

East Asia in the Post-Classical Period

*All the birds have flown up and gone;
A lonely cloud floats leisurely by.
We never tire of looking at each other –
Only the mountain and I.*

—Li Bo, “Alone Looking at the Mountain” (date unknown)

Poet Li Bo (701–762 C.E.) was one of the most accomplished artists of the Tang era in China. Many of his poems, such as the one above, describe someone contemplating nature. Others focus on attending parties and other ways people enjoy life with friends. These themes, both positive and uplifting, seem to reflect the buoyancy of Post-Classical China. During the 600 years of the Tang and Song dynasties, China enjoyed great wealth, political stability, and fine artistic and intellectual achievements. These years were a golden era in Chinese history.

During the Post-Classical period, China dominated East Asia. Its neighbors, including Korea, Japan, and Vietnam, developed vibrant and distinctive cultural traditions, but each also displayed China’s influence.

Political Structures in China

After the collapse of the Han Dynasty in the third century C.E., China fell into a state of anarchy for nearly 400 years. People suffered from reduced trade and greater political turmoil until the short-lived *Sui Dynasty* (581–618 C.E.).

Unity under the Sui Dynasty Emperor Sui Yangdi unified China through violence and repression. Successful military expeditions to the south expanded the reach of China’s government. He also sent troops into Korea and Central Asia. Sui Yangdi ruled through harsh, dictatorial methods, which made dissent risky.

Grand Canal The greatest accomplishment of the dynasty was the inception of the construction of the *Grand Canal*. This ambitious public works project involved thousands of conscripted peasants working for many years. The idea behind the canal was to provide a means of transporting rice and other crops from the food-rich Yangtze River valley in the south to populous northern China and the center of government of Luoyang. At the southern end of the

Grand Canal was the city of *Hangzhou*, which expanded greatly during the Sui Dynasty because of the increased trade. It was during the Sui Dynasty that the city leaders had a defensive wall built around the city. The Sui used conscripts also to reinforce the “Long Wall” in the north begun by earlier dynasties. (The Long Wall would later become part of the Great Wall of China.)

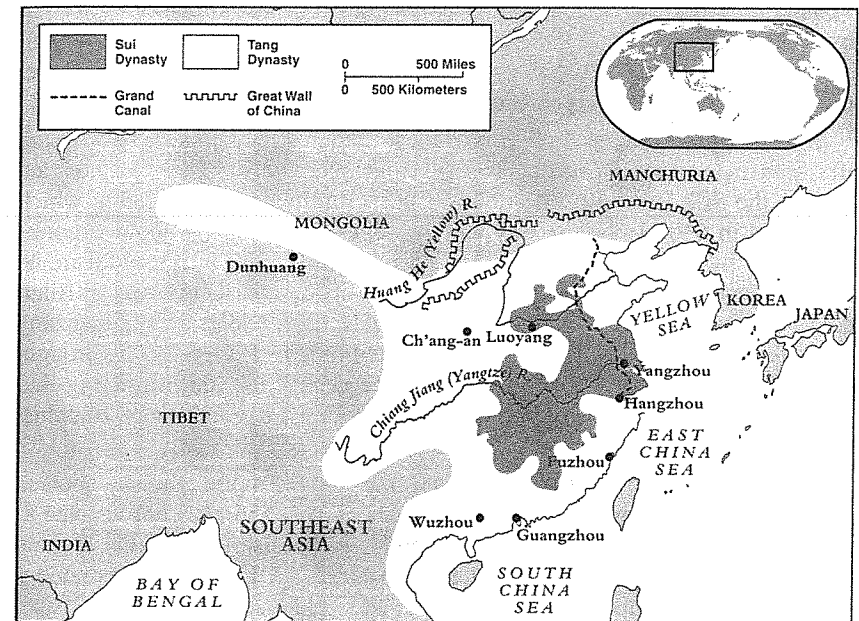
Downfall of the Sui The rule by the Sui lasted only 40 years. People complained about high taxes needed to pay for the expensive military escapades, the conscription of laborers for the building projects, and the emperor’s dictatorial ways. The emperor was assassinated in 618, and the dynasty ended.

Tang Dynasty

The short Sui Dynasty prepared the way for the longer, more influential *Tang Dynasty* (618–907 C.E.). During this period, China enjoyed relative prosperity and stability. Rulers extended the territory of the Chinese Empire. At its height, the Tang Dynasty extended west to Central Asia, north to Manchuria, and south into modern-day Vietnam.

Tributary System The Tang Dynasty dominated its neighbors. The Chinese viewed their country as the *Middle Kingdom*, a society around which the whole world revolved. At the very least, China was the center of a *tributary*

SUI AND TANG EMPIRES



system, an arrangement in which other states had to pay money or provide goods to honor the Chinese emperor. For example, the *Silla Kingdom* in Korea was not part of China, but it had to pay a large tribute to the emperor. The tributary system cemented China's economic and political power over several foreign countries, but it also created stability and stimulated trade for all parties involved.

Tang emperors also expected representatives from tributary states to perform a ritual *kowtow*, a requirement in which anyone greeting the Chinese emperor must bow his or her head until it reached the floor. This act was a way to acknowledge China's superior status.

Tang Accomplishments The Tang Dynasty had some notable achievements. Emperor Tang Taizong (ruled 627–649) further developed modes of transportation that had begun during the Sui Dynasty, such as roads and canals, as well as postal and messenger services. His government successfully reduced the dangers from bandits.

