Week 9: Chapter 12: Part 1: Terms

Wendi - He was a member of a prominent north Chinese noble family. He arranged a marriage between his daughter and the ruler of the northern Zhou empire. Eventually he seized the throne and called himself empire. He had the support of neighboring nomadic military commanders. He did this by not favoring the Confucian scholar-gentry at their expense. In 539 his armies attacked the weak and divided Chen. This allowed him to unite the majority of the core areas of Chinese civilization. He lowered taxes and established granaries throughout his domains.

Yangdi - He murdered his father Wendi to get the throne. He drove back the nomadic intruders who threatened the northern frontiers of the empire. He devoted resources to upgrading Confucian education. He also restored the examination system for regulating entry into the bureaucracy. He also was fond of extravagant building projects.

Loyang – The capital city of Yangdi’s Sui empire.

Li Yuan - “The duke of Tang”. He was a powerful leader, and realized that only rebellion would save his family and the empire. In 623, he received the throne, and laid the basis for the golden age of the Tang.

Tang Taizong - Was given the throne in 626, by his father Li Yuan.

heavenly khan - The name that Tang rulers took.

Kaozong - An emperor who took over Korea.

Silla - Korea was called this. It was a vassal kingdom of the Tang that remained loyal to the Tang for a long period of time. Was established in 668.

Changan - The new capital of the Tang.

Ministry of Rites - Administered tests to students from government school or those recommended by distinguished scholars. The highest offices were gained only by those who passed philosophical or legal classics and the more difficult exams on Chinese literature.

jinshi – Students who passed the exams on Chinese literature were given this title and they were highly respected.

Chan Buddhism (Zen) - Elite people were attracted to this type of Buddhism. It stressed meditation and the appreciation of natural and artistic beauty. The ultimate goal was to come to know the ultimate wisdom, and find the release from the cycle of rebirth. One reached this by introspective meditation.

Mahayana (Pure Land) Buddhism - This was popular among the Chinese because it seemed to offer an escape from the wars.
**Empress Wu** - (690-705) Greatly supported the Buddhist establishment. She contributed large sums to build or improve monasteries and reward Buddhist cooperation with grants of land. She also had intricate statues created.

**Wuzong** - (841-847) He led an open persecution of Buddhism.

**Xuanzong** - An emperor, he reigned (713-756), which was the high point of Chinese civilization under the Tang.

**Yang Guifei** - Xuanzong became infatuated with her. She was a beautiful young woman from the harem of one of the imperial princes. She was raised to the status of royal concubine, and she used her new power to pack the upper levels of the government with her greedy relatives.

**An Lushan** - In 755 when one of the main military leaders named An Lushan led a much supported revolt against the Tang.

**Song Dynasty** - The dynasty after the Tang, it was started by Zhao Kuangyin, and was rather weak.

**Zhao Kuangyin** - In 960 he appeared to unite China under a single dynasty, but he never conquered the Liao Dynasty in the north.

**Khitan Peoples** - Beginning in 1004, the Song were forced to sign a series of humiliating treaties with the Khitians because the Khitians were able to defeat them militarily.

**Zhu Xi** - One of the most prominent thinkers of the era, he stressed the importance of applying philosophical principles to everyday life and action.

**Wang Anshi** - In the 1070’s to 1080’s the chief minister of the Song Shenzong emperor tried to ward off the collapse of the dynasty by introducing reforms. He ran the government on Legalist assumption that an energetic and interventionist state could greatly increase the resources and strengths of the dynasty. He introduced cheap loans and government-assisted irrigation projects to encourage agricultural expansion. He taxed the landlord and scholarly classes and used the revenue to establish well-trained mercenary forces to replace the untrained and unwilling peasantry. His reform in the university education stressed analytical thinking rather than rote memorization.

**Xi Xia** - Tangut tribes, originally from Tibet established this kingdom to the southwest of the Khitan kingdom of Liao. The Chinese were forced to pay a tribute to pay for protection from the Khitans in the North, and this drained the Songs resources.

