History 104, Lecture 01:
The Asia-centered World Economy to the 16th 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