CHAPTER 12

Reunification and Renaissance in Chinese Civilization: The Era of the Tang and Song Dynasties

Rebuilding the Imperial Edifice in the Sui-Tang Era

- The long factional struggle that followed the fall of the Han dynasty ended when Wendi unified China under the Sui dynasty in 589. Wendi used alliances, intrigue, and warfare to achieve his goals.
- Yangdi, who murdered his father Wendi to gain the throne, at first strengthened the empire and made legal and educational reforms, but after military defeats and expensive building projects that overwhelmed his subjects, widespread revolts threatened the realm.
- Following Yangdi's death, Li Yuan (the Duke of Tang) seized power, expanded China's boundaries dramatically, and founded the Tang dynasty.
- The Tang used the scholar-gentry to create an effective bureaucracy and check the nobility's power. They set up a new capital at Changan.
- The Tang also greatly expanded the Confucian-based examination system (administered by the Ministry of Rites) that provided qualified bureaucrats. Those who passed the highest-level exams were called jinshi. Despite the system, many officials gained their positions through family connections rather than merit.
- Buddhism enjoyed a resurgence. Among the masses, the salvationist, pure-land strain of Mahayana Buddhism won widespread conversions because it seemed to provide a refuge from an age of war and turmoil. Members of the elite classes, on the other hand, were more attracted to the Chan variant of Buddhism, or Zen as it is known in Japan and the West. Empress Wu was particularly supportive of Buddhism.
- Buddhist successes aroused the envy of Confucian and Daoist rivals, and by the reign of Emperor Wuzong in the mid-9th century, the religion was openly persecuted. Buddhism survived, but in a weakened condition.

Tang Decline and the Rise of the Song

- Deadly family infighting led to the long reign of Emperor Xuanzong, whose reign marks a high point in Tang civilization. As his interest in governing waned, his affection for the arts and his famous lover Yang Guifei increased. In 755, the first of several revolts signaled growing discontent with Xuanzong, and soon...
nomadic tribesmen—former allies—were impinging on Tang territory with impunity.

- In 960, the scholarly general Zhao Kuangyin defeated most of the rivals scrounging for power after Xuanzong's death and founded the Song dynasty. However, he could not defeat the Manchurian Liao dynasty (founded by Khitan peoples) in the north, a fact that would prove fatal in time.

- The Song favored the scholar-gentry at the expense of the military, which meant that the empire was never as formidable as the Tang.

- Accordingly, Confucian ideals were again emphasized. Zu Xi and the neo-Confucians, or revivers of ancient Confucian teachings, believed that cultivating personal morality was the highest goal for humans, arguing that virtue could be attained through book learning and personal observation as well as through contact with men of wisdom and high morality.

- Signs of the Song dynasty's decline included border kingdoms like the Tangut people's kingdom of Xi Xia, disdain for military expenditures among the scholar-gentry, and Wang Anshi's failed attempts to secure long-term reform.

- In 1115, a new nomadic contender, the Jurchens, overthrew the Liao dynasty of the Khitans and established the Jin kingdom north of the Song empire. What became known for the next century and a half as the Southern Song dynasty was a weak state politically, but radiant culturally.

### Tang and Song Prosperity: The Basis of a Golden Age

- Yangdi's Grand Canal linked the original centers of Chinese civilization on the north China plain with the Yangtze River basin more than 500 miles to the south. The canal made it possible to transport grain from the fertile southern regions to the capital and to transfer food from the south to districts threatened by drought and famine in the north.

- Tang conquests led to increased trade and contact (primarily over the silk road and over the seas in Chinese junks) with civilizations to the west. Urban centers grew, and "flying money," for example, was a sign of the increasing sophistication of Chinese trade.

- The movement of the population southward to the fertile valleys of the Yangtze and other river systems was part of a larger process of agrarian expansion that Tang and Song leaders encouraged. Agricultural improvements and leaders' modestly successful attempts at land reform aided peasant quality of life.

- Both within the family and in society at large, women remained clearly subordinate to men. But some evidence suggests that, at least for women of the upper classes in urban areas, the opportunities for personal expression increased in the Tang and early Song.