Tang Taizong expanded the empire's bureaucracy, which developed into an important and ongoing feature of Chinese government. Candidates for the bureaucracy had to pass an extremely rigorous civil service examination. The exam system had a tremendous impact on Chinese culture. Since the examination was difficult, education became increasingly important in China, a development that fostered economic growth for many centuries. Further, serving in the bureaucracy was highly regarded. So, just as communities today might take pride in producing an Olympic athlete or a noted actor, communities in China took pride in their natives who won a good position working for the government. Though most bureaucrats earned their positions in government, some were appointed. Aristocratic families had greater access to high-level positions in the bureaucracy than did any other group.

Spread of Buddhism In 629, a Chinese Buddhist monk named *Xuanzang* left China to go on a pilgrimage to India, the birthplace of Buddhism. He traveled west on the Silk Roads to Central Asia, then south and east to India, which he reached in 630. Along the way and in India he met many Buddhist monks and visited Buddhist shrines. In order to gain more insight into Buddhism, he studied for years in Buddhist monasteries and at Nalanda University in Bihar, India—a famous center of Buddhist knowledge. After 17 years away, *Xuanzang* finally returned to China, where people greeted him as a celebrity. He brought back many Buddhist texts, which he spent the rest of his life translating into Chinese. These writings were highly instrumental in the growth of Buddhist scholarship in China.

An Lushan By the eighth century, the Tang Empire already showed signs of weakness. Emperor *Hsuan Tsung* (ruled 712–756) was not devoted to administering the affairs of government and became distracted by his favorite concubine, Yang Guifei. A military leader named An Lushan orchestrated a rebellion involving about a hundred thousand soldiers, overthrowing Hsuan Tsung in 755. Finally, an army of *Uighurs*, an ethnic group living in Central Asia on land controlled by China, arrived from the west to restore power to the government and defeat the rebels. The rebellion did tremendous damage.

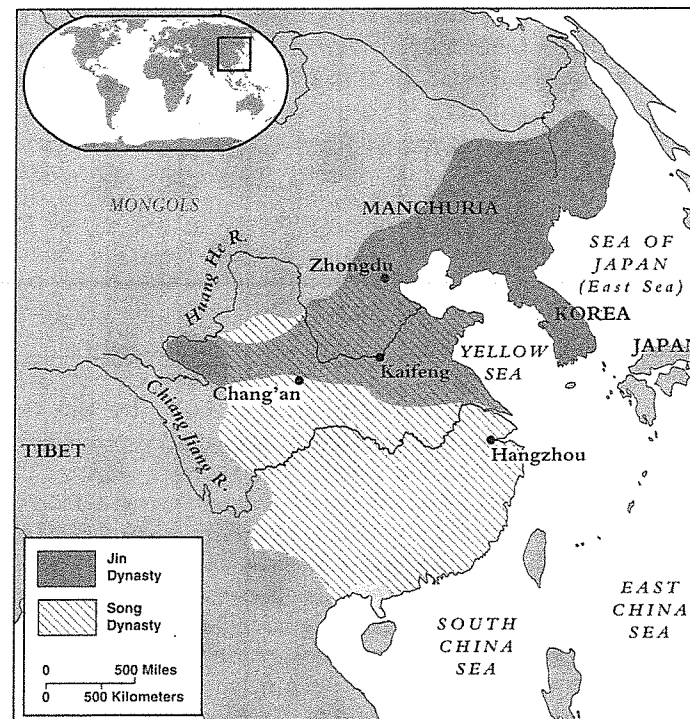
The death toll from the fighting, combined with the starvation and disease associated with the conflict, reached the millions and maybe the tens of millions. It was probably one of the most devastating wars in human history. The Tang survived, but they never fully recovered their power. They had to pay an annual tribute to the Uighurs. The Tang Dynasty finally collapsed in 907.

Song Dynasty

The *Song Dynasty* began in 960 and lasted until 1279. Because nomadic pastoralists from Manchuria invaded its lands, captured the northern part, and set up their own empire (the *Jin*, with a capital in Beijing), the Song came to rule a smaller region than the Tang had. Nevertheless, China under the Song was quite prosperous, and the arts flourished.

Bureaucracy and Meritocracy Under the Song, China's bureaucracy expanded, and the number of bureaucratic positions in government increased. Moreover, Emperor Song Taizu made special efforts to expand the educational opportunities to young men of the lower strata so they could pass the civil service exams. Though the poor were still extremely underrepresented in the

SONG AND JIN EMPIRES



bureaucracy, the Chinese system of meritocracy allowed for more upward mobility than any other hiring system of its time.

However, under the Song Dynasty, the bureaucracy had gotten so large it contributed to the empire's weakness. By creating more positions within the bureaucracy and by paying these officials quite handsomely, Song Taizu increased the costs of government enough that it began drying up China's surplus wealth.

Another problem was that Song Taizu and other emperors asked some bureaucrats to be responsible for military affairs. Government officials, who were together known as the *scholar gentry*, had studied in-depth the teachings of Confucius and the Chinese classics, but they were not experts in military tactics and strategy. Their lack of expertise left Chinese armies more vulnerable to nomadic incursions.

A Shifting Capital Because of threats from nomads, the Song Dynasty moved its capital from *Chang'an* (the modern city of Xian) about 530 miles to the east, to *Kaifeng*. In 1127, under continuous pressure from incursions by nomads, the empire was forced to move its capital again, this time 400 miles further south, to Hangzhou.

