a trading base that would

THINK THROUGH HISTORY

A. Comparing How was the Dutch East India Company like the British East India Company?





serve as a stop for its ships that traveled the India-China sea routes. They found the ideal location—a large, sheltered harbor—on Singapore, an island just off the tip of the Malay Peninsula. The opening of the Suez Canal and the increased demand for tin and rubber combined to make Singapore one of the world's busiest ports.

Britain also gained colonies in Malaysia and in Burma (modern Myanmar). Malaysia had large deposits of tin and became the world's leading rubber exporter. Upper Burma provided teak, while central Burma exported oil. Needing workers to mine the tin and tap the rubber trees, Britain encouraged Chinese to immigrate to Malaysia. Chinese flocked to the area, and some of them became highly successful in business. As a result of such immigration, the Malays soon became a minority in their own country. Conflict between the resident Chinese and the native Malays remains unresolved today.

THINK THROUGH HISTORY

B. Analyzing

Motives Why do you think so many Chinese would move to Malaysia?

French Control Indochina The French had been active in Southeast Asia since the turn of the century. They even helped the Nguyen (nuh-WIN) dynasty rise to power in Vietnam. In the 1840s, during the rule of an anti-Christian Vietnamese emperor, seven French missionaries were killed. Church leaders and capitalists who wanted a larger share of the overseas market demanded military intervention. Emperor Napoleon III ordered the French army to invade southern Vietnam. Later, the French added Laos, Cambodia, and northern Vietnam to the territory. The combined states would eventually be called French Indochina. In 1867, a governor of a Vietnamese state told how overpowering the French were:

A VOICE FROM THE PAST

Now, the French are come, with their powerful weapons of war to cause dissension among us. We are weak against them; our commanders and our soldiers have been vanquished. Each battle adds to our misery. . . . The French have immense warships, filled with soldiers and armed with huge cannons. No one can resist them. They go where they want, the strongest ramparts fall before them.

PHAN THANH GIAN, in a letter to his administrators

The French colonists tried to impose their culture on the Indochinese. Using direct colonial management, the French themselves filled all important positions in the government bureaucracy. They did not encourage local industry. Rice became a major export crop. Four times as much land was devoted to rice production. However, the peasants' consumption of rice decreased because rice was shipped out of the region. Anger over this reduction set the stage for Vietnamese resistance against the French.

Colonial Impact In Southeast Asia, colonization brought mixed results. Economies grew based on cash crops or goods such as tin and rubber that could be sold on the world market. Roads, harbors, and rail systems linked areas and improved communication and transportation. These improvements were more for the benefit of European business than the local population. However, education, health, and sanitation did improve. Political changes included unification of areas at the cost of weaker local leaders and governments.

Unlike other colonial areas, millions of people from other areas of Asia and the world migrated to work on plantations and in the mines in Southeast Asia. This migration changed the cultural and racial makeup of the area. Southeast Asia became a melting pot of Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and Buddhists. The resulting cultural changes often led to racial and religious clashes that are still seen today.

THINK THROUGH HISTORY

C. Recognizing

Effects What changes took place in Southeast Asia as a result of colonial control?

GlobalImpact

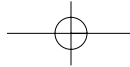


Migrating Rubber Plants

The rubber tree is native to the South American tropics. South American Indians first realized its potential and used the sap to make balls and "waterproof" shoes.

At first rubber sap was only a curiosity in Europe. Then American, Scottish, and British inventors discovered ways of processing it. In 1876, an English botanist collected seeds from wild trees in the Amazon rainforest and planted them in Kew Gardens in London. Later, young trees grown from those seeds were taken to Ceylon and the Malay Peninsula to start rubber plantations there.

The invention of automobiles created a huge demand for rubber. Rubber plantations soon mushroomed in Southeast Asia, Africa, and Central and South America.



Siam Maintains Independence

While its neighbors on all sides fell under the control of imperialists, Siam (present-day Thailand) maintained its independence throughout the colonial period. Siam lay between British-controlled Burma and French Indochina. (See map on page 702.) France and Britain each aimed to prevent the other from gaining control of Siam. Knowing this, Siamese kings skillfully promoted Siam as a neutral zone between the two powers.

Siam modernized itself under the guidance of **King Mongkut** and his son Chulalongkorn. In a royal proclamation, King Chulalongkorn showed his understanding of the importance of progress:

A VOICE FROM THE PAST

As the times and the course of things in our country have changed, it is essential to promote the advancement of all our academic and technical knowledge and to prevent it from succumbing [giving in] to competition from the outside. In order to achieve this, it is imperative to make haste in education so that knowledge and ability will increase.

KING CHULALONGKORN, "Royal Proclamation in Education"

To accomplish the changes, Siam started schools, reformed the legal system, and reorganized the government. The government built its own railroads and telegraph systems and ended slavery. Because the changes came from their own government, the Siamese people escaped the social turmoil, racist treatment, and economic exploitation that occurred in countries controlled by foreigners.

