Chapter 12

China in the Middle Ages

Imperial Palace at the Forbidden City

When & Who?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A.D. 600</th>
<th>A.D. 900</th>
<th>1200</th>
<th>1500</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.D. 581 Wendi founds Sui dynasty</td>
<td>A.D. 868 Chinese print world’s first book</td>
<td>1206 Genghis Khan unites the Mongols</td>
<td>1405 Zheng He begins overseas voyage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Preview

Like the Arabs, the Chinese were interested in science and technology. Read this chapter to learn about Chinese inventions and how they influence your life today.

View the Chapter 12 video in the World History: Journey Across Time Video Program.

Section 1

China Reunites
During the Middle Ages, Chinese rulers brought peace, order, and growth to China. Buddhism became a major religion in China, but the Chinese government supported Confucian ideas.

Section 2

Chinese Society
Farming and trade brought wealth to China. The Chinese developed new technology and enjoyed a golden age of art and writing.

Section 3

The Mongols in China
Led by Genghis Khan, the Mongols built a vast empire. Under his son, Kublai Khan, they went on to conquer China as well.

Section 4

The Ming Dynasty
China’s Ming rulers strengthened government and brought peace and prosperity. They supported trading voyages to other parts of Asia and to East Africa.

Foldables Study Organizer

Categorizing Information Make this foldable to help you organize your notes about China in the Middle Ages.

Step 1 Fold a sheet of paper in half from side to side, leaving \( \frac{1}{2} \) inch tab along the side.

Step 2 Turn the paper and fold it into fourths.

Step 3 Unfold and cut along the top three fold lines.

Step 4 Label as shown.

Reading and Writing
As you read the chapter, identify the main ideas in the chapter. Write these under the appropriate tab.
1 Learn It!

Reading Between the Lines

To infer means to evaluate information and arrive at a conclusion. When you make inferences, you “read between the lines,” or draw conclusions that are not stated directly in the text. We naturally make inferences about things we read, see, and hear every day.

Read this paragraph from Section 3.

Genghis Khan gathered an army of more than 100,000 warriors. He placed his soldiers into well-trained groups. Commanding them were officers chosen for their abilities, not for their family ties. These changes made the Mongols the most skilled fighting force in the world at that time.

—from page 425

Use this Think-Through chart to help you make inferences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Inference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genghis Khan</td>
<td>Who was he?</td>
<td>A powerful leader?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The army had 100,000 warriors</td>
<td>Why did he need so many warriors?</td>
<td>To take over another country or to defend his own?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officers not chosen for family ties</td>
<td>Why did Genghis Khan want officers without strong family ties?</td>
<td>So they would not worry about their families to better concentrate on battle?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongols</td>
<td>Who were they?</td>
<td>Genghis Khan’s countrymen? People from Mongolia?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sometimes you make inferences by asking yourself questions or making predictions about what is going to come next.
Making Inferences

Read the next paragraph, also about Genghis Khan’s warriors, and pay attention to highlighted words as you make inferences.

Genghis Khan began building his empire by conquering other people on the steppes. These victories brought him wealth and new soldiers to fill the army. Soon the Mongols were strong enough to attack major civilizations. In 1211 Mongol forces turned east and invaded China. Within three years, they had taken all of northern China. They then moved west and struck at the cities and kingdoms that controlled parts of the Silk Road.

—from pages 425–426

Create your own Think-Through Chart to help you make further inferences about Genghis Khan’s army. You might want to use the highlighted words in your first column and label it Text. Your second and third columns can be labeled Questions and Inference. Read the rest of page 426 to see if your inferences were correct.

We also make inferences about other types of text, such as poetry. Read the poems on pages 420–421, and create a Think-Through chart to help understand the poems.
What's the Connection?

Earlier you read that the Han dynasty of China collapsed and China plunged into civil war. As you will read, China eventually reunited. The new dynasties took Chinese civilization to even higher levels.

Focusing on the Main Ideas

• The Sui and Tang dynasties reunited and rebuilt China after years of war. (page 409)
• Buddhism became popular in China and spread to Korea and Japan. (page 412)
• The Tang dynasty returned to the ideas of Confucius and created a new class of scholar-officials. (page 413)

Locating Places

Korea (kuh REE uh)
Japan (juh PAN)

Meeting People

Wendi (WHEHN DEE)
Empress Wu (WOO)

Building Your Vocabulary

warlord economy (ih KA nuh mee)
reform monastery (MAH nuh STEHR ee)

Reading Strategy

Categorizing Information Complete a table like the one below to show the time periods, the most important rulers, and the reasons for the decline of the Sui and Tang dynasties.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Sui</th>
<th>Tang</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Important Rulers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons for Decline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A.D. 500

• Wendi founds Sui dynasty

A.D. 581

A.D. 900

• Tang dynasty falls

A.D. 907

1300

• Mongols end Song rule
Rebuilding China’s Empire

Main Idea The Sui and Tang dynasties reunited and rebuilt China after years of war.