The *Southern Song Dynasty* survived until 1279, when the nomadic Mongol Empire vanquished the government and established the *Yuan Dynasty*. In the years leading up to the Mongol conquest of China, the Song Empire had been paying tribute to the Mongol nomads as a way to stave off conquest. However, this tribute was not enough to save China from Mongol domination.

Economic Developments in Post-Classical China

The Tang Dynasty's efforts to promote agricultural development, improve infrastructure, encourage foreign trade, and spread technology led to rapid prosperity and population growth during the Song Dynasty. For the first 150 years under the Song, China may have grown faster than any country ever had.

Land Reform Reforms in agriculture spurred economic growth. As was the case in many societies of the era, a feudal hierarchy prevented most people from owning any land or from owning sufficient land to live on. As discussed earlier, Wang Mang attempted to redistribute land during the Han Dynasty, when social tensions reached their peak. This created widespread unrest and weakened the Han Dynasty permanently.

Six hundred years after Wang Mang's failed reforms, the Tang Empire reintroduced an *equal-field system*, which attempted to ensure that all Chinese families had a parcel of land to cultivate. The empire's intent was not humanitarian; its goal was to wrest power away from the landed aristocracy. This reform proved effective for about 100 years, resulting in an increase in rural wealth. In the eighth century, though, the landed aristocracy used their money and power to bribe government officials to let them keep owning their land. Though the equal-field system reform did not last, rural wealth did grow, and increased prosperity provided some stability for the countryside.

Agricultural Productivity Agriculture prospered also because of new methods of production. The Chinese put manure (both human and animal) on the fields to enrich the soil. They built elaborate irrigation systems using ditches, water wheels, pumps, and terraces to increase productivity. New heavy plows pulled by water buffalo or oxen allowed previously unusable land to be cultivated.

Under the Tang Dynasty (618–907), *fast-ripening rice* (also known as Champa rice) added to Chinese agricultural surpluses. This grain is native to northern Vietnam, which came under the control of China during the Tang Dynasty. Fast-ripening rice allowed peasants in the warmer agricultural region of southern China to grow two crops a year. Thus, both land redistribution and food surpluses were instrumental in spreading China's prosperity.

Because of the Sui Dynasty's construction of the Grand Canal, one of the biggest infrastructure efforts of its time, agricultural products from southern China traveled more easily to the less fertile lands of northern China. The Grand Canal moved the centers of agricultural production of China from the barren north to the fertile south.

In most societies in world history prior to the time of the Song, agricultural goods dominated the economy and trade. Song China produced more nonagricultural goods for commercial use than any earlier civilization. Two of these goods stand out: porcelain and silk. Under the Song, China went through *proto-industrialization*, a phase that precedes and enables full industrialization later, earlier than Western Europe. (Test Prep: Write a paragraph comparing China's proto-industrialization with the cottage industries of Western Europe. See page 287.)

Urbanization Like the Abbasid civilizations, Song China featured growing urban areas. Chinese cities impressed Marco Polo, a visitor from Western Europe's most sophisticated urban area—Venice. Polo wrote extensively about the high levels of urbanization he saw in the thirteenth century.

They use paper money as currency. The men as well as the women are fair-skinned and handsome. Most of them always dress themselves in silk, as a result of the vast quantities of that material produced in Hangzhou, exclusive of what the merchants import from other provinces.

Hangzhou was large—it was home to about one million people—but other Chinese cities were larger. Chang'an had about two million. However, Hangzhou was the center of culture in southern China, the home of poets such as Lu Yu and Xin Qiji. And, located at the southern end of the Grand Canal, it was a center of trade. Like other important cities of the era, such as Novgorod in Russia, Timbuktu in Africa, and Calicut in India, the city grew and prospered as its merchants imported and exported goods. This trade brought diversity to Hangzhou, including a thriving community of Arabs.

Tax Policy The Song reduced the requirement that people labor for the government. Instead, they paid people to work on public projects. This increased the money in circulation, thereby promoting economic growth.

Metal, Gunpowder, and Guns Iron and steel production increased greatly in China as people developed their skills in smelting, the process of separating a metal from ore. One major advance in metal production was to convert coal into coke, a process that removes many of the impurities found in coal. By using coke, the Chinese could make metal that was stronger and make better plows, weapons, and bridges.

During the ninth century, Chinese researchers, trying to find elements that might lead to longer or even eternal life, discovered that blending certain ingredients created a powder that, when touched with a flame, exploded. This was gunpowder. They soon learned to use gunpowder to produce both entertaining fireworks displays and weapons. The first guns were made in the Song Dynasty. Over centuries, the technology of making gunpowder and guns spread from China to all parts of Eurasia via traders on the Silk Roads and through the movement of nomadic peoples such as the Mongols along the steppe, the long stretch of grasslands from Mongolia to Hungary.

Foreign Trade As discussed in earlier chapters, interregional trade along the Silk Roads created many intercultural connections during the Classical Era. After the collapse of classical civilizations such as the Roman and Han empires, activity on the Silk Roads declined dramatically. However, by the eighth and ninth centuries, Arab merchants from the Abbasid Empire revived the land route of the Silk Roads as well as sea routes in the Indian Ocean. Tang China had much to offer the newly revived global trade network, including the compass, paper, and gunpowder. China exported porcelain, tea, and silk. From other parts of Asia, China imported cotton, precious stones, pomegranates, dates, horses, and grapes. These luxury goods appealed to the upper class of Chinese society, whose members reveled in their country's newfound affluence.

