

# Chapter 13 – Reunification and Renaissance in Chinese Civilization: The Era of the Tang and Song Dynasties



Tang Dynasty, China

- The **Sui and Tang**, from the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century brought a restoration of Chinese civilization
- Confucianism** emerged as the central ideology of Chinese civilization, The result of strong dynasties and Neo-Confucian philosophy was a “Golden Age” of art, literature and culture that lasted 700 years



# Out of the Chaos: The Sui Dynasty

- After the collapse of the Han dynasty around 200 CE, China suffered from more than 300 years of civil war, strife, and instability (“Era of Division” – 220-581 CE)
- The Sui dynasty wasn’t a savior but it did bring some *stability* to the region



**Wendi** – Member of prominent northern Chinese family during the **Era of Division**; with support from northern nomadic peoples **established Sui dynasty in 581**; gained support of people by lowering taxes & establishing granaries for a stable food supply

**Yangdi** – Second Sui ruler; son of Wendi; restored Confucian examination system; constructed grand canal system; assassinated in 618 = end of dynasty.

# Sui Dynasty, 581-618 C.E.

- ⌘ “Land Equalization” System → land redistribution.
- ⌘ Cheap but stable food supply
- ⌘ Unified coinage.
- ⌘ **Grand Canal system** constructed to link the empire
- ⌘ Established an army of professional soldiers.

- **Yangdi** attempted unsuccessful military campaigns which led to the downfall of the Sui dynasty
- Tried to conquer Korea; widespread revolts followed; imperial rule crumbled
- Defeated by the large group of Turkic nomads from Central Asia.
- Assassinated in 618

## The Grand Canal



# The Grand Canal (Today)



**Grand Canal** – great canal system begun by Yangdi; joined the Yellow River region to the Yangzi basin

Above is a picture of Suzhou in Jiangsu province showing houses along the Grand Canal. From north to south, the Grand Canal is over 1,700 kilometers (roughly 1,100 miles) long, linking Hangzhou in Zhejiang province with Beijing in the north. An extremely important water project that was first started in the Sui dynasty (589-618), it connects several big rivers and provides an important means of transportation and communication.

## T'ang (618-907)



• **Li Yuan** – **Duke of Tang** – former supporter of the Sui and a minister for Yangdi; took over empire after assassination of Yangdi; first Tang ruler

# Tang Dynasty, 618-907 C.E.

- ⌘ Liberal attitude towards all religions.
  - Spread of Buddhism in China
- ⌘ “Golden Age” of foreign relations with other countries:
  - Japan, Korea, and Persia
  - Built on the new unity created by the Grand Canal and brought years of peace and stability to China

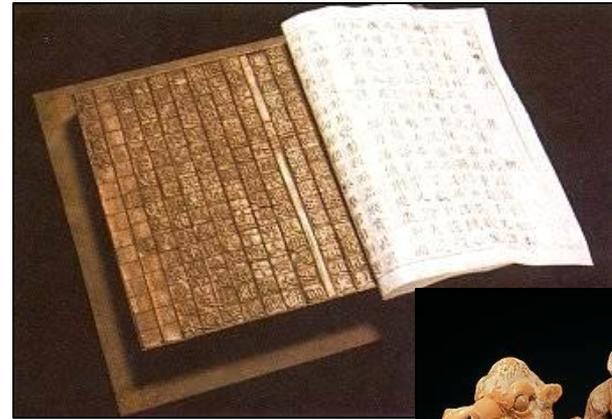
# Tang Government Organization

- **Tang armies** extended the empire's reach to the borders of Afghanistan and dominated the nomads of the borderlands
- **The Great Wall of China was repaired**
- The extensive Tang Empire stretched into Tibet, Vietnam (south of China), Manchuria (northeast of China) and Korea

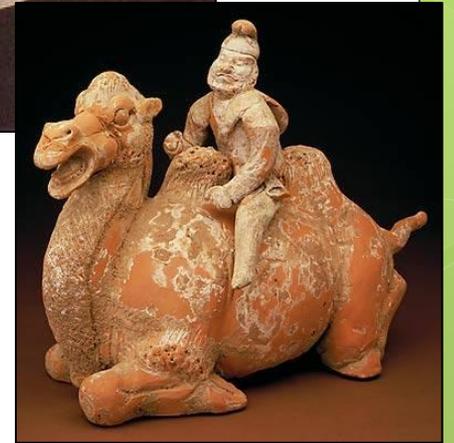
# Tang Dynasty, 618-907 C.E.