- Neo-Confucian philosophers were leading advocates of male dominance. Men were allowed to have premarital sex without scandal, to take concubines if they could afford them, and to remarry if one or more of their wives died. No practice exemplifies the degree to which women in Chinese civilization were constrained and subordinated as dramatically as footbinding.

- The Tang and Song eras are remembered as a time of remarkable Chinese accomplishments in science, technology, literature, and the fine arts.
As the Confucian scholar-gentry supplanted the Buddhists as the major producers of art and literature, devotional objects and religious homilies gave way to a growing fixation on everyday life and the delights of the natural world. Li Bo's poetry is a shining example of the everyday themes these intellectuals prized.

Ignore this page, I had my sheet facing the wrong way on the copier. Sorry.

Dear Northern High Families,

I'm happy to share great news for our Advanced Placement students. Starting this year, students enrolled in an Advanced Placement course can take the corresponding exam for free. As you may know, students who are successful on an AP exam can earn college credit for that course.

This is a change from the past five years, when GCS covered 75% of the exam cost and families paid the remaining 25% ($22 for the 2013-14 school year). The state recognizes the value of student participation in AP classes and will now pay the entire exam cost - $89! - for students enrolled in the corresponding AP courses.

The exams are administered in May, and students can register online at our school. Please note: students who register for the exam and do not take it will have to pay a $15 no-show fee.

Students who are not enrolled in an AP course can still take the exam, but will be required to pay the full $89 cost.

The following registration timeline will apply:

Students will register online in the Service Learning Center during their assigned lunch beginning on December 1st and ending on December 12th.

Students enrolled in AP courses are encouraged, though not required, to take the AP exam. Success on the AP exam is the only way to earn college credit for AP courses; however, the exam score doesn't impact the final class grade. All students enrolled in AP classes will receive the higher quality point for being in an AP course (A=6.0 GPA, B=5.0, etc.)

For questions regarding AP exam registration or administration, please contact Wade Billeisen at 336-643-8449 or billeij@gcsnc.com.

Sincerely,

J. Wade Billeisen
CHAPTER 13

The Spread of Chinese Civilization: Japan, Korea, and Vietnam

Japan: The Imperial Age

1. The Chinese influence on Japan came to a peak in the Taika, Nara, and Heian periods, (645–857). The Taika reforms restructured the government following the Chinese model. Confucianism permeated Japanese culture from top to bottom.
2. The Taika reforms were not completed because of resistance from the nobles and Buddhist monks. Moving the capital to Heian (Kyoto), the emperor Kammu hoped to avoid monastic opposition. Failing in this, he restored to the aristocracy all of their rights.
3. Heian society was extremely mannered and sophisticated, developing a poetic tradition in a Chinese script tailored to the Japanese language. The classic Tale of Genji symbolizes the aesthetic of the period, in particular the important, albeit limited, role of women at the Heian court.
4. The Fujiwara family was one of the most powerful, but typical in their cooperation with Buddhist monasteries to reduce the power of the emperors.
5. A new force came to challenge the court aristocracy: the bushi, or warrior leaders. Some were of noble origin, some not, but they had in common increasing power in their small domains, and the loyalty of samurai troops. Unchecked use of force led to the preeminence of a warrior class and a warrior culture. The code the samurai followed included the practice of seppuku, or ritual suicide following defeat. Growth of samurai power accompanied the reduction of peasant status.

The Era of Warrior Dominance

1. Chinese influence, and direct contact with China, waned in the 9th century. From the 11th century, court families, in conjunction with bushi allies, split the court with open rivalry. Eventually, open war broke out between the Taira and Minamoto families in the 1180s.
2. The Gempei Wars ended with the ascendancy of the Minamoto at their new capital at Kamakura.
3. The bakufu government of the first Minamoto ruler, Yoritomo, was supported by shoguns, military leaders. The following centuries saw a complex system with titular emperors and Minamoto shoguns, real power being wielded by the Hojo family. The latter were supplanted by the Ashikaga Shogunate. Royal authority...
was a mere shadow, but the shoguns also lost power in the late 15th century, replaced by 300 daimyo kingdoms. Court manners became irrelevant as making war took center stage. The plight of the peasants became desperate, leading to unsuccessful revolts. At the same time, the dynamism of some daimyos led to economic growth and the emergence of a merchant class. Among the merchant and artisans, women had a more prominent role, while women of elite families saw their lives constrained. The revival of Zen Buddhism brought with it artistic renewal. Such traditions as the tea ceremony emerged to provide a contemplative retreat in an era of violence.

