

CHAPTER 14: THE RESURGENCE OF EMPIRE IN EAST ASIA

After 350 years of being separate states, China was unified again under Yang Jian at the start of the Sui Dynasty. The achievements of the Sui included the building of granaries (for food storage), the repair of the Great Wall, military expeditions into central Asia and Korea, and the building of the Grand Canal, a very significant project at this time. These advancements took money, and the taxes that the Sui imposed soon made the population very unhappy. High taxes and military defeats in Korea led to rebellions beginning in north China in 610 C.E. and ending in the assassination of the last Sui emperor in 618 C.E..

One of the rebel leaders who helped overthrow the Sui seized power and started the Tang dynasty (618-907 C.E.). The dynasty was cemented by the second Tang emperor, Tang Taizong, who was a ruthless ruler who issued in a long era of stability and prosperity. The Tang created extensive transportation networks, instituted land reform, and created an efficient bureaucracy using the civil service examination system. Like the earlier dynasties, the Tang began to lose control due to the actions of bad leaders. This led to rebellions and the fragmentation of China. The last Tang emperor abdicated in 907.

In 960 Song Taizu gained control and began the Song dynasty which lasted for 300 years until 1279 when the Song fell to the Mongols.

The new agricultural techniques used by both the Tang and the Song produced more food and led to growth in population and cities. There was also a growth in industry, especially ceramics and metallurgy, as well as the appearance of both printing and new naval technology. These advancements led to a market economy with a banking system and paper money that put China in the center of economic growth in East Asia.

Along with products, the trade network brought different religions to China, notably Buddhism, which was attractive to many Chinese. It was highly moral and intellectual and fit with other religious thinking in China. Buddhism also influenced political thinking by combining with Confucianism to form Neo-Confucianism.

The influence of China spread across east and Southeast Asia in different ways. China's conquest of the Silla dynasty in Korea brings resistance but also Buddhism to Korea. The Viet people adopted Chinese agriculture, education, scholarship, government structure, and Buddhism.

China also influenced Japan, the other major eastern empire discussed in this chapter. Japan was first inhabited by nomadic people, but by 500 C.E. it was divided into a number of small states. One of the ruling clans followed the example of the Tang Dynasty in China. In what is known as the Nara period (710-794 C.E.), it claimed imperial authority over Japan and adopted both Buddhism and Confucianism, but also kept the native Shinto religion. The Heian Period (794-1185 C.E.) followed, marking the start of an era wherein the emperor is only a figurehead, with real authority held by a major clan. It is during the following periods, Kamakura (1185-1333 C.E.) and the Muromachi (1336-1573), that we see the growth of the samurai class and their influence on Japan.

Overview

After the fall of the Han dynasty, more than 350 years of disruption plagued China. Toward the end of the sixth century, centralized imperial rule returned to China and persisted for almost 700 years under the Sui, Tang, and Song dynasties (589-1279 C.E.). This period witnessed unprecedented economic prosperity for China. In addition, China, as the "Middle Kingdom," made its influence felt

throughout the surrounding territories, creating a larger east Asian society centered on China. This period of East Asian history is characterized by the following:

- Rapid economic development because of more advanced agricultural practices, technological and industrial innovations, and participation in sophisticated trade networks throughout east Asia and including the revived silk roads
- The spread of Buddhism beyond its place of origin in India until it became the most popular religious faith in all of east Asia
- The profound influence of Chinese social organization and economic dynamism on the surrounding cultures of Korea, Vietnam, Japan, and central Asia

Chapter Outline

I The restoration of centralized imperial rule in China

A The Sui dynasty (589-618 C.E.)

- 1 After the Han dynasty, turmoil lasted for more than 350 years
- 2 Reunification by Yang Jian in 589
- 3 The rule of the Sui
 - a Construction of palaces and granaries; repairing the Great Wall
 - b Military expeditions in central Asia and Korea
 - c High taxes and compulsory labor services
- 4 The Grand Canal integrated economies of north and south
- 5 The fall of the Sui
 - a High taxes and forced labor generated hostility among the people
 - b Military reverses in Korea
 - c Rebellions broke out in north China beginning in 610
 - d Sui Yangdi was assassinated in 618, the end of the dynasty

B The Tang dynasty (618-907 C.E.)

- 1 Tang Taizong (627-649)
 - a A rebel leader seized Chang'an and proclaimed a new dynasty, the Tang
 - b Tang Taizong, the second Tang emperor; ruthless but extremely competent
 - c era of unusual stability and prosperity
- 2 Extensive networks of transportation and communications
- 3 Equal-field system--land allotted according to needs
- 4 Bureaucracy of merit through civil service exams
- 5 Foreign relations
 - a Political theory: China was the Middle Kingdom, or the center of civilization
 - b Tributary system became diplomatic policy
- 6 Tang decline
 - a Casual and careless leadership led to dynastic crisis
 - b Rebellion of An Lushan in 755 weakened the dynasty
 - c The Uighurs became de facto rulers
 - d The equal-field system deteriorated
 - e A large-scale peasant rebellion led by Huang Chao lasted from 875 to 884

