East Asia

China, Korea, and Japan
500 to 1000 CE
China 500-1000 CE
(not in your notes)

❖ Sui, Tang and Song Dynasties
❖ During this period, Chinese dynasties brought about significant improvements in food production and distribution, which resulted in an increase in population, rise of urbanization, and specialization in various technologies.
Background

(not in your notes but you could add key points in the margin if you need to)

- 220 CE: Collapse of Han dynasty
- During last two centuries of Han rule, large landowners gained influence in the government. They reduced their own taxes and raised the taxes of the peasant. There was massive discontent and rebellion.
- Han military generals took power, aligning themselves with regional landowners as war lords.
- Han dynasty dissolved into regions ruled by war lords.
Decline of Confucianism  
(not in your notes but you could add key points in the margin if you need to)

- During Han dynasty, elites and intellectuals embraced Confucian traditions.
- Confucian traditions were believed to ensure social order and stability.
- With collapse of Han dynasty and disintegration of China into warring states, interest in Confucianism lessened.
Sui

589-618 CE

- After the Han dynasty, turmoil lasted for more than 350 years
- Reunification by **Yang Jian** in 589
- The rule of the Sui - lasted only 30 years but it re-established centralized rule in China
  - Construction of palaces and granaries; repairing the **Great Wall**
  - **Military** expeditions in central Asia and Korea
  - High **taxes** and compulsory **labor** services
Sui

The **Grand Canal** integrated economies of north and south
Sui (add to your notes!)

- Established power using legalistic means similar to those of Qin Shihuangdi.
- Strong central government, harsh rules, forced labor.
The Fall of the Sui Dynasty

- High taxes and forced labor generated **hostility** among the people.
- Military reverses in **Korea**
- **Rebellions** broke out in north China beginning in 610.
- Sui Yangdi was **assassinated** in 618, the end of the dynasty.
During the era of the Sui Dynasty, artists combined what they learned from the West Asians and Indians with a traditional Chinese style to create an entirely new form of art.

This form of art was used all throughout China, as if to symbolize that the people were all under one ruler again.

The Sui Dynasty sculptures were much more lively and active than previous dynasties, and by the time the Tang dynasty came around, these figures were developed even further.
Sui Art
Buddhism was a very important part of Chinese life during the Sui dynasty, as is evident in a lot of Sui art like the one above. The image is of an early incarnation of the Buddha. Buddhism was spread throughout the empire, and encouraged. Buddhism was a main factor in uniting the varied peoples and cultures of China after four centuries of division between rival regimes.
The Tang Dynasty was one of the most glorious periods in the history of China. It was the largest, wealthiest, most populous empire in the world at its height.
Tang Dynasty

Tang Taizong (627-649)

- A rebel leader seized Chang'an and proclaimed a new dynasty, the Tang
- Tang Taizong, the second Tang emperor; ruthless but extremely competent
- Era of unusual stability and prosperity
- Conquered central Asia to the eastern border of Bactria (present-day Afghanistan)
- Strengthened the Great Wall for protection
Tang Dynasty

- Extensive networks of **transportation** and **communications**
- Equal-field system--land allotted according to needs, only **1/5** was hereditary
- Bureaucracy of merit through **civil service** exams

This is important to know!!!!
Political theory: China was the Middle Kingdom, or the center of civilization.

Tributary system became diplomatic policy.

(Add the following in the margin…)

Neighbors recognized Chinese emperors as overlords.

Paid tribute in form of gifts

Kowtow: ritual prostration before emperor.

Chinese gave gifts and recognition in return.

Trade and cultural exchanges as well as diplomatic contacts.

