



## Mexico and Asia: From the galleon trade to the present

This course will examine the ties between Mexico and Asia. During the early colonial period, the Spanish established the Manila-Acapulco galleon trade, sending silver and gold, chilies and other foods, and other items to Asia, and bringing back silk, porcelain, jade, gunpowder and spices. This also began the movement of people in both directions, including Asian slaves sent to Mexico and Mexicans and Spaniards sent to the Philippines and elsewhere in Asia, where they spread religion, music and culture.

“Chinos” – a caste created by the Spanish to describe any Asian, from Indians to Indonesians – established themselves in Mexico and lobbied for their freedom, eventually becoming “Indios.” Mexicans and Spaniards in the Philippines established a colonial administration run in a large part by religious orders, known as a “Friarocracy,” and explored the region in search of spices and wealth.

Near the turn of the 20th century, Mexicans in the Philippines fought the Spanish in support of Philippine Independence. In the mid-twentieth century, Mexico established ties with the former colonies of Southeast Asia as they became independent following World War II, such as Indonesia’s President Soekarno, a leader of the Non-Aligned Movement whose visits and warm relationship with Mexican President Adolfo López Mateos influenced the latter’s ideas on international relations and the Mexico-United States relationship. Although the history of Asians in Mexico is marked with occasional tragedy – from slavery to massacres to the forced relocation of Japanese during World War II (mirroring the United States), Asian immigration and trade continues to this day, bringing goods and people who continue to enrich the development and culture of Mexico.