⌘ New technologies:

- Printing
- Porcelain
- Gunpowder
- Mechanical clocks



⌘ Re-established the Silk Roads.



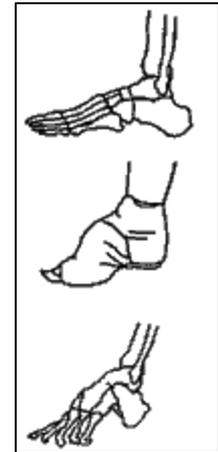
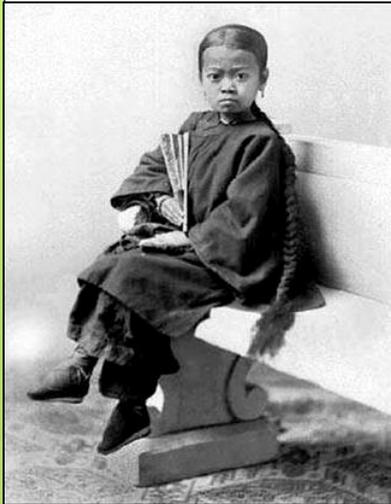
⌘ Tea comes into China from Southeast Asia.

# Empress Wu, 624-705

- ⌘ The only female Empress in China's history who ruled alone
- ⌘ Construction of new irrigation systems.
- ⌘ Buddhism was the favored state religion.
  - *attempted* to have **Buddhism recognized as a state religion.**

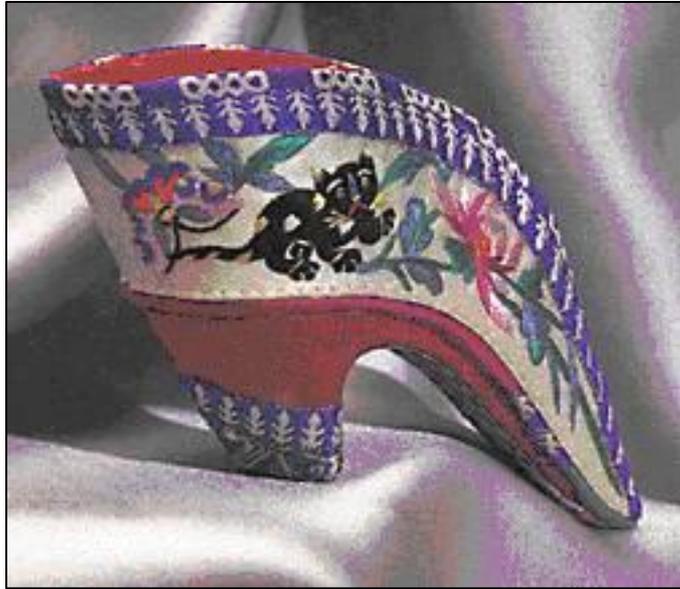


# Foot-Binding in Tang China



**Foot binding** – Male-imposed practice to mutilate women's feet in order to reduce size; produced pain and restricted movement; helped to confine women to the household

# Foot-Binding in Tang China



- For upper-class girls, it became a new custom.





# WARNING!

The next slide has pictures of actual foot-binding examples. Viewer discretion is strongly advised!