This is important to know!!!!
Tang Decline

- Casual and careless leadership led to dynastic crisis
- Rebellion of An Lushan in 755 weakened the dynasty
- The Uighurs (nomadic Turkish people) became de facto rulers
- The equal-field system deteriorated
- A large-scale peasant rebellion led by Huang Chao lasted from 875 to 884
- Regional military commanders gained power and were beyond control of the emperor
- The last Tang emperor abdicated his throne in 907
Achievements of the Tang

- Trade and travel along the Silk Roads was protected.
- Contacts with Islamic peoples increased.
- Ocean-going ships were improved, increasing interest in ocean trade.
- Chinese junks were among the world’s best ships and Chinese merchants dominated trade in the Indian Ocean.
- Paper money was introduced in China.
- Letters of credit, or flying money, facilitated long-distance trade.
Achievements of the Tang

- Urban areas grew in size.
- Canals and irrigation systems increased agricultural **productivity**.
- Large estates were broken up and land **redistributed**.
- **Gunpowder** was invented.
- Short stories and poetry were popular.
- Tea and fast-growing rice were imported from **Vietnam**
- **Population** growth in the rice-growing south surpassed that of the millet-growing north.
The Tang Dynasty’s capital city of Chang’an was one of the great cultural centers of the world. Art, poetry, scholarly thought, merchants, and government and religious leaders flourished there.
Tang Art
What to Remember

• The Sui Dynasty was short-lived but important because it unified China and paved the way for the Tang Dynasty.
• The Tang Dynasty was one of the most glorious periods in Chinese history. Culture flourished, government was well organized, and the country was unified.
Song Taizu (r. 960-976)
(not in your notes – add in the margin if you want to)

- Junior military officer of one of the most powerful war lords in China.
- Song had a reputation for honesty and effectiveness.
- In 960 his troops proclaimed him emperor.
- Song and his troops subdued the other war lords.
Song Dynasty
(not in your notes)

- 960-1279 CE
- Did not develop into a powerful state or a military state.
- Emperors kept military in a subordinate position.
- Focused on civil administration, industry, education, and the arts instead of military.
- Created a large bureaucracy based on merit and reward
Song Dynasty

- Many Chinese traditions were **strengthened**
  - Civil service exams were emphasized as a prerequisite for government posts.
  - Greater **prestige** was granted to the scholar-gentry
  - Neo-Confucianism arose as a blend of Confucian and Buddhist values
Song Weaknesses

- **Financial** problems: enormous bureaucracy and high salary devoured surplus
- **Military** problems: civil bureaucrats in charge of military forces
- External pressures: semi-nomadic Khitan and nomadic Jurchen
  - Unable to control the Khitan and had to pay tribute to the Khitan to keep them from conquering additional territory
  - The Khitan were overthrown by the Jurchen who forced the Song to retreat southward
- The Song moved to the south, ruled south China until 1279
Achievements of the Song

- Overseas trade begun the Tang continued.
- Artists expressed themselves through landscape paintings.
- Warfare saw the use of catapults to hurl bombs and grenades. Armies and ships used flame-throwers and rocket launchers.
- Printing with movable type was developed.
- Compasses were used in ocean navigation.
- The abacus was developed to aid counting and the recording of taxes.
- The practice of footbinding spread among the elite classes. Later, lower classes would often adopt the custom as well.
- The concept of the patriarchal family intensified.
Economic Development of Tang and Song periods
Agricultural Development

- Fast-ripening rice increased food supplies
- New agricultural techniques increased production
- Population growth: 45 to 115 million between 600 and 1200 C.E.
- Urbanization
- Commercialized agriculture; some regions depended on other regions for food
Ancestor worship became more elaborate (*strengthened the family identity*)

Foot binding gained popularity

- Designed to enhance a girl’s attractiveness, display their high social standing, and gain control of their behavior (only the privileged classes)

*Footbinding Memories*
Footbinding
Technological and Industrial Development

- **Porcelain** (chinaware) diffused rapidly
- **Metallurgy** increased ten times from ninth to twelfth centuries
- **Gunpowder** was used in primitive weapons and diffused through Eurasia
- **Printing** developed from wood block to movable type = *cheap, high-volume readily available texts*
- Naval technology: "south-pointing needle"--the **magnetic compass**
The Emergence of a Market Economy

- **Financial** instruments: "flying cash" (letters of credit) and paper money
  - Promoted commercial interactions when currency ran short
  - Government had to step in to manage credit and the production of paper money due to disorder and riots