To manage the increasing trade, China developed new financial systems. Because copper coins became too unwieldy to transport for everyday transactions, the government developed a system of credit known as *flying cash*. This allowed a merchant to deposit *paper money* under his name in one location and withdraw the same amount at another location. Merchants and tax collectors used abacuses to calculate their transactions. The system of flying cash became the model for the banks of the modern era. Later, Chinese governments would prohibit private individuals and businesses from making paper money, reserving that right for themselves.

Advances in naval technology allowed China to control trade in the South China Sea. Chinese scientists developed the *magnetic compass* and improved the *rudder*, both of which helped aid navigation and ship control along the seas. The Chinese *junk*, developed in the Han Dynasty, was a boat similar to the Southwest Asian dhow (discussed in Chapter 8), had multiple sails and was as long as 400 feet—at least triple the size of the typical Western European ship of its time. The hull of a junk was divided into compartments. The walls making these divisions strengthened the ship for rough voyages at sea and made sinking less likely.

Innovations in Commerce, 500 B.C.E. to 1603 C.E.

| Financial Instrument | Description | Origin Date | Early Location |
|----------------------|--|---------------|----------------|
| Coin | Minted precious metals (silver, bronze, gold) with own inherent value | c. 500 B.C.E. | Lydia, Turkey |
| Caravanserai | Inns along trade routes where travelers could trade, rest, and replenish | c. 500 B.C.E. | Persian Empire |
| Paper Money | Currency in paper form | c. 800 C.E. | China |
| Hanseatic League | First common market and confederation of merchant guilds | 1296 C.E. | Germany |
| Banking House | Precursor to modern bank | c. 200 B.C.E. | China |
| Bill of Exchange | A written order without interest which binds one party to pay a fixed sum to another party at a predetermined date in the future | c. 700 C.E. | China |

Social Structures in China

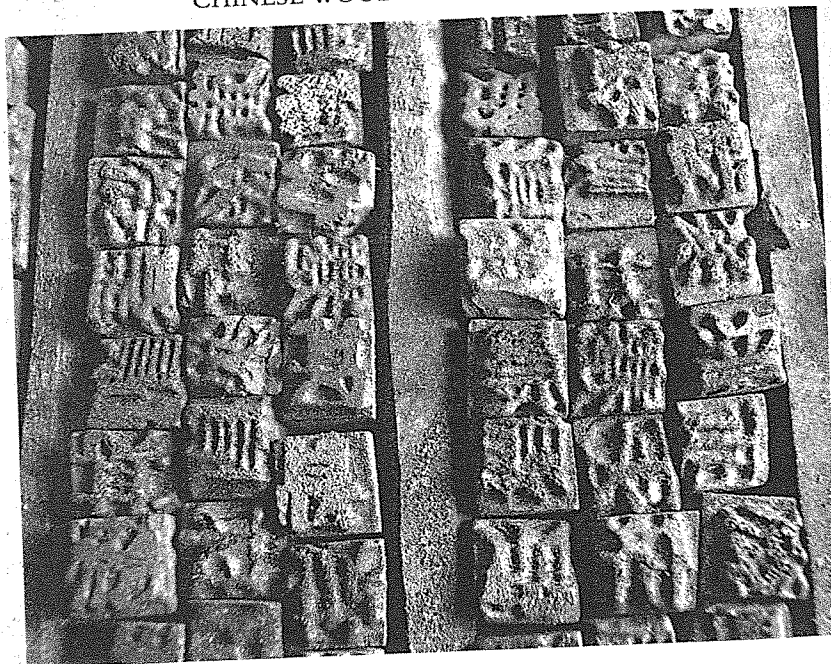
Through most of Chinese history, the majority of people lived in rural areas. The Tang and Song eras were no exception. However, this was the first time in China's history when urban areas grew in prominence. At the height of the Song Dynasty, China was the most urbanized land in the world, boasting several cities containing more than 100,000 people. The largest cities, Chang'an, Hangzhou, and Guangzhou, were cosmopolitan metropolises—active centers of commerce with many entertainment options to offer. Taverns, restaurants, street vendors, markets, theaters, and specialty shops filled with imported luxuries were all available to residents of these bustling cities, many of which were located on the southeastern coast of China. The size and wealth of these cities amazed foreign visitors and traders, who came from as far away as Italy.

New Social Class Though urbanization represented a significant development in China's economic and social landscape, life in rural areas grew more complex as well. As discussed earlier, the Song Dynasty expanded the bureaucracy immensely, opening up opportunities for well-paying jobs to men of modest backgrounds. This expansion created an entirely new social class, the *scholar gentry*. They soon outnumbered the aristocracy, which was comprised of landowners who inherited their wealth. The scholar gentry were educated in Confucian philosophy, had more money than their ancestors, and, because of their numbers, became the most influential social class in China.

Other Classes Three other classes ranked below the scholar gentry: farmers, artisans and craftsmen, and the merchant class. Merchants were considered by the gentry as the lowest in rank because they didn't produce anything new; they merely profited from the exchange of others' handiwork and labor. Even so, the merchant was often quite wealthy and held considerably more influence in society than their rank would suggest.

Role of Women As in many societies, in China, men ruled and women assumed subordinate roles. China's patriarchal society strengthened during the Song and Tang dynasties. One distinctive constraint on women's activity in China was the practice of *foot binding*, which began during the Song Dynasty. From a very young age, girls from aristocratic families had their feet wrapped so tightly that the bones did not grow naturally. Though the small feet were considered a sign of beauty, foot binding was quite painful and often made it difficult for women to walk. Many women had to use canes to get around, and some had servants carry them to their desired destinations. Because it restricted a woman's movement, foot binding was not prevalent among rural peasants. Thus, a bound foot signified social status, something particularly desired when choosing a suitable mate. Often, such practices have served to restrict women and thus limit their contributions to the public sphere.

