

**History 104, Lecture 01:  
The Asia-centered World Economy to the 16<sup>th</sup> Century**

**1. The (Sinocentric) World Order: The Tribute System**

**a. The Emperor (Son of Heaven)**

- i. As ruler of All Under Heaven (by the Mandate of Heaven)
- ii. As apex of human civilization
- iii. As custodian of cosmic order

**b. Manifestation & maintenance of hierarchical relationships/civilization**

- i. Within and beyond China's core territory
- ii. Marked the civilized from the barbaric
- iii. The kowtow (*k'o-t'ou*, "bump head")

**c. 3 Zones of external tributary relations:**

- i. Sinic zone (Korea, Vietnam, Liu-ch'iu, [Japan])
- ii. Inner Asia zone (Mongolia, Tibet, Central Asian realms)
- iii. Outer zone (Russia, Portugal, Holland, England, etc.)

**d. Types of Bilateral Trade within the Tribute System**

- i. Gift trade (and "re-gifting")
- ii. Market trade at frontier "ports of trade" (Canton, Kiahkta, Macao, etc.)
- iii. Administered trade (most important) at Peking and ports of trade

**e. The Nature of Tribute-Trade**

- i. Ceremony & commerce deeply intertwined
- ii. For Emperor:
  - tribute was most important as confirmation of position and affirmation of civilization
- iii. For tributaries:
  - trade was important, along with political recognition
- iv. Framework for relatively peaceful economic exchange

**2. The Indian Ocean Trade Circuits**

**a. 3 interlocking circuits centered on Indian Ocean:**

- i. Arabian Sea, dominated by Muslims
- ii. Indian Ocean (Bay of Bengal), conducted by Muslims from East Africa and Hindus from South and Southeast Asia
- iii. South China Sea, dominated by Chinese

**b. East African city-states and the Swahili**

**c. Links to Southeast and East Asia: The Entrepôt of Malacca**