Reading Focus Have you ever thought about how the economy in your town or city works? How do goods get to your local stores? Who makes sure roads are paved? Read to learn how China dealt with these issues.

Earlier you read that China’s Han empire ended in A.D. 220. For the next 300 years, China had no central government. It broke into 17 kingdoms. War and poverty were everywhere. Chinese warlords—military leaders who run a government—fought with each other while nomads conquered parts of northern China.

While China was absorbed in its own problems, it lost control of some of the groups it had conquered. One of these groups was the people of Korea (kuh•REE•uh). They lived on the Korean Peninsula to the northeast of China. The Koreans decided to end Chinese rule of their country. They broke away and built their own separate civilization.

The Sui Dynasty Reunites China China finally reunited in A.D. 581. In that year, a general who called himself Wendi (WHEHN•DEE) declared himself emperor. Wendi won battle after battle and finally reunited China. He then founded a new dynasty called the Sui (SWEE).
After Wendi died, his son Yangdi (YAHNG•DEE) took the Chinese throne. Yangdi wanted to expand China’s territory. He sent an army to fight the neighboring Koreans, but the Chinese were badly defeated. At home, Yangdi took on many ambitious building projects. For example, the Great Wall had fallen into ruins, and Yangdi had it rebuilt.

Yangdi’s greatest effort went into building the Grand Canal. This system of waterways linked the Chang Jiang (Yangtze River) and Huang He (Yellow River). The Grand Canal became an important route for shipping products between northern and southern China. It helped unite China’s economy. An economy (ih•KAH•nuh•mee) is an organized way in which people produce, sell, and buy things.

THEM Opening the Grand Canal boosted Imperial China’s economy and made it much cheaper and faster to ship food and goods north and south. It also cost many laborers their lives. In addition, the canal system often flooded, drowning many people and animals and destroying crops.

NOW In 1994 China began building the Three Gorges Dam on the Chang Jiang. The dam will control flooding and produce electricity. Building it, however, requires many areas to be flooded. Millions of people have had to move, and much farmland will be lost. What have construction projects changed in your state?
Yangdi rebuilt China, but he did it by placing hardships on the Chinese people. Farmers were forced to work on the Great Wall and the Grand Canal. They also had to pay high taxes to the government for these projects. Finally, the farmers became so angry that they revolted. The army took control and killed Yangdi. With Yangdi gone, the Sui dynasty came to an end.

The Tang Dynasty In A.D. 618 one of Yangdi’s generals took over China. He made himself emperor and set up a new dynasty called the Tang (TAHNG). Unlike the short-lived Sui, the Tang dynasty was in power for about 300 years—from A.D. 618 to A.D. 907. The Tang capital at Changan became a magnificent city, with about one million people living there.

Tang rulers worked to strengthen China’s government. They carried out a number of reforms, or changes that brought improvements. The most powerful Tang emperor was named Taizong (TY•ZAWNG). He restored the civil service exam system. Government officials were once again hired based on how well they did on exams rather than on their family connections. Taizong also gave land to farmers and brought order to the countryside.

During the late A.D. 600s, a woman named Wu ruled China as empress. She was the only woman in Chinese history to rule the country on her own. A forceful leader, Empress Wu (WOO) added more officials to the government. She also strengthened China’s military forces.

Under the Tang, China regained much of its power in Asia and expanded the areas under its control. Tang armies pushed west into central Asia, invaded Tibet, and took control of the Silk Road. They marched into Korea and forced the Korean kingdoms to pay tribute, a special kind of tax that one country pays to another to be left alone. The Tang also moved south and took control of northern Vietnam.

By the mid-A.D. 700s, however, the Tang dynasty began to have problems. A new group of nomads—the Turks that you read about earlier—drove the Tang armies out of central Asia and took control of the Silk Road. This damaged China’s economy. Revolts in Tibet and among Chinese farmers at home further weakened the Tang. In A.D. 907 all of this disorder brought down the Tang dynasty.

The Song Dynasty For about 50 years after the fall of the Tang, military leaders ruled China. Then, in A.D. 960, one of the generals declared himself emperor and set up the Song (SOONG) dynasty.
The Song dynasty ruled from A.D. 960 to 1279. This period was a time of prosperity and cultural achievement for China. From the start, however, the Song faced problems that threatened their hold on China. Song rulers did not have enough soldiers to control their large empire. Tibet broke away, and nomads took over much of northern China. For safety, the Song moved their capital farther south to the city of Hangzhou (HAHNG JOH). Hangzhou was on the coast near the Chang Jiang delta.

Buddhism Spreads to China

Main Idea  Buddhism became popular in China and spread to Korea and Japan.

Reading Focus  Where do you turn when you are having problems? Read to learn why many Chinese turned to Buddhism when China was in trouble.

Earlier you learned that traders and missionaries from India brought Buddhism to China in about A.D. 150. At the time, the Han dynasty was already weak. Soon afterward, China collapsed into civil war. People everywhere were dying from war and a lack of food and shelter. It was a time of great suffering. Because Buddhism taught that people could escape their suffering, many Chinese seeking peace and comfort became Buddhists.

