

# Chapter 12

## The Tang and Song Dynasties



Ms. Sheets  
AP World History

# Six Dynasties (220 CE - 589 CE)

- 220-589: Six Dynasties
  - 220-280: Three Kingdoms Period
    - Three kingdoms (Wei; Shu; Wu) who fight for control
  - Jin Dynasty (265-420)
    - Divided into East and West Jin
    - Heavily Buddhist
  - Southern and Northern Dynasties (420-589)
    - Age of civil war and political chaos
    - Buddhism and Daoism flourished
    - Confucianism dramatically weakened



# Sui Dynasty (589-618)

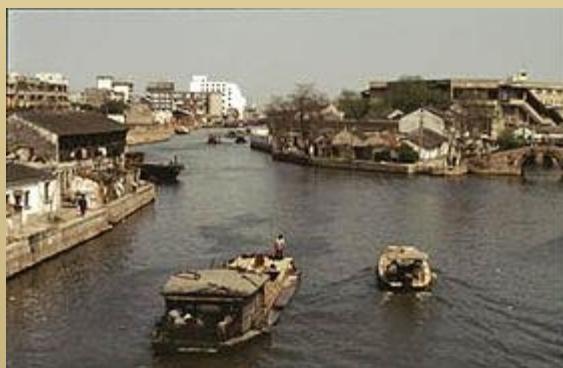
- After Three Kingdoms Period, Sui signaled a return to strong – albeit brief – dynastic control in China
- Wen (581-604; Northern Zhou Emperor)
  - Northern Zhou united northern China
    - Secured support of neighboring nomads
  - 589: Defeated remaining kingdoms and established Sui Dynasty over China
  - Lowered taxes, established granaries
  - Buddhist; expands Buddhism



# Sui Collapse (618)

- Yang (604-618; son of Wen)
  - Continued conquests of territory, drove back nomads
  - Created milder legal code
  - Supported reorganized Confucian education
    - Scholar-gentry reestablished
    - Restored examination system
  - Expensive building projects
    - Loyang (new capital)
    - Grand Canal
    - Palaces
  - 611-614: Attacked Korea, failure
  - 618: Assassinated by own ministers





# Grand Canal

- Built by Yang, Sui emperor
- Built to accommodate population movements, transportation of goods and revenue
- Traded millet from North to rice in South
- 1,100 miles long
- 1 million forced laborers worked on canal

# QUICK REVIEW QUESTION

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In Chinese dynastic history, why is the Sui Dynasty significant?

# Tang Dynasty (618-907)

- Emperor Gauzo
  - Previously Li Yuan (Duke of Tang and one of Yang's officials)
  - Used armies to unite China
  - Use of Turkish nomads in army
  - Rapidly expands empire into Tibet, Vietnam, Manchuria, Korea
  - Great Wall repaired and strengthened to defend against nomads
  - Yangtze River valley and much of the south were fully integrated with north China for first time since Han Dynasty



# Tang Dynasty



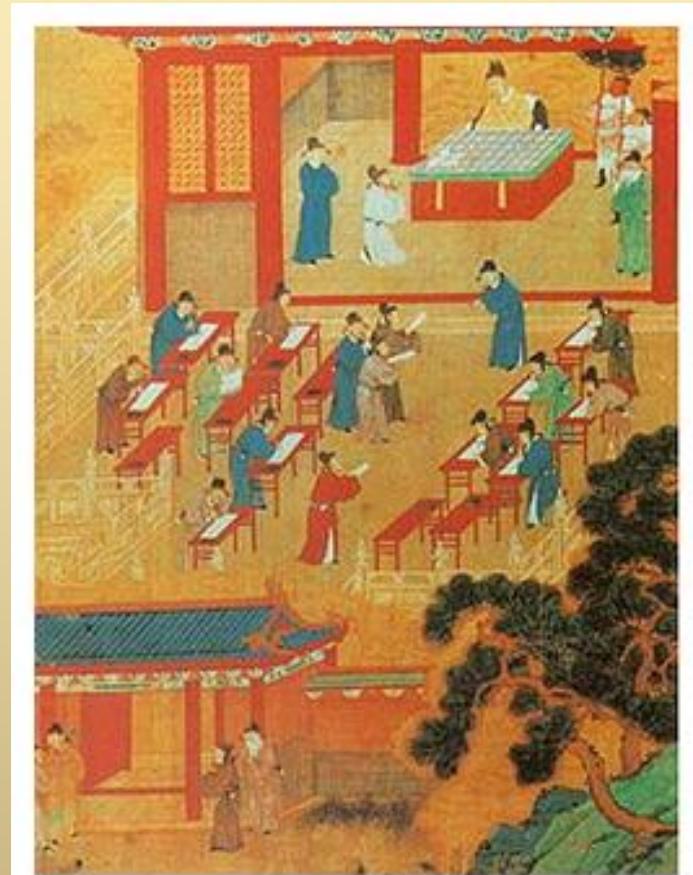
# Rebuilding the Tang Bureaucracy

- Tang needed to rebuild and expand bureaucracy after Han collapse
- Goal #1: Revive scholar-gentry (bureaucrats)
  - Create large bureaucracy of well-educated officials to govern vast empire
  - Jobs ranged from Imperial palace to small districts in provinces
  - Scholar-gentry offsets power of aristocracy, which declines
- Goal #2: Rework Confucian ideology
  - Educate bureaucrats in Confucian classics
  - Emphasize importance of Confucian philosophy for an effective government



