AMSCO Chapter 10

East Asia in the Post-Classical Period

1. Political Structures in China
2. After collapse of Han in third century CE, China had 400 years of anarchy
3. Unity under the Sui (581-618 CE) – Emperor Sui Yangdi used force to unify China, and went in to Korea and Central Asia
4. Grand Canal – thousands of peasants built canal from Yangtze River valley in south to Luoyang capital in the north. Hangzhou (city at southern end) grew through trade and built a defensive wall around the city plus continuing to build Great Wall started earlier
5. Downfall of Sui – only lasted 40 years, people unhappy with high taxes and forced labor, so emperor assassinated.
6. Tang Dynasty (618-907 CE)
7. Tributary System – other states (like Korea) paid money or goods to honor the Chinese emperor, which also contributed to Chinese power and economy; kowtow was practice of bowing head to the floor when meeting the emperor.
8. Tang Accomplishments – roads, canals, postal and messenger services, safer trade routes
9. Bigger bureaucracy through the civil service exam, which emphasized importance of education
10. Chinese towns took great pride in locals who joined the government
11. Spread of Buddhism – Xuanzang studied and spread the ideas of Buddhism from his travels to India back to China, where he translated Buddhist texts in to Chinese
12. An Lushan – military leader under Hsuan Tsung who organized a rebellion. Both Lushan and the government were defeated by Uighars from Central Asia; Tang Dynasty survived in a very weak version, paying tribute to the Uighars until Tang Dynasty collapse in 907.
13. Song Dynasty (960-1279)
14. Bureaucracy and Meritocracy
15. Bureaucracy grew, efforts to expand educational opportunity to lower classes
16. So many bureaucrats began to strain government budget
17. Bureaucrats were put in charge of military, but were not capable, leaving China open to nomadic attacks
18. Shifting Capital – moved from Chang’an to Kaifeng, then to Hangzhou
19. Southern Song Dynasty had been paying tribute to the Mongols to avoid conquest, but in 1279 Mongols invaded and established Yuan dynasty.
20. Economic Developments in Post-Classical China
21. Land Reform – feudalism prevented most people from owning land, spreading unrest
22. Equal-field system was introduced, attempt to give every family a parcel of land, and take power from landed aristocracy
23. Rural wealth grew for a time, but after 100 years the aristocracy was able to get control of land back
24. Agricultural Productivity
25. Manure for fertilizer, irrigation systems, water wheels, pumps, terraces, plows pulled by water buffalo or oxen
26. Champa rice from Vietnam, fast ripening, allowed for two crops per year and a food surplus
27. Grand Canal allowed food from productive south to travel north easily
28. Porcelain and silk were also produced in large quantities, in a proto-industrialization that preceded and enabled industrialization
29. Urbanization –
30. Marco Polo, from Venice, was impressed with urban centers of Song China, especially Hangzhou and Chang’an
31. Tax policy – no more forced labor, rather paid labor, which increased amount of money in circulation
32. Metal, Gunpowder, and Guns
33. Iron and steel, coke from coal to use for better plows and bridges
34. Gunpowder discovered in search for eternal life, soon used for fireworks and weapons; eventually spread along Silk Road
35. Foreign Trade
36. Classical civilizations traded along Silk Road, then it decreased after collapse of Han Dynasty, revived by Arab traders of Abbasid Empire
37. Tang traded compasses, paper, gunpowder, porcelain, tea, silk for cotton, precious stones, pomegranates, dates, horses, grapes
38. System of credit to replace coins, “flying cash” where paper money was deposited in one location and withdrawn in another location
39. Magnetic compass and rudder, Chinese junk, all contributed to control of South china sea trade.
40. Social Structures in China
41. Song Dynasty had largest cities in world for that time, up to 100,000 people in Chang-an, Hangzhou and Guangzhou; centers of commerce and entertainment
42. New Social Class – scholar-gentry arose from civil service system as well-paid employees from modest families, educated in Confucianism and wealthy
43. Other Classes –farmers, artisans, craftsmen and merchants at the bottom, because they didn’t produce anything new
44. Role of Women – patriarchal society; foot binding as a sign of beauty and social status for the wealthy, but not very often used in the rural peasantry, as it restricted movement and ability to work.