- f Regional military commanders gained power and were beyond control of the emperor
 - g The last Tang emperor abdicated his throne in 907
 - C The Song dynasty (960-1279 C.E.)
 - 1 Song Taizu (reigned 960-976 C.E.) was the founder
 - 2 Song weaknesses
 - a Financial problems: enormous bureaucracy and high salary devoured surplus
 - b Military problems: civil bureaucrats in charge of military forces
 - c External pressures: semi nomadic Khitan and nomadic Jurchen
 - d The Song moved to the south, ruled south China until 1279

II The economic development of Tang and Song China

- A Agricultural development
 - 1 Fast-ripening rice increased food supplies
 - 2 New agricultural techniques increased production
 - 3 Population growth: 45 to 115 million between 600 and 1200 C.E.
 - 4 Urbanization
 - 5 Commercialized agriculture; some regions depended on other regions for food
 - 6 Patriarchal social structure
 - a Ancestor worship became more elaborate
 - b Foot binding gained popularity
- B Technological and industrial development
 - 1 Porcelain (chinaware) diffused rapidly
 - 2 Metallurgy increased ten times from ninth to twelfth centuries
 - 3 Gunpowder was used in primitive weapons and diffused through Eurasia
 - 4 Printing developed from wood block to movable type
 - 5 Naval technology: "south-pointing needle"--the magnetic compass
- C The emergence of a market economy
 - 1 Financial instruments: "flying cash" (letters of credit) and paper money
 - 2 A cosmopolitan society: communities of foreign merchants in large cities
 - 3 Economic surge in China promoted economic growth in the eastern hemisphere

III Cultural change in Tang and Song China

- A Establishment of Buddhism
 - 1 Foreign religions: Nestorians, Manichaeans, Zoroastrians, Muslim communities
 - 2 Dunhuang, city on silk road, transmits Mahayana Buddhism to China

- 3 Buddhism in China
 - a Attraction: moral standards, intellectual sophistication, and salvation
 - b Monasteries became large landowners, helped the poor and needy
 - c Also posed a challenge to Chinese cultural tradition
- 4 Buddhism and Daoism
 - a Chinese monks explained Buddhist concepts in Daoist vocabulary
 - b Dharma as dao, and nirvana as wuwei
 - c Teaching: one son in monastery would benefit whole family for ten generations
- 5 Chan Buddhism
 - a A syncretic faith: Buddhism with Chinese characteristics
 - b Chan (or Zen in Japanese) was a popular Buddhist sect
- 6 Hostility to Buddhism from the Daoists and Confucians
- 7 Persecution; it survived because of popularity
- B Neo-Confucianism
 - 1 Buddhist influence on Confucianism
 - a Early Confucianism focused on practical issues of politics and morality
 - b Confucians began to draw inspiration from Buddhism in areas of logic and metaphysics
 - 2 Zhu Xi (1130-1200 C.E.), the most prominent neo-Confucian scholar

IV Chinese influence in East Asia

- A Korea and Vietnam
 - 1 The Silla dynasty of Korea (669-935 C.E.)
 - a Tang armies conquered much of Korea; the Silla dynasty organized resistance
 - b Korea entered into a tributary relationship with China
 - 2 China's influence in Korea
 - a Tributary embassies included Korean royal officials and scholars
 - b The Silla kings built a new capital at Kumsong modeled on the Tang capital
 - c Korean elite turned to neo-Confucianism; peasants turned to Chan Buddhism
 - 3 Difference between Korea and China: aristocracy and royal houses dominated Korea
 - 4 China and Vietnam
 - a Viet people adopted Chinese agriculture, schools, and thought
 - b Tributary relationship with China
 - c When Tang fell, Vietnam gained independence
 - 5 Difference between Vietnam and China
 - a Many Vietnamese retained their religious traditions
 - b Women played more prominent roles in Vietnam

than in China

- 6 Chinese influence in Vietnam: bureaucracy and Buddhism
- B Early Japan
 - 1 Nara Japan (710-794 C.E.)
 - a The earliest inhabitants of Japan were nomadic peoples from northeast Asia
 - b Ruled by several dozen states by the middle of the first millennium C.E.
 - c Inspired by the Tang example, one clan claimed imperial authority over others
 - d Built a new capital (Nara) in 710 C.E., modeled on Chang'an
 - e Adopted Confucianism and Buddhism, but maintained their Shinto rites
 - 2 Heian Japan (794-1185 C.E.)
 - a Moved to new capital, Heian (modern Kyoto), in 794
 - b Japanese emperors as ceremonial figureheads and symbols of authority
 - c Effective power in the hands of the Fujiwara family
 - d Emperor did not rule, which explains the longevity of the imperial house
 - e Chinese learning dominated Japanese education and political thought
 - 3 The Tale of Genji was written by a woman, Murasaki Shikibu
 - 4 Decline of Heian Japan
 - a The equal-field system began to fail
 - b Aristocratic clans accumulated most land
 - c Taira and Minamoto, the two most powerful clans, engaged in wars
 - d Clan leader of Minamoto claimed title shogun, military governor; ruled in Kamakura
- C Medieval Japan was a period of decentralization
 - 1 Kamakura (1185-1333 C.E.) and Muromachi (1336-1573 C.E.) periods
 - 2 The samurai
 - a Professional warriors of provincial lords
 - b Valued loyalty, military talent, and discipline
 - c Observed samurai code called bushido
 - d To preserve their honor, engaged in ritual suicide called seppuku