

# China 1400's

Economics, Trade



In the early 1400's most people did not venture outside of their birthplace. Most did not live long lives. They died either from child birth, famine, or sickness. Their knowledge of Arts, medicine, work, and law was confined to the small village and the families that lived there. They would have traveled only a few miles to the next village to trade or shop for necessities. The bulk of their food intake would have been corn, wheat, sorghum, rice and barley. But not too far away in the same world there were missionaries, pilgrims, explorers, conquerors, seaman, caravan leaders and merchants.

Explorers and conquerors made their way to villages and took people into their web of networks most against their will. In the beginning merchants were like lower class people. They were watched closely, and their activities were regulated. However as the world got bigger the merchants grew in power, wealth, and status. China was a power house in the early 1400's. They were an advanced region and would have been best prepared for the emerging world market. They were trading silk, spices, tea, religion, and sickness. Sickness was a drawback/ disadvantage of having travelers, merchants and traders in your area.

China had a fleet of ships that traveled to places such as Calicut, Thailand, and other countries. But in 1421 a emperor named Yongle stopped a voyages by the Ming Fleet, and in 1436 emperor Zhu Qizhen ordered the destruction of all shipbuilding plans. China became isolated from other countries and isolated from itself merchants and traders were not supported by the government and were not protected from pirates. The population almost tripled in size from the 1400's to the 1600 to a staggering 160

million. The majority were poor and could not purchase from Chinese traders.