CHINESE WOOD-BLOCK PRINTING



Source: Thinkstock

With the development of wood block printing in China, people could make multiple copies of art or written texts without laboriously copying each by hand.

Intellectual and Cultural Developments

Perhaps because of China's increased affluence, better-educated populace, and extensive contact with foreign nations, intellectual pursuits (technology, literature, and visual arts) thrived during the Tang and Song eras.

Paper and Printing The Chinese had invented paper as early as the second century C.E., and they developed a system of printing in the seventh century. They were the first culture to use *wood-block printing*. In that method, an artist carves a block of wood so that the carved parts of the wood will appear as blank spaces on the page. The artist then coats the remaining raised parts of the block with ink, and the mirror image of the block is created when pressed against a page. A Buddhist scripture produced in the seventh century is thought to be the world's first wood-block printed work. (For more on the Gutenberg press, see page 278.)

Reading and Poetry The development of paper and printing expanded the availability of books. Though most peasants were illiterate, China's privileged classes had increased access to literature. Confucian scholars not only consumed literature at a tremendous rate, they also were the major producers of literature throughout the Post-Classical Era. The Tang and Song dynasties' emphasis on schooling created generations of well-rounded scholar-bureaucrats with leisure time on their hands, which they might spend composing romantic verses or dabbling in painting. These members of a privileged class were the world's first "Renaissance men."

The secular backgrounds of many writers were revealed in their poetry. For example, *Li Bo's* verse of the eighth century was light and airy; his subjects were love, friendship, and the pleasures of wine. (See the example at the beginning of the chapter.) His writing stands in contrast to the more somber poetry of *Du Fu*, in the same century. *Du Fu* is known as the "poet-historian" of China's Post-Classical Era. As the Tang Dynasty began to crumble, *Du Fu's* writing dealt with the hardships of daily life. The works of these two prolific writers continue to be read in modern times.

Painting Another art form that flourished during the Post-Classical Era was landscape painting. Landscape in Chinese literally means "mountain-water." Human figures on the canvas are miniscule in comparison to the work's vast empty spaces or mountains. Daoism's emphasis on nature shows itself in these paintings.

Religious Diversity in China

Many Chinese respected the ideals of Daoism and combined Daoist beliefs with Confucianism. The two belief systems existing alongside each other in people's everyday beliefs and practices. For example, the scholar gentry who created meditative landscape paintings were also well-versed in Confucianism. However, Confucians and Buddhists did not coexist comfortably.

Buddhism had come to China from its birthplace in India via the Silk Roads. Its presence is evident during the anarchic period between the later Han and the Sui dynasties. However, its popularity became widespread during the Tang Dynasty. The seventh century Buddhist monk Xuanzang was instrumental in building Buddhism's popularity in China.

Buddhism and Taoism Monks introduced Buddhism to the Chinese by relating its beliefs to Daoist principles. For example, Buddhism's idea of dharma became translated as dao ("the way"). Eventually, Buddhist doctrines combined with elements of Daoist traditions to create the syncretic faith *Chan Buddhism*, also known as *Zen Buddhism*. Similar to Taoism, this new form of Buddhism emphasized direct experience and meditation as opposed to formal learning based on scripture.

Thanks to this religious syncretism, Buddhism's popularity in China grew immensely. Monasteries—homes of monks—appeared in virtually every major city, which became a problem in itself for the Tang bureaucracy. Wealthy converts donated large tracts of land to monasteries, which did not pay taxes, annoying the Confucian bureaucracy.

More broadly, it was difficult for many leaders of the Tang Dynasty, which considered itself the "Middle Kingdom"—the center of world affairs—to accept that a foreign religion would have such prominence in society. Buddhism's popularity, which drew individuals away from China's native religions, made Daoists and Confucians quite jealous. Thus, during the eighth century, Tang officials ordered that Buddhist monasteries be closed and their lands seized. Nevertheless, Chan Buddhism remained popular among ordinary Chinese citizens.

Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism The Song Dynasty was somewhat friendlier towards Buddhism, but it did not go out of its way to promote the religion, preferring to emphasize China's native traditions, such as Confucianism, which itself went through changes. Buddhism's presence had been so strong that many Confucians had begun to adopt its ideals into their daily lives. The development of printing had made Buddhist scriptures widely available to the Confucian scholar gentry. In spite of themselves, the scholars found that they appreciated the thoughtfulness that Buddhism devoted to issues of the soul and the meaning of life. Thus, *Neo-Confucianism*, another syncretic faith, evolved in China between 770 and 840. Neo-Confucianism is a social and ethical philosophy, not a religious belief, that combines rational thought with the metaphysics of Taoism and Buddhism. This new incarnation of Confucianism also became immensely popular in the countries in China's orbit, including Japan, Korea, and Vietnam.

Japan

Though the "Middle Kingdom" was powerful, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam had their own political and cultural traditions. That said, China cast a long shadow

over its neighbors. During the Post-Classical Era, these societies were forced to adapt to the rise of China and grapple with the changes that its predominance brought to their lands.

Fear of China During the Post-Classical Era, Japan's isolation was interrupted by China's emergence as a global power. Though China did not invade Japan during this time, it did have a presence in nearby Korea, which troubled the Japanese government. Japanese officials worried that the "Middle Kingdom" would soon be encroaching upon their land.