**Southern Song** - The Jurchens took over much of the Song area. This dynasty lasted from 1127-1279.
**Jurchens** – In 1115, a new nomadic contender overthrew the Liao dynasty and established the Qin kingdom north of the Song Empire.

**Grand Canal** - Yangdi risked the throne to build this. It was designed to link the original centers of Chinese civilization on the North China plain with the Yangtze River basin more than 500 miles to the south.

**junks** - These ships were among the best in the world and allowed Chinese sailors become the dominant force in the Asian seas east of the Malayan peninsula.

**flying money** - Credit vouchers. Merchants would deposit profits in their hometown and given flying money which they could present for reimbursement at the appropriate office in the city of destination.

**Hangzhou** - a remarkable urban center, which was the late Song capital. Its traders and artisans were able to prosper through the sale of goods. It was famed for its wealth, cleanliness, and the amount of diversions it offered.

**footbinding** - in the later Song era, male demanded small feet. By age 5 or 6 mothers bounded their daughters’ feet.

**Li Bo** - he was the most famous poet of the Tang era. He was especially good at celebrating the natural world.

**Week 9: Chapter 12: Part 2: Questions**

1. How did the Sui and Tang reestablish a centralized empire in China?

A strong military presence brought nomads and the warring nobility under control allowing for the effective set-up of a centralized bureaucracy. Restoration of the scholar-gentry assisted the Tang in maintaining imperial unity. Political authority went to the scholar-gentry limiting the power of the aristocracy. Officials were watched by the Bureau of Censors.

2. What institutions did the Tang use to govern their empire and why?

The Bureau of Censors was utilized to watch the local officials and make certain they were following the imperial directives. Civil Service exams were expanded and heavily relied upon at this time. This allows for talent to be rewarded, with exams determining ranking for eligible offices.

3. What accounts for the decline of the Tang dynasty?

The reign of Emperor Xuanzong is widely seen as the reason for the decline in the Tang Dynasty. He turned away from ruling in order to focus on the arts. His infatuation with a woman in his harem led to her and her family increasing their power at court. Rivalries emerged and the
court was too busy to settle economic and military issues. Rebellion broke out and continued as economic conditions worsened.

4. In what way was the Song empire weaker than the Tang? How did the Song attempt to solve the problems they faced?

A focus on scholar-gentry caused military issues to be over looked. The Song Dynasty opted to pay tribute rather than fight when threatened although employing a large military. This created a burden on the peasantry and draining the state of resources.

5. Describe the Chinese commercial revolution.

The expansion of the canal system led to greater trade. Chinese junk boats also allowed for China to dominate the seas as they were considered to be among the best ships of the world. The Chinese exported manufactured goods and imported luxury goods. The expansion of trade led to increasing sophistication in banking including deposit shops and paper money.

6. Discuss the status of women during the Tang-Song era. How did gender relations change during their period?

The independence and legal rights of elite minority of women worsened under the influence of Neo-Confucian thinkers. They stressed the roles of housemaker and mother, advocated physical confinement of women while men were permitted free sexual behavior and remarriage. New laws favored males in inheritance and divorce, and females were excluded from the educational system. The Song Dynasty legitimized and promoted the practice of foot binding which restricted mobility while promoting an image of beauty and wealth.

7. What was the overall impact of the Tang-Song era on Chinese history?

The Tang and Song periods are most remembered for their accomplishments in science, technology, literature, and the fine arts. The scholar-gentry defined Chinese civilization for the next several centuries. Engineering feats such as the Grand Canal and banking innovations such as paper money stimulated other developments. Movable type combined with the invention of paper led the Chinese to have a higher literacy rate than most other nations.

8. What innovations were made during the Tang-Song era?

Gunpowder, paper, moveable type. Kites, abacus, flame throwers, improved irrigation systems, compasses, tea drinking