# The Growing Importance of the Examination System

- Number of bureaucrats increases to meet Tang demands
- Therefore, the examination system was greatly expanded
- Ministry of Rites established to administer exams
  - Jinshi: scholars who passed very difficult exams on philosophy, legal texts, Chinese literature
- To become a bureaucrat and take exam: must be recommended by scholar or go to government school
- Special social privileges emerge



# Pro-Buddhism in the Early Tang

- Despite Tang government's support for Confucianism, Buddhism gained wide acceptance amongst people
  - *Mahayana* Buddhism popular among commoners in Six Dynasties Period
  - *Chan* (Zen) Buddhism common among elite (Zen gardens, tea, etc)
- Early Tang support Buddhism
  - Empress Wu (690-705)
    - Endows monasteries (50,000 monasteries by 850)
    - Tried to make Buddhism the state religion
    - Gave land grants and tax incentives to Buddhist monasteries
    - Commissioned Buddhist sculptures



# Anti-Buddhist Backlash in the Late Tang

- Success of Buddhism led to criticism by Confucians
  - Confucians supported taxation of Buddhist monasteries
  - Decried property given to monasteries
  - Tried to convince Tang rulers of loss of money for dynasty
  - Supported “native” Confucianism
- 841-847: Buddhist persecution under Emperor Wuzong
  - Shrines and monasteries destroyed
  - Lands redistributed to peasants
  - Confucianism supported on exams
- For remainder of Tang Dynasty, Confucian emerges the central ideology as Buddhism is weakened



# Tang Decline (8<sup>th</sup> c. – 907)

- 8<sup>th</sup> c: Nomadic invasions, internal rebellions, military weakness (defeated at Battle of Talas against Abbasids, 751)
- Emperor Xuanzong (713-756)
  - Height of Tang power, but poor ruler
  - His favorite concubine, Yang Guifei, grew powerful; gave her relatives government positions (Nepotism)
  - 755: An Lishan Rebellion
  - General An Lishan led mutiny and declared himself Emperor of Northern China
  - Xuanzong flees to Sichuan province
  - Rebellion did not topple Tang; weakened it significantly
- 907: last Tang emperor resigns
  - China appears to be entering another period of nomadic dominance, political division, social strife



Emperor Xuanzong

# QUICK REVIEW QUESTION

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Summarize Tang attitudes towards Buddhism. (Hint: for each “attitude,” there is a corresponding time period and ruler who exemplifies that attitude)

# Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms Period (907-960)

- Five Dynasties in Northern China succeeded one another rapidly
  - Later Liang
  - Later Tang
  - Later Jin
  - Later Han
  - Later Zhou (General Zhao Kuangyin conquers other kingdoms and unifies China)
- Ten Kingdoms in Southern China existed concurrently and controlled their own territory
  - Wu
  - Wuyue
  - Min
  - Chu
  - Southern Han
  - Former Shu
  - Later Shu
  - Jingan
  - Southern Tang
  - Northern Han

# Song Dynasty (960-1279)

- Song: 960-1127
- Southern Song: 1127-1279
- 960: Emperor Taizu (originally General Zhao Kuangyin) founded Song Dynasty
  - Overcame all rivals but one: nomadic Liao dynasty in Manchuria
  - Song were unable to defeat these nomads → Song pay tribute to Liao to keep them from raiding Chinese borders



# Neo-Confucians

- Revivers of pure or “original” Confucian thought and teachings
- Libraries established, old texts recovered
- Stressed personal morality and regulation
- Importance of philosophy in everyday life to guide oneself and society
- Hostility to foreign ideas (Buddhism and Daoism are superstitious, and have tainted Confucianism)
  - Fearful of outside influences and spirituality
- Gender, class, age distinctions reinforced
  - These things will ensure social harmony
- Became the dominant interpretation of Confucianism in the Song Dynasty