Under Prince *Shotoku Taishi* (lived 574–622), of the dominant Yamato region, Japan responded by attempting to implement Chinese practices in Japan. For example, the prince wrote a new constitution that consolidated power for all of Japan in one ruler. He argued for a centralized government with a merit-based system of selecting bureaucrats. He hired skilled Chinese laborers to come to Japan to share their knowledge in various crafts and construction. The court also sent Japanese nobility to China to study Chinese culture. They promoted Buddhism and Confucianism as supplements to Japan's traditional Shinto religion, and introduced wood-block printing to Japan (Test Prep: In a paragraph compare Japan's reaction to China with its reaction to Western powers in the 1800s. See page 454.)

| Religious Affiliations in Japan Today | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Religion | First Widely Practiced in Japan | Source | Percentage of Japanese* |
| Shinto | Prehistoric period | Developed in Japan | 84 |
| Buddhism | Sixth century C.E. | China | 71 |
| Christianity | Sixteenth century C.E. | Portugal | 2 |
| Other | Various | Various | 8 |

Source: The World Factbook. cia.gov.

* Many Japanese consider themselves followers of more than one religion.

Taika Reforms After Shotoku's death, his successor enacted other reforms, known as the *Taika Reforms*, in 646. One goal of the reforms was increasing efficiency; the other was to wrest control of society from the landed aristocracy. The new laws put all farmland under government ownership, which meant that all taxes would be paid directly to the central government, rather

than the nobility. This was a major blow to the power of the feudal lords and a large step toward creating a powerful centralized government.

In the 710, the *Fujiwara clan* took control of the government and moved the capital city to *Nara*, which was built in the style of China's capital city, Chang'an. Indeed, the Fujiwara Clan continued in the tradition of Shotoku in modeling itself after Tang China in many ways.

Return to Decentralized Government Eventually, however, the power of the aristocracy was too strong, and in 794 the current emperor moved the capital back to *Heian*, where the emperor had more support. Unlike the Chinese emperors, the emperor of Japan was merely a figurehead to whom the Japanese people gave respect. In the Post-Classical Era, power truly rested in the hands of the Fujiwara family.

Leaders of the empire during the Heian Period (794–1185) still tried to emulate Chinese political traditions. They were not successful, though, as Heian Japan slipped back into a pattern of political decentralization. Though the government had instituted an equal-field system similar to China's, it failed because of the nobility's influence. The merit-based bureaucracy actually served to strengthen the nobility because the civil service examination was not open to all social classes.

The Tale of Genji Although leaders of Heian Japan failed to consolidate government power, their cultural achievements are notable. Literature flourished during this period. A woman named *Murasaki Shikibu* wrote *The Tale of Genji*, arguably the world's first novel. It is a classic of world literature about Genji, an imperial prince. *The Tale of Genji* is not only a melancholy story of love and the passing of time, but it is also a window into the life of aristocratic Japan.

Military Rule Political weakness and aristocratic greed caused the downfall of the Heian court. Thereafter, the *Minamoto clan* rose to power. From the end of the twelfth century until the late sixteenth century, power would stay in the hands of the Minamoto family, which installed a *shogun*, or military ruler, to reign supreme. This shogun was separate from the emperor, who had even less power during this period than before. While the Nara and Heian courts tried to emulate China's scholarly and courtly traditions, the Minamoto shogunate emphasized military prowess.

Because power became decentralized under the Minamoto clan, noble families returned to battling over estates. To protect their lands, nobles recruited *samurai*, professional warriors who, in return for their sacrifice, received clothing, shelter, and food from their landlord. In the absence of any army or central political force to stabilize the society, the samurai played a central role in the 400-year period (the Kamakura and Muromachi shogunates) after Heian Japan fell. (Test Prep: Make an outline in which you compare Japanese samurai with knights of medieval Europe. See page 223.)

Feudalism For hundreds of years, Japan had been a feudal society without a centralized government. Landowning aristocrats, the *daimyo*, battled for supreme power over the land, while the majority of people worked as rice farmers.

Japanese feudalism was similar to European feudalism, which is described in Chapter 12. Both featured very little social mobility, and both systems were built upon hereditary hierarchies. In Japan, peasants, known as serfs, were born into lives of economic dependency, while samurai were born into their roles as protectors, and daimyo were born into lives of privilege. In Europe, the three groups were serfs, knights, and nobles.

What distinguishes Japanese feudalism from that of Europe was that the daimyo enjoyed much more power than the nobility in Europe did. The daimyo ruled over vast stretches of land and, in reality, were more powerful than either the emperor or the shogun. By contrast, Europe's hierarchy placed the monarch above the nobility. Though there were periods when authority of the monarch waned and power was distributed among nobility, the main centralized power structure of European feudalism would not change until the Modern Industrial Era.

In Europe, the ideal knight held to the code of chivalry, with duty to countrymen, duty to God, and duty to women, the latter expressed through courtly love and the virtues of gentleness and graciousness. In Japan, the code was known as *bushido*, and stressed frugality, loyalty, the martial arts, and honor unto death.

Korea

Since it shared a land border with China, Korea had a much more direct relationship with China than Japan. The Tang Dynasty demanded that representatives of the Korean Silla Kingdom perform the ritual kowtow when meeting the Chinese emperor and become a tributary state of China. In order to appease the Chinese, the Korean Kingdom agreed. Giving tributes to China had its benefits: Korea began receiving valuable Chinese exports to which it may not have otherwise had access.