45. Intellectual and Cultural developments
46. Paper and Printing – wood block printing as early as 2nd century CE
47. Reading and Poetry – upper classes only could read, especially Confucian texts
48. New scholar-gentry class with leisure time for reading
49. Li Bo’s versus famous from 8th century
50. Painting – landscapes reflected Daoism emphasis on nature
51. Religious Diversity in China
52. Daoism and Confucianism existed side by side, and sometimes combined, with Buddhism coming from India via the Silk Road
53. Buddhism and Taoism
54. Buddhist priests promoted Buddhism in combination with Daoism, creating syncretic Chan Buddhism or Zen Buddhism, which emphasized nature over learning
55. Buddhist monasteries arose in cities, and the wealthy donated to these monasteries, which were exempt from taxes
56. Tang officials ordered all Buddhist monasteries closed and land seized, but Buddhism already had too many followers to die off
57. Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism – Song dynasty more tolerant, and Buddhism begins to mix with Confucianism, leading to Neo-Confucianism, particularly in the scholar-gentry who could read Buddhist texts.
58. Neo-Confucianism is a social and ethical philosophy more than a religion
59. Japan
60. Fear of China
61. China’s presence in Korea frightened Japan, which was isolationist
62. Japanese emperor Shotoku Taishi began to implement some Chinese practices like centralized government and civil service system
63. Japan sent nobles to China to study, and they returned with Buddhist and Confucian ideas that blended with Japanese Shinto beliefs.
64. Taika Reforms (646 CE) increased government efficiency and reduced power of landed aristocracy by putting all farmland under government ownership
65. 710 CE Fujiwara clan takes control and continues with the Chinese model of government
66. Return to decentralized government
67. 794 CE aristocracy again exerted influence, and emperor was more of a figure head, with only aristocracy able to participate in civil service exams
68. Tale of Genji – written by Muasaki Shikibu (Japanese woman), considered to be the world’s first novel, about a prince, love, and aristocratic Japanese society
69. Military Rule – Minamoto clan ruled from late 12th to late 16th centuries, under a shogun (military ruler) who had more power than the emperor
70. Decentralized government led to rise of samurai hired by nobles to protect their lands in return for food and shelter from the noble
71. Feudalism
72. Daimyo (landed aristocracy) fought over land using samurai
73. Feudalism like in Europe, hierarchies of daimyo, samurai, peasants
74. Daimyo more powerful than European lords
75. Code of Bushido for samurai
76. Korea
77. Korean Silla Kingdom representatives were required to kowtow to the Tang dynasty emperor, bowing and paying China, but receiving Chinese exports in return
78. Similarity to China – modeled capital city Kumsong on Chang’an, centralized government, adopted Confucian and Buddhist beliefs, even used some Chinese written characters
79. Korean Bureaucracy – civil service exam like China, but never open to peasants, just the aristocracy
80. Vietnam
81. Trade – Chinese silk traded for Vietnamese tortoise shells, ivory, peacock feathers and pearls
82. Relationship with China
83. Vietnamese cultural traditions conflicted with Chinese, for example, women had greater independence, and the Vietnam culture centered around nuclear, not extended families; Vietnam government was decentralized, and villages operated independently
84. Sinification – Vietnamese students educated in Chinese tradition with Chinese characters, but still maintained their own spoken and written language
85. The Vietnamese civil service system was a meritocracy, but loyalty was to individual villages, not the emperor
86. Chinese practice of polygamy (many wives) not accepted by Vietnamese women
87. Guerrilla warfare tactics helped Vietnamese kick out Chinese when Tang Dynasty began to weaken
88. Buddhism and Chinese education system DID remain in Vietnam