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# The Results of Foot-Binding



# The Fall of the Tang Dynasty

- Tang bureaucracy becomes large and corrupt
- Chinese control of new territories became a problem
- The Tang needed to hire soldiers:
  - Uighurs - a group of Turkic speaking people from central Asia who were hired as soldiers by the Tang dynasty.
- The Uighurs saw the weakness of the Tang dynasty (too many pencils and not enough swords! – pencils=bureaucrats) and overthrew the dynasty in 907



# The Song Dynasty

- Song dynasty rose around 960 after taking power away from the Uighurs
- The Song dynasty retained power over China until 1279

Northern Sung (960 - 1126)



Southern Sung (1127 - 1279)



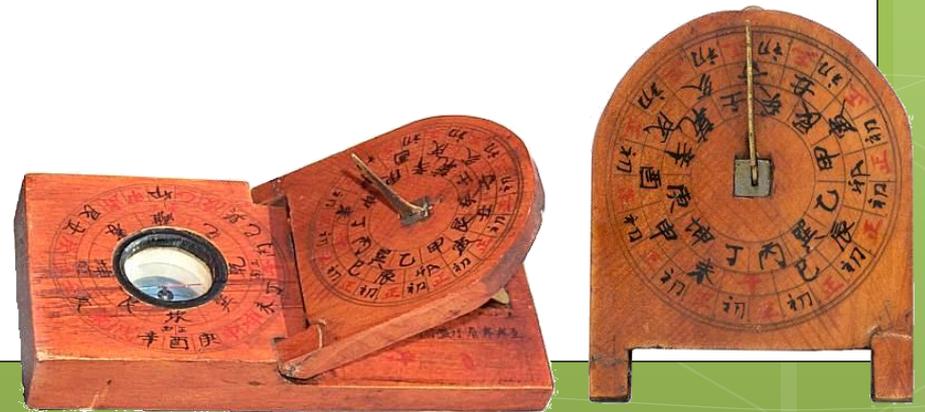
# Song Dynasty, 960-1279 C.E.

Creation of an urban, merchant, middle class.

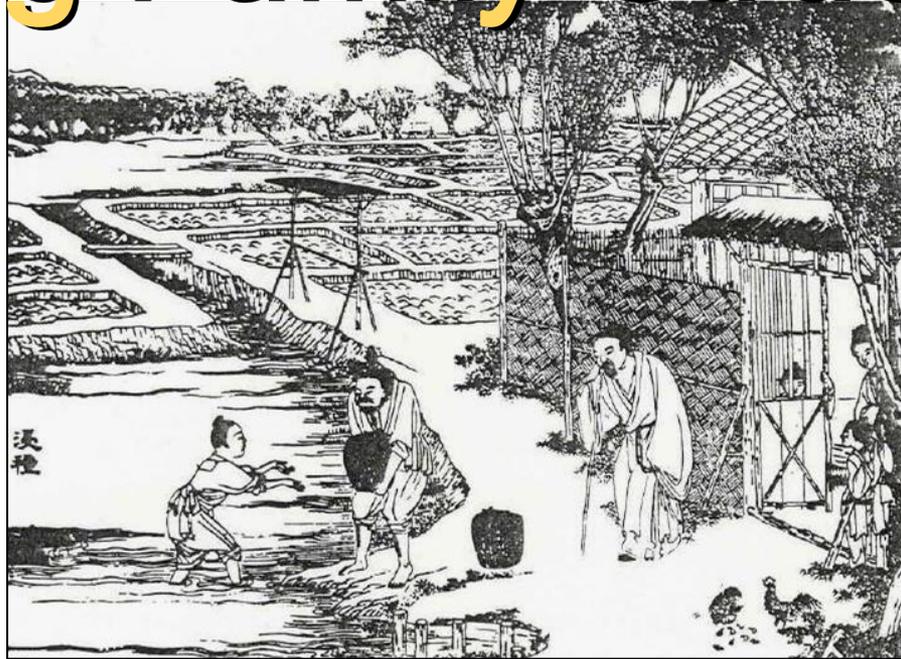


Increased emphasis on education & availability of printed books.

Magnetic compass makes China a great sea power! 