Similarity to China Through its tributary relationship, Korea and China were in close contact. Thus, Korea emulated many aspects of China's politics and culture. For example, it modeled its capital city, *Kumsong*, on Chang'an. It centralized its government in the style of the Chinese. Culturally, Koreans adopted both Confucian and Buddhist beliefs. The educated elite studied Confucian classics, while Buddhist doctrine attracted the peasant masses. Koreans adopted Chinese written characters, even though it was difficult because the two languages were not the same.

Korean Bureaucracy The Korean landed aristocracy held such power over Korean society that certain Chinese reforms were never implemented. Though there was a Korean civil service examination, it was not open to peasants. Thus, there was no truly merit-based system for entering the bureaucracy.

Vietnam

Vietnam's adversarial relationship with China stands in stark contrast to Korea's peaceful one. The Vietnamese realized the benefits of new technology and trade, but they did not willingly give up their own identity to China.

Trade The Han Dynasty had expanded south into Vietnam during the Classical Era. It did not significantly alter Vietnam's culture or government, though it did bring trade to this Southeast Asian land. In exchange for Chinese silk, the Vietnamese exported tortoise shells, ivory, peacock feathers, and pearls.

Relationship with China Several aspects of Vietnamese culture differed from Chinese culture, which is why so many resisted Chinese incursion into their lifestyles. For example, women in Vietnamese culture enjoyed greater independence in their married lives than did Chinese women in the Confucian tradition. While the Chinese lived in extended families, the Vietnamese preferred *nuclear families* (just a wife, husband, and their children). Vietnamese villages operated independently of a national government; political centralization was nonexistent.

Sinification, or the assimilation of Chinese traditions and practices, was not welcomed wholeheartedly in Vietnam. Vietnamese schools educated their students in Chinese, which led the Vietnamese to develop their own written language based on Chinese characters. They still retained their spoken language, however, which is not at all related to the Chinese language. (Test Prep: Write a paragraph in which you compare and contrast the way Vietnam dealt with the Chinese language with the way Korea dealt with the Chinese language. See page 193.)

Although Vietnam adopted a merit-based bureaucracy of educated men, the Vietnamese system did not function like the Chinese scholar-bureaucracy. Instead of loyalty to the emperor, scholar-officials in Vietnam owed more allegiance to the village peasants. In fact, Vietnamese scholar-officials often led revolts against the government if they deemed it too oppressive. Vietnamese women resented their inferior status under the Chinese, as well as Confucian practices such as *polygyny* (the practice of having more than one spouse at the same time).

As the Tang Dynasty began to crumble in the eighth century, Vietnamese rebels took the opportunity to drive out China's occupying army. In their battles against the Chinese, they showed a strong capacity for *guerilla warfare*, perhaps due to their deep knowledge of their own land.

In spite of Vietnamese efforts to maintain the purity of their own culture, sinification did occur. For example, the majority of the Vietnamese converted to Buddhism and became serious adherents to the faith. Politically, Viet kingdoms modeled their palaces after those in China, but with less grandeur and opulence. Formal education continued to be conducted in Chinese.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: WHO INVENTED GUNPOWDER AND GUNS?

The development of gunpowder and its use in guns revolutionized world history. While the Chinese took credit for developing both gunpowder and guns, European historians were skeptical because they doubted the Chinese had the technological ability. For example, Henry Hime, a British military officer, argued in his 1904 book, *Gunpowder and Ammunition: Their Origin and Progress*, that the Chinese "possessed little genius for mechanical or chemical inventions" so they had probably "obtained their first gunpowder and firearms from the West."

Europeans slowly acknowledged Chinese contributions to the technologies that led to the development of guns. They first recognized that the Chinese had invented gunpowder, and that knowledge of the explosive substance had been carried by traders and the Mongols to Europe in the thirteenth century. However, European historians continued to argue that the Chinese had used gunpowder only for fireworks, not for weaponry. Historian Jack Kelly, in a recent book about the history of gunpowder, noted that historians had not moved much beyond Hime's argument in their views of Chinese abilities. "The notion of China's benign relationship with gunpowder sprang in part from Western prejudices about the Chinese character. Some viewed the Chinese as dilettantes who stumbled into the secret of gunpowder but couldn't envision its potential. Others saw them as pacifist sages who wisely turned away from its destructive possibilities."

The next step was for Europeans to acknowledge that the Chinese historians were correct, and that the Chinese had begun using gunpowder to make early forms of guns since the tenth century. British scholar Joseph Needham revolutionized western attitudes toward China with his multi-volume work *Science and Civilization in China*. Begun in 1954, it continued after Needham's death under other scholars and now includes more than 25 volumes. By 1986, Needham called the development of gunpowder "no doubt the greatest of all Chinese military inventions." And he concluded that the Chinese had developed the first gun "before other peoples knew of the invention at all."