- A cosmopolitan society: communities of **foreign** merchants in large cities

- Economic surge in China promoted economic growth in the eastern hemisphere
Social aspects of Tang and Song periods
Populations Expansion

- Increased food supply resulted in rapid rise in population.
- Growth of cities
- Chang’an believed to be the world’s largest city with estimated population of two million during Tang dynasty.
- By Song Dynasty, China was the most urbanized area in the world.
Li Bai

- Most popular poet of the Tang era
- Wrote about Chinese cities; celebrated life, friendship and wine
Below is one of Li Bai's most famous works, *Waking From Drunkenness on a Spring Day* (translated by Arthur Waley)

处世若大梦, *Life in the World is but a big dream;*
胡为劳其生. *I will not spoil it by any labour or care.*
所以终日醉, *So saying, I was drunk all the day,*
颓然卧前楹. *Lying helpless at the porch in front of my door.*

觉来盼庭前, *When I woke up, I blinked at the garden-lawn;*
一鸟花间鸣. *A lonely bird was singing amid the flowers.*
借问此何时, *I asked myself, had the day been wet or fine?*
春风语流莺. *The Spring wind was telling the mango-bird.*

感之欲叹息, *Moved by its song I soon began to sigh,*
对酒还自倾. *And as wine was there I filled my own cup.*
浩歌待明月, *Wildly singing I waited for the moon to rise;*
曲尽已忘情. *When my song was over, all my senses had gone.*
Economy

- Abundant food supply allowed division of labor.
- Specialization in technological areas
- Improved existing technologies and invented new products.
- Farmers shifted to commercial market-oriented cultivation
Cultural Change in Tang and Song China

- Sects honoring family ancestors.
- Legalist, Confucian, Daoist philosophies.
- Confucianism had declined with collapse of Han dynasty, but saw a comeback during this period.
Establishment of Buddhism

Foreign religions: Nestorian Christians, Manichaeans, Zoroastrians, Muslim communities

Dunhuang, city on Silk Road, transmits Mahayana Buddhism to China

Buddhism in China
- Attraction: moral standards, intellectual sophistication, and salvation
- Monasteries became large landowners, helped the poor and needy
- Also posed a challenge to Chinese cultural tradition
Establishment of Buddhism

Buddhism and Daoism
- Chinese monks explained Buddhist concepts in Daoist vocabulary
  - *Dharma* as *dao*, and *nirvana* as *wuwei*
  - Teaching: one son in monastery would benefit whole family for ten generations

Chan Buddhism
- A syncretic faith: Buddhism with Chinese characteristics
- Chan (or Zen in Japanese) was a popular Buddhist sect
Establishment of Buddhism

- Hostility to Buddhism from the Daoists and Confucians
- Persecution; it survived because of popularity
  - Emperor Wuzang of Tang (840-846) suppressed all foreign religions, including Buddhism and Christianity, which declined sharply in China.
Neo-Confucianism

- Buddhist influence on Confucianism
  - Early Confucianism focused on practical issues of politics and morality
  - Confucians began to draw inspiration from Buddhism in areas of logic and metaphysics
- Zhu Xi (1130-1200 C.E.), the most prominent neo-Confucian scholar
  - Added a metaphysical dimension to Confucianism
  - Supported by Song Dynasty
Assyrian Church

*(add to your notes)*

- Adopted a version of Nestorianism, a form of early Christianity that was rejected by the Byzantine church.
- Assyrian Church believed that Christ had two separate essences: human and divine.
- Brought to China in 635 by missionaries.
- This was the first form of Christianity to be introduced to China.
Criticisms
(add to your notes)

- Confucians felt Buddhism was too abstract and impersonal
- They also disliked Buddhist emphasis on celibacy and monastic lifestyle
- Daoists did not like the reliance on religious texts and the ideal of striving for perfection by living an ascetic lifestyle
- Support for Buddhism took away sources of funding for Daoism.
- Buddhism seen as a superstition
- Monasteries seen as leeches upon society.
Buddhism Adaptations

*(add to your notes)*

- Use Daoist terms to express Buddhist concepts:
  - Dharma (teachings of the Buddha) is called dao “the way”
- Recognized validity of Chinese family life.
- Provided a means for Chinese families to gain religious merit: supporting monks and giving one son to monastery.
- For one son to become a monk would guarantee salvation for ten generations of his family.
Chinese influences in Korea are traced back as far as the fourth century B.C. Chinese settlers moved in to the peninsula in the latter part of the Han dynasty which also brought Buddhism into the region. Chinese writing was modified and Confucian classics were read by Korean scholars.