# Song Family Structure



- Family organization resembled that of earlier eras
- Extended-family households were preferred
- The Confucian male-dominated family hierarchy was common

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# Trade and Technology

- Renewed trade on the Silk Roads with **exports** of tea, silk and porcelain going westward.
- Gunpowder was used; leads to creation of explosives and flame throwers
- Cotton used for garments

- Tang and Song periods are most remembered for their accomplishments in science, technology, literature and fine arts:
- Arts and literature passed to neighboring regions – Japan, and Vietnam
- Grand Canal, irrigation system, and bridges
- Banks, coinage, and paper money
- Gunpowder – fireworks, flamethrowers
- Compasses help ocean/sea navigation; builds strong navy
- Printing with movable type, **the invention of paper allowed literacy levels higher than any other post-classical civilization**

# Rice Cultivation Began Under the Song Dynasty

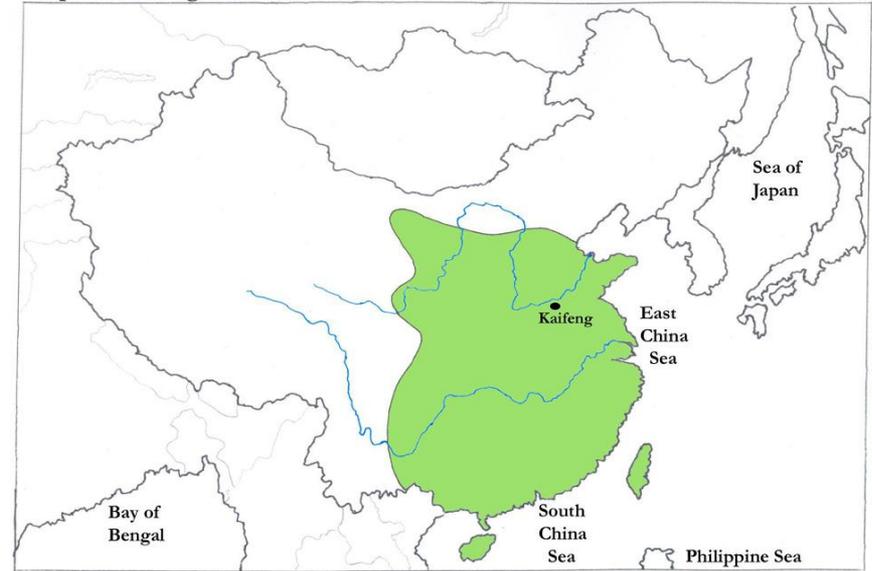


- Tang and Song rulers pushed for agricultural expansion (similarity)
- Peasants were encouraged to migrate to new areas for agricultural expansion
- The canals enabled their produce to move through the empires



## Song Dynasty (960-1279)

Capital: Kaifeng



- The Song dynasty fell to the **Mongol invasions**
- The Chinese economy, until the 18<sup>th</sup> century was a world leader in overseas trade, productivity, sophistication of tools, and craft production

• **Sinification** – Extensive adaptation of Chinese culture in other regions; typical of Korea and Japan; less typical of Vietnam

• **Neo-Confucians** – Revived ancient Confucian teachings in the Song era of China; placed emphasis on tradition; hostility towards foreign systems made Chinese rulers and bureaucrats less receptive to outside ideas and influences.

# Neo-Confucianism

- Came about as a reaction to the growing popularity of Daoism and Buddhism
- Tenets – acknowledgment of a god or Supreme Ultimate; 1) The world is real not illusionary. 2) Personal fulfillment is gained by participation, not withdrawal from the world. 3) Two worlds: material & spiritual 4) The goal of everyone is to unify with the Supreme Ultimate

## Song Dynasty

- Urban growth surged – population of 1,500,000 enjoyed marketplaces, parks, teahouses and popular entertainment
- The Tang & Song era restored and strengthened Chinese centralization and bureaucracy
- Banks, paper money, new ways to build bridges & dams, explosive gunpowder, and compasses applied to sea navigation, were some innovations made during the Tang-Song era



## The Least you Need to Know

- Sui dynasty ended period of strife (“Era of Division”)
- Tang dynasty renewed trade and culture
- Buddhism and Daoism made successful impacts in China but later were minimized by efforts of Tang dynasty and the emergence of Neo-Confucianism
- Neo Confucianism combined the philosophy of Confucianism with spiritual elements to create a new religious tradition in China