Chinese Buddhism  Early Tang rulers were not Buddhists, but they allowed Buddhism to be practiced in China. They even...

City Life in Tang China

Under the Tang, China grew and was prosperous. Tang cities could be large, with many activities occurring within the city's walls. A city contained many shops and temples. The homes of rich families often had two or three floors. When did the Tang rule China?
supported the building of Buddhist temples. Many Chinese Buddhists became monks and nuns. They lived in places called monasteries (MAH•nuh•STEHR•eez), where they meditated and worshiped.

Buddhist temples and monasteries provided services for people. They ran schools and provided rooms and food for travelers. Buddhist monks served as bankers and provided medical care.

Not all Chinese people liked Buddhism, however. Many thought that it was wrong for the Buddhist temples and monasteries to accept donations. Others believed that monks and nuns weakened respect for family life because they were not allowed to marry.

In the early A.D. 800s, Tang officials feared Buddhism’s growing power. They saw Buddhism as an enemy of China’s traditions. In A.D. 845 the Tang had many Buddhist monasteries and temples destroyed. Buddhism in China never fully recovered.

**Chinese Buddhism Spreads East** As you read earlier, Korea broke free of China when the Han dynasty fell in A.D. 220. For several hundred years after, Korea was divided into three independent kingdoms.

In the A.D. 300s, Chinese Buddhists brought their religion to Korea. About A.D. 660, the Koreans united to form one country. After that, with government support, Buddhism grew even stronger in Korea.

Buddhism later spread to the nearby islands of Japan (juh•PAN). According to legend, one of Korea’s kings wrote to Japan’s emperor. The letter contained a statue of the Buddha and Buddhist writings. “This religion is the most excellent of all teachings,” the king wrote. As time passed, Buddhism won many followers in Japan as well.

**New Confucian Ideas**

**Main Idea** The Tang dynasty returned to the ideas of Confucius and created a new class of scholar-officials.

**Reading Focus** Have you ever seen someone get a reward that he or she did not earn? Read to learn how China’s rulers tried to avoid this problem when hiring government officials.

You have already read about Confucius and his teachings. Confucius and his followers believed that a good government depended on having wise leaders. The civil service examinations introduced by Han

**Primary Source** Defending Confucianism

Han Yü (A.D. 768 to A.D. 824) encouraged the Chinese people to remain faithful to Confucianism.

“What were the teachings of our ancient kings? Universal love is called humanity. To practice this in the proper manner is called righteousness. To proceed according to these is called the Way. . . . They offered sacrifices to Heaven and the gods came to receive them . . . . What Way is this? I say: This is what I call the Way, and not what the Taoists [Daoists] and the Buddhists called the Way . . . .”

—Han Yü, “An Inquiry on The Way” (Tao)

**DBQ Document-Based Question**

Why does Han Yü think Confucianism should be followed?
rulers were a product of Confucian ideas. They were supposed to recruit talented government officials.

After the fall of the Han dynasty, no national government existed to give civil service examinations. Confucianism lost much support, and Buddhism with its spiritual message won many followers. Tang and Song rulers, however, brought Confucianism back into favor.

**What Is Neo-Confucianism?** The Tang dynasty gave its support to a new kind of Confucianism called neo-Confucianism. This new Confucianism was created, in part, to reduce Buddhism’s popularity. It taught that life in this world was just as important as the afterlife. Followers were expected to take part in life and help others.

Although it criticized Buddhist ideas, this new form of Confucianism also picked up some Buddhist and Daoist beliefs. For many Chinese, Confucianism became more than a system of rules for being good. It became a religion with beliefs about the spiritual world. Confucian thinkers taught that if people followed Confucius’s teachings, they would find peace of mind and live in harmony with nature.

The Song dynasty, which followed the Tang, also supported neo-Confucianism. The Song even adopted it as their official philosophy, or belief system.

**Scholar-Officials** Neo-Confucianism also became a way to strengthen the government. Both Tang and Song rulers used civil service examinations to hire officials. In doing so, they based the bureaucracy on a merit system. Under a merit system, people are accepted for what they can do and not on their riches or personal contacts.
The examinations tested job seekers on their knowledge of Confucian writings. To pass, it was necessary to write with style as well as understanding. The tests were supposed to be fair, but only men were allowed to take the tests. Also, only rich people had the money that was needed to help their sons study for the tests.

Passing the tests was very difficult. However, parents did all they could to prepare their sons. At the age of four, boys started learning to write the characters of the Chinese language. Later, students had to memorize all of Confucius’s writings. If a student recited the passages poorly, he could expect to be hit by his teacher.

After many years of study, the boys took their examinations. Despite all the preparation, only one in five passed. Those who failed usually found jobs helping officials or teaching others. However, they would never be given a government job.

Over the years, the examination system created a new wealthy class in China. This group was made up of scholar-officials. Strict rules set the scholar-officials apart from society. One rule was that they could not do physical work. Students preparing for the tests were taught never to use their hands except for painting or writing.

Describe How did Confucianism change in China?