U.S. Acquires Pacific Islands

Because they fought for their independence from Britain, most Americans disliked the idea of colonizing other nations. However, two groups of Americans were outspoken in their support of imperialism. One group of ambitious empire-builders felt the United States should fulfill its destiny as a world power, colonizing like the Europeans. The other group, business interests, welcomed the opening of new markets and trade possibilities. Beginning in 1898, the United States began to acquire territory and to establish trading posts in the Pacific.

The Philippines Change Hands The United States acquired the Philippine Islands, Puerto Rico, and Guam as a result of the Spanish-American War in 1898. Gaining the Philippines touched off a debate in the United States over imperialism. President McKinley's views swayed many to his side. He told a group of Methodist ministers that he had concluded "that there was nothing left for us to do but to take them all [the Philippine Islands], and to educate Filipinos, and uplift and Christianize them."

Filipino nationalists who had already been fighting with the Spanish were not happy to trade one colonizer for another. **Emilio Aguinaldo** (eh-MEE-lyoh AH-gee-NAHL-doh), leader of the Filipino nationalists, claimed that the United States had promised immediate independence after the Spanish-American War ended. The nationalists declared independence and the establishment of the Philippine Republic.

The United States immediately plunged into a fierce struggle with the Filipino nationalists and defeated them in 1902. The United States promised the Philippine people that it would prepare them for self-rule. To achieve this goal, the United States provided many benefits to the islands. It built roads, railroads, and hospitals, and set up school systems. However, American businesses exploited the Philippines

Background

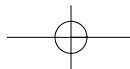
Siam was named Thailand in 1939.

The progressive Siamese king Mongkut ruled from 1851 to 1868. During his reign he modernized his land and prevented the British and French from taking over.



Vocabulary

Filipino: an inhabitant of the Philippine Islands



economically. As with other Southeast Asian areas, businessmen encouraged growing cash crops such as sugar at the expense of basic food crops.

Hawaii Becomes a Republic U.S. interest in Hawaii began around the 1790s when Hawaii was a port on the way to China and East India. Beginning about the 1820s, sugar trade began to change the Hawaiian economy. Americans established sugar-cane plantations and became so successful that they imported laborers from China, Japan, and Portugal. By the mid-19th century, American sugar plantations accounted for 75 percent of Hawaii's wealth. At the same time, American sugar planters also gained great political power in Hawaii.

Then in 1890, the McKinley Tariff Act passed by the U.S. government set off a crisis in the islands. The act eliminated the tariffs on all sugar entering the United States. Now, sugar from Hawaii was no longer cheaper than sugar produced elsewhere. That change cut into the sugar producers' profits. Some U.S. business leaders pushed for **annexation** of Hawaii, or the adding of the territory to the United States. Making Hawaii a part of the United States meant that Hawaiian sugar could be sold for greater profits because American producers got an extra two cents a pound from the U.S. government.

About the same time, the new Hawaiian ruler, **Queen Liliuokalani** (luh-LEE-uh-oh-kuh-LAH-nee), took the throne. In 1893, she called for a new constitution that would increase her power. It would also restore the political power of Hawaiians at the expense of wealthy planters. To prevent this from happening, a group of American businessmen hatched a plot to overthrow the Hawaiian monarchy. In 1893, Queen Liliuokalani was removed from power.

In 1894, Sanford B. Dole, a wealthy plantation owner, was named president of the new Republic of Hawaii. The president of the new republic asked the United States to annex it. Acting on the findings of a commission sent to the islands, President Cleveland refused. However, about five years later, in 1898, the Republic of Hawaii was annexed by the United States.

The period of imperialism was a time of great power and domination of others by mostly European powers. As the 19th century closed, the lands of the world were all claimed. The European powers now faced each other with competing claims. Their battles with each other would become the focus of the 20th century.

Background

President McKinley, who had strong imperialist feelings, came to office in 1897 and encouraged annexation of Hawaii.

HISTORYMAKERS



Queen Liliuokalani
1838–1917

Liliuokalani was Hawaii's only queen and the last monarch of Hawaii. At the death of her younger brother, she became next in line for the throne. In 1891, she took that throne after the death of her older brother.

Liliuokalani bitterly regretted her brother's loss of power to American planters. She worked to regain power for the Hawaiian monarchy. As queen she refused to renew a treaty signed by her brother that would have given commercial privileges to foreign businessmen. It was a decision that would cost her the crown.

In 1895, she was forced to give up power. However, she continued to oppose the annexation of Hawaii by the United States as a part of the Oni pa'a (Stand Firm) movement.

Section 5 Assessment

1. TERMS & NAMES

Identify

- Pacific Rim
- King Mongkut
- Emilio Aguinaldo
- annexation
- Queen Liliuokalani

2. TAKING NOTES

Re-create on your paper the spider map below. In each circle, identify a Western power and the areas it controlled.



3. DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

How did the reforms of the Siamese kings maintain Siam's independence?

THINK ABOUT

- what was happening to Siam's neighbors
- the results of the changes

4. THEME ACTIVITY

Empire Building Compose a series of letters to the editor expressing different views on the overthrow of the Hawaiian queen. Include both the Hawaiian and American views on this event.