Korea: Between China and Japan

Korea, although strongly linked to Chinese cultural and political developments, had distinct origins, and long followed its own path of development. The peninsula’s first kingdom, Choson, was conquered by China in 109 B.C.E., and subsequently Chinese settlers arrived. Korea broke from Chinese dominance, forming three kingdoms: Koguryo, Silla, and Paekche. As in Japan, Sinification—adoption of Chinese culture—was largely mediated by Buddhism. The Koguryo ruler applied a Chinese-style law code.

Internal conflict in the Three Kingdoms Era left Korea vulnerable to Chinese attack. The Tang allied with the Silla to destroy Paekche and Koguryo, leaving the Silla a subject kingdom.

Sinification peaked under the Silla and Koryo rulers. Tribute and acknowledgement of Chinese authority created peaceful relations that stimulated Korean borrowing from Chinese culture.

Under the Silla, their capital at Kumsong copied the Tang capital. Both the royal family and the Korean elite supported Buddhism. While Korean borrowing from China was heavy, in the areas of pottery and printing, they exceeded their teachers.

Sinification was limited to Korean elite, while indigenous artisanship was allowed to decline. All of Korean society was arranged to serve the needs of the aristocracy.

Periodic popular revolts were successful only in weakening the Silla and Koryo monarchies. The Mongol invasion in 1231 began a period of strife, ending with the founding of the Yi dynasty in 1392.

Between China and Southeast Asia: The Making of Vietnam

The early history of the Viet people is little known. Early Chinese raids into Vietnam in the 220s B.C.E. increased trade. Intermarriage with Mon-Khmer and Tai language groups furthered the development of a distinct Vietnamese ethnicity. Many early traditions separated them from the Chinese, such as the nuclear family pattern and a greater role for women.

The Han became dissatisfied with merely exacting tribute from the Viet rulers and began direct rule in 111 B.C.E. Sinification increased, and was used by the Viet rulers to consolidate their power over both their own peoples and those to the west and south.

In spite of Chinese expectations, the Viets never became assimilated to Chinese culture. Indeed, a culture of anti-Chinese resistance developed. The rising of the Trung
sisters in 39 C.E. underlined the continuing prominent role of Vietnamese women. Continuing Chinese influence in Vietnam depended on overcoming physical barriers, and on the competence of Chinese rulers. Following the fall of the Tang, the Vietnamese freed themselves completely by 939. Yet Chinese influence continued, particularly in the administration. An important exception was the scholar-gentry who never gained an important role in the Vietnamese regime.

The lands of the Chams and Khmers attracted the Vietnamese. From the 11th to the 18th centuries, the latter steadily expanded their territory at the expense of the Chams. Subsequently, they attacked the Khmers in the Mekong delta.

The new southern territories were controlled only with difficulty by Hanoi. The Trinh family, ruling the north, was challenged by the southern Nguyen family. The conflict left the Vietnamese oblivious to an outside threat: the French and the Catholic Church.
CHAPTER 14