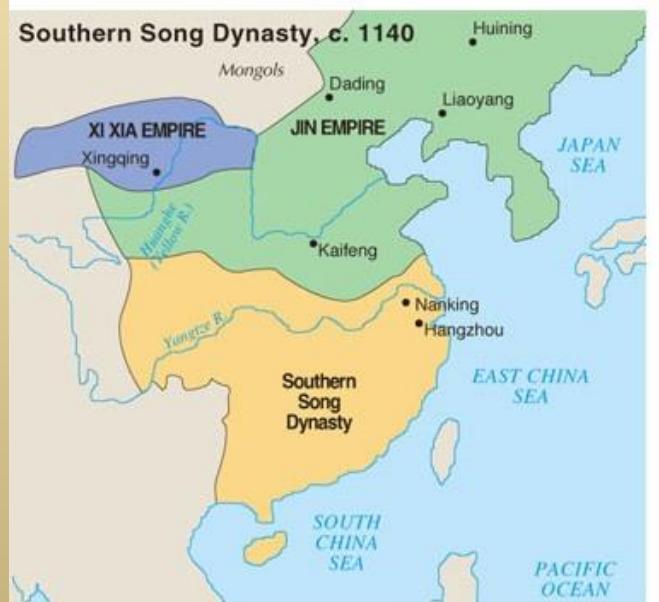
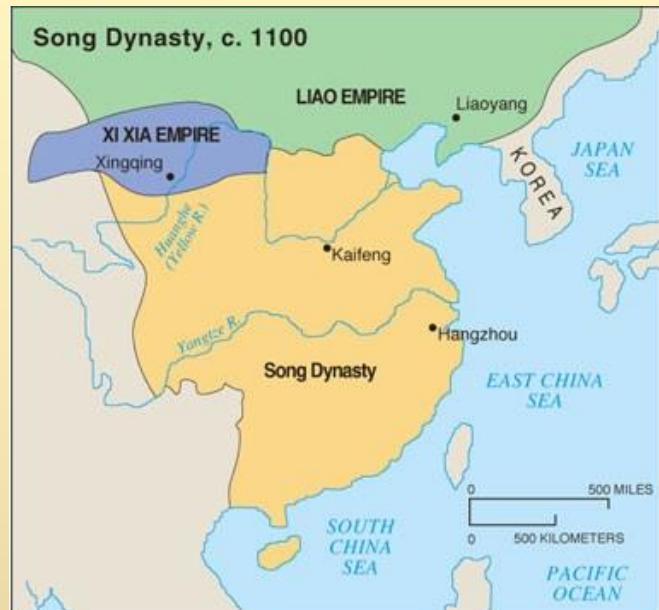
# Attempts at Reform

- Wang Anshi (1070s-1080s)
  - Confucian scholar, chief minister of Song and advisor to Emperor Shenzong
  - Instituted reforms in attempt to save dynasty's finances
    - Supported agricultural expansion
    - Landlords, scholar-gentry taxed; unpopular
  - Tries to begin a bureaucracy that stresses analytical thinking rather than memorization of classics
- 1085: Emperor Shenzong dies; reforms are reversed by neo-Confucians and new emperor



# Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279)

- Tribute arrangement with Liao encouraged other kingdoms and nomads to invade borders of Song China as well
  - Xi Xia kingdom: established by Tangut tribes from Tibet
    - Song pay tribute to Xi Xia; began to drain economy
  - 1115: Jin Kingdom founded north of Song Empire (defeated Liao)
    - Jin invade China → Song flee south
  - Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279)
    - New capital at Hangzhou: sophisticated, wealthy
    - Numerous cultural and technological innovations



# QUICK REVIEW QUESTION

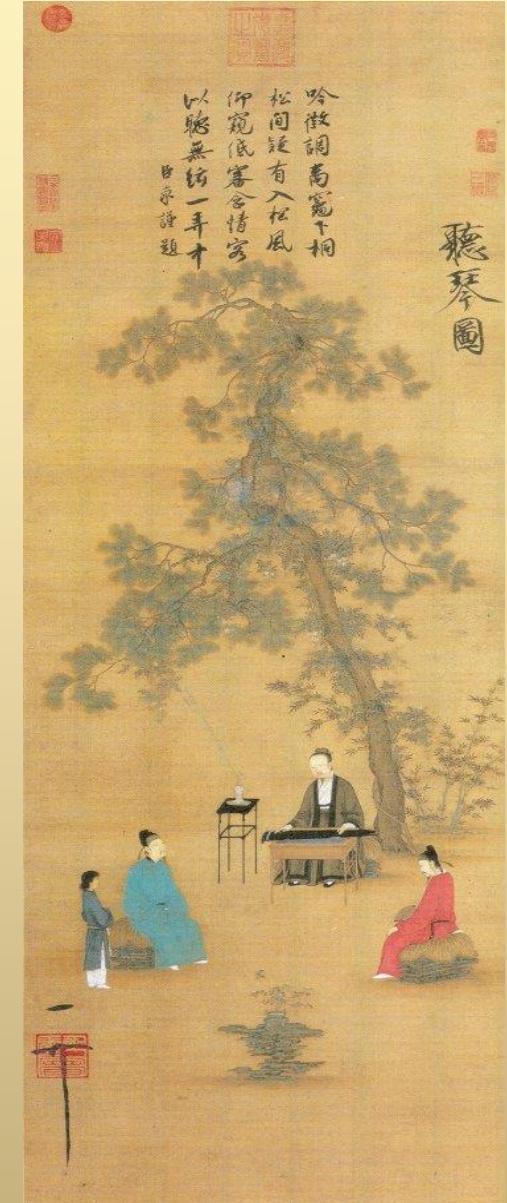
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What causes