The Silla dynasty of Korea (669-935 C.E.)

- Tang armies conquered much of Korea; the Silla dynasty organized resistance
- Korea entered into a tributary relationship with China (kowtow – ritual bow to the Chinese emperor)
Korea

China's influence in Korea

- Tributary embassies included Korean royal officials and scholars
- Used the Chinese civil service exam
- Tribute payments allowed them to participate in the Chinese trade network and educational systems
- Koreans modified Chinese porcelain to produce celadon bowls with a characteristic pale green color
- The Silla kings built a new capital at Kumsong modeled on the Tang capital
- Korean elite turned to neo-Confucianism; peasants turned to Chan Buddhism
Korea

- Difference between Korea and China: aristocracy and royal houses dominated Korea
- Mongol invasion of Korea interfered with cultural contacts for a period of time in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries
Vietnam

- Viet people adopted Chinese agriculture, schools, and thought under the Han dynasty
- Tributary relationship with China
- When Tang fell, Vietnam gained independence
Differences Between China and Vietnam

- Had a different spoken language
- Lived in villages rather than establishing large urban areas
- Based their society on the nuclear family
- Many Vietnamese retained their religious traditions
- Women played more prominent roles in Vietnam than in China
Vietnam

- Chinese influence in Vietnam: bureaucracy, Buddhism, veneration of ancestors, extended family structure
- Staged rebellions against Chinese rule and gained independence in 939
Japan

Nara Japan (710-794 C.E.)

- The earliest inhabitants of Japan were nomadic peoples from northeast Asia
- Ruled by several dozen states by the middle of the first millennium C.E.
- Inspired by the Tang example, one clan claimed imperial authority over others
- Adopted Chinese written characters
- Built a new capital (Nara) in 710 C.E., modeled on Chang'an
- Adopted Confucianism and Buddhism, but maintained their Shinto rites (traditional Japanese belief system that revered spirits of nature and of ancestors)
- Aristocratic rebellion against Chinese traditions led to the restoration of the elite classes and the establishment of large estates
Japan

Heian Japan (794-1185 C.E.)
- Moved to new capital, Heian (modern Kyoto), in 794
- Japanese emperors as ceremonial figureheads and symbols of authority
- Effective power in the hands of the Fujiwara family – power of local lords in the countryside increased
- Emperor did not rule, which explains the longevity of the imperial house
- Construction of fortresses protected by earthen walks and ditches
- Chinese learning dominated Japanese education and political thought
Japan

The Tale of Genji was written by a woman, Murasaki Shikibu

Decline of Heian Japan
- The equal-field system began to fail
- Aristocratic clans accumulated most land
- Taira and Minamoto, the two most powerful clans, engaged in wars
- Clan leader of Minamoto claimed title shogun, military governor; ruled in Kamakura
Medieval Japan

- Kamakura (1185-1333 C.E.) and Muromachi (1336-1573 C.E.) periods
- The small states were led by bushi, who not only administered their territories but also maintained their own military
- The samurai
  - Professional warriors of provincial lords
  - Valued loyalty, military talent, and discipline
  - Observed samurai code called *bushido*
  - To preserve their honor, engaged in ritual suicide called *seppuku* (used by defeated or disgraced warriors to maintain family and personal honor)
Medieval Japan

- The rise of the samurai gradually moved Japan toward a style of feudalism similar to Western Europe during this time
  - Japanese peasants gradually became serfs bound to the land and considered property of the local lord
  - Gempei Wars (late twelfth century) – conflicts between the peasants and the samurai
    - Japanese countryside was destroyed
    - The Minamoto family established the bakufu, or military government
    - As imperial government broke down, the Japanese increasingly distanced themselves from Chinese Confucian ways