The Last Great Nomadic Challenges: From Chinggis Khan to Timur

The Mongol Empire of Chinggis Khan

- Mongols were typical nomads: living off of their herds and trade, organized around the tribe, forming short-lived confederations, electing leaders, and valuing warrior virtues.
- Kabul Khan, in the early 1100s defeated a Chinese Qin army. His grandson, Temujin emerged from Kabul Khan’s fragmented dominions. A kuriltai—or meeting of the Mongol leaders—convened in 1206. Temujin was chosen khan—supreme ruler—as Chinggis Khan, in 1206.
- The Mongol army relied on mounted archers. Chinggis Khan brought unity and organization, creating tumens of 10,000 warriors. Scouting parties and messengers allowed the khan to hold together large areas, as did swift punishment for disloyalty. Information gathering supplied Chinggis Khan with maps that facilitated his conquests.
- Chinggis Khan’s ambition led him to attack the northern Chinese Xi Xia kingdom, then the Jin Empire of the Jurchens.
- The Mongolian Kara Khitai Empire was next conquered by Chinggis Khan’s forces. Subsequently, the Mongols defeated Muhammad Shah’s Khwarazm Empire. By the time of Chinggis Khan’s death in 1227, the Mongol Empire extended from Persia to the North China Sea.
- Chinggis Khan, although capable of great brutality, patronized artists and intellectuals in the realms he conquered. At his capital at Karakorum, he gathered the greatest thinkers from China and from Muslim lands. The Mongol imperium meant lasting peace for much of Asia. Merchants in particular profited from the calm.
- Following the death of Chinggis Khan, his empire was divided by his sons and his grandson Batu. The kuriltai then chose Ogedai as the next great khan. Ogedai extended the empire to the east and north.

The Mongol Drive to the West

- The Khanate of the Golden Horde was one of the four divisions of Chinggis Khan’s empire. The goal of the Golden Horde was the conquest of Europe. Division in Russia made it vulnerable to Mongol aggression. By 1240, only Novgorod had avoided conquest.
Mongol rule was demanding, but also extended religious and cultural toleration. Moscow profited by Mongol rule to rebuild and to strengthen its hegemony. Mongol rule of Russia had a negative impact, but only a minor cultural legacy. Its greatest impact was in changing the direction of Russian history, leading its rulers to consolidate their power, and temporarily cutting Russia off from western Europe.

Early news of the Mongols led Europeans to equate Chinggis Khan with the mythical Christian king, Prester John. Even the news of the defeat of Russia failed to alarm the western Europeans. King Bela of Hungary contemptuously rejected Mongol demands, only to be defeated in 1240. The Mongols then raided further north in eastern Europe before withdrawing.

Hulegu, one of Chinggis Khan’s successors, captured Baghdad in 1258. The impact on the Islamic heartland was enormous. Berke Khan threatened Hulegu’s domains from the north. Finally, the Mongols defeat at the hands of the Mamluks under Baibars stopped Hulegu’s push to the west.

The Mongol Interlude in Chinese History

The Mongols under Kubilai Khan continued their assault on China, having already conquered the Xi Xia and Jin empires. Kubilai took the title of great khan, and the dynasty he founded was known as the Yuan. Under his rule, Mongol and Chinese cultures were kept separate, and intermarriage was forbidden. The Mongol elite ruled the ethnic Chinese. However, Kubilai Khan’s capital at Tatu followed Chinese precedents, as did court ritual.

Mongol women kept the freer roles to which they were accustomed. Kubilai’s wife Chabi played an influential part in his government.

Kubialai and Chabi patronized artists and intellectuals, especially Persians and Turks. Travelers from many areas arrived at their court, including Marco Polo.

Kubialai was more effective in his efforts to keep Mongols and ethnic Chinese separate than he was in encouraging his people to adapt to Chinese ways. Chinese resentment of the invaders was exacerbated by Mongol support for artisans and merchants, upsetting the traditional order. The Yuan dynasty saw a revival of urban life and high culture. Kubilai Khan had plans, never fully realized, to lighten the tax burden on peasants and establish a system of village schools.

The Yuan dynasty was short-lived, and lost much of its vigor at the death of Kubilai Khan. His successors’ abuses heightened hostility towards the Mongols. Crime became widespread, and secret sects—the White Lotus Society is an example—found large followings. Order was restored under the leadership of Ju Yuanzhang, a commoner, who founded the Ming dynasty.

The brief rule of Timur-i Lang again destabilized central Asia. From Samarkand, the Turkish leader conquered Persia, much of the Middle East, India, and southern Russia. Although Timur was himself cultured, his legacy was one of brutal destruction.