KEY TERMS BY THEME

ECONOMICS

equal-field system
fast-ripening rice
proto-industrialization
flying cash
paper money
magnetic compass
rudder
junk
wood-block printing

SOCIAL STRUCTURES

nuclear family
sinification
polygyny
Xuanzang
Hsuan Tsung
An Lushan
scholar gentry
daimyo

STATE-BUILDING

Sui Dynasty
Grand Canal
Hangzhou
Tang Dynasty
Middle Kingdom
Silla Kingdom
tributary system
Song Dynasty
Southern Song
Dynasty
Tang Taizong
Song Taizu
Chang'an
Kaifeng
Yuan Dynasty
Ming Dynasty
Minamoto clan
shogun
samurai
Kumsong
guerilla warfare

CULTURE

kowtow
Uighurs
foot binding
Li Bo
Du Fu
Chan (Zen)
Buddhism
Neo-Confucianism
Shotoku Taishi
Taika Reforms
Fujiwara clan
Nara
Heian
Murasaki Shikibu
The Tale of Genji
bushido

MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

- Why are the Tang and Song dynasties often thought of as China's Golden Age?
 - Foreign workers built the Grand Canal and rebuilt the Great Wall.
 - It was a period of wealth and stability.
 - Women gained more rights.
 - Trade brought large quantities of gold into China.
- One long-term impact of the civil service examination system in China was
 - to place a high value on learning
 - to reduce corruption in government
 - to allow equal opportunities for men and women
 - to decentralize the government

- Why is China during the Song Dynasty (960–1279) often regarded as the most upwardly mobile civilization of the time?
 - Gender equality became an active goal.
 - Talented officers were needed to lead the army as they conquered new territories.
 - Chinese meritocracy rewarded gifted men.
 - Confucian principles expected the status quo to be constantly tested.
- Which statement best summarizes the influence of the bureaucracy during the Song Dynasty?
 - It promoted foreign trade, but it made tax collection difficult.
 - It made managing the empire more efficient, but it was very expensive.
 - It ended corruption, but it weakened the scholar gentry class.
 - It strengthened Buddhism, but it undermined Confucianism.

Question 5 refers to the excerpt below.

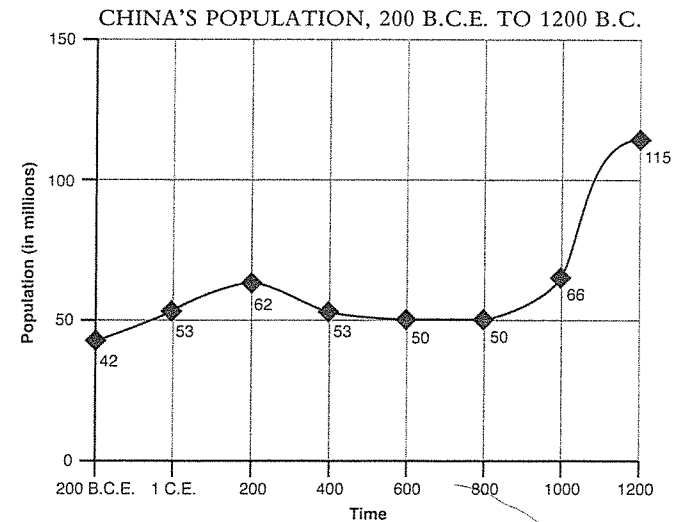
When she was young, Lingshou was intelligent and fond of study. Her speech was clear and beautiful; her nature modest and unassuming. Taking no pleasure in worldly affairs, she was at ease in secluded quiet. She delighted in the Buddhist teaching and did not wish for her parents to arrange her betrothal.

—Shi Baochang's "Lives of Nuns" (c. 516)

- Which phrase of the above quotation would the followers of Confucius find the most praiseworthy?
 - "intelligent and fond of study"
 - "at ease in secluded quiet"
 - "delighted in the Buddhist teaching"
 - "did not wish for her parents to arrange her betrothal"
- In which of the following ways did China most influence Japan in the Post-Classical period?
 - Both countries consistently had powerful central governments.
 - Both countries had military rulers with more power than the emperor.
 - China's emperors sent scholars to tutor the Japanese emperor.
 - Japan sent emissaries to China to learn styles of art and literature.

7. One source of conflict between Chinese Buddhism and Confucianism was that
- Confucianism emphasizes accomplishment in this world, while Buddhism emphasizes what happens after death
 - Buddhism is based on gender equality, while Confucianism teaches a hierarchical ordering in relationships
 - supporters of Buddhism charged that Confucians encouraged class conflict in society
 - supporters of Confucianism charged that Buddhist monks made no visible contributions to Chinese society
8. Which is the best example of one way Neo-Confucianism represented syncretism?
- Neo-Confucians discounted filial piety in favor of an all-pervasive soul.
 - People spread Theravada Buddhism throughout Southeast Asia.
 - The scholar gentry class began to contemplate the existence of the soul and the meaning of life.
 - China allowed more classes of people to take the civil service exam.
9. Though the Koreans had to kowtow to the Chinese, one advantage in the tributary relationship was that
- China subsidized the Korean education system
 - Korea and China had a healthy trade relationship
 - China protected Korea from Japanese and Mongolian incursion
 - the Korean peasantry benefited from a weakened nobility

Question 10 refers to the graph below.



Source: Population data adapted from Quamrui Ashraf and Oded Galor, "Cultural Assimilation, Cultural Diffusion and the Origin of the Wealth of Nations." voxeu.org, September 13, 2007.

10. Based on this graph, the two periods when China's population increased the most were also periods when
- foreign trade was decreasing rapidly
 - Buddhism was practiced most widely
 - the political situation was unstable
 - the central government was strong

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE-OVER-TIME ESSAY QUESTIONS

Directions: You are to answer the following question. You should spend 5 minutes organizing or outlining your essay. Write an essay that:

- Has a relevant thesis and supports that thesis with appropriate historical evidence.
- Addresses all parts of the question.
- Uses world historical context to show continuities and changes over time.
- Analyzes the process of continuity and change over time.