## Haijin and Canton ER Name:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Haijin**: The Haijin simply means “Sea Ban.” The Sea Ban abolished all private naval commerce throughout China. The idea was to stop Japanese piracy and to free up China’s soldiers to finish off the last remnant of the Mongol army. | **What was the Haijin?**  **What was it created to do?** |
| **Did it Work?** Short answer: no. It made the problem worse. By 1450, piracy was at the worst it had ever been in or around China. The ban on trade meant that people living on the coast of China could no longer make money legally and so many turned to smuggling and piracy. In fact, by 1450 most of the “Japanese” pirates were actually Chinese. | **In what ways did the Haijin actually make problems worse?** |
| **Why?** Most historians believe the Sea Ban was actually kept in place to support the central government against the wealthy merchants of Southern China. It also was intended to defend Chinese culture, which was considered to be under threat from foreign influences. Most concerning to the emperors were radical forms of Buddhism from Japan, Islam from Central Asia, and Christianity from Portuguese traders (starting around 1470). | **Why is “fighting pirates” not viewed as the reason for the Haijin?**  **What are some possible reasons it was enforced?** |
| **How did it hurt China?** Many ways. Firstly, the government lost a large amount of tax revenue. This was especially difficult considering that the Ming Dynasty also spent a lot of money. It built the modern Great Wall—an incredibly expensive project. Combined with the costly treasure fleets and the expense of supporting China’s million man army, the Ming Dynasty often was fighting to not go bankrupt.  Secondly, China was starting to isolate itself from diffusion. For the first time in a thousand years, China was not the center of world innovation. And the Haijin came at just the right time to worsen China’s disadvantage. China missed out on such inventions as the musket, steam engine, telescope, and vaccine. | **Why did the Haijin cause a revenue problem for China?**  **How did the Haijin hurt China’s technological progress?** |
| **The Canton System**: During the Qing Dynasty, China shifted its trade policy. It formally abolished all foreign trade throughout China, except through the single port of Canton (now known as Guangzhou). This lead to China actually becoming more isolated than before. | **What is the Canton System?**  **How was it different from Haijin?** |
| **Technological decline**: isolated behind the Haijin and Canton systems, China fell further and further behind Europe. By 1600, Europe had caught up to China technologically. By 1800, Europe was greatly ahead of China. It is unclear the extent to which this decline was caused by China’s isolation but it certainly wasn’t helping. Had lines of diffusion been open, China probably would have received some of the newer inventions from Europe. However, China’s intellectual community also shares some of the blame. By rejecting foreigners, they closed themselves to the new ideas that drove Europe’s period of innovation. The Imperial Exams might also have had a hand in the decline, as they absorbed much of the time that intellectuals might have spent studying science, math, or engineering. | **To what extent was Haijin and Canton to blame for China’s decline?**  **How were Chinese intellectuals also to blame?**  **How were the exams to blame?** |

|  |
| --- |
| **Prompt:** was the Haijin or Imperial Exam more to blame for China’s decline from 1300-1800? |
| **Thesis:** |
| **Evidence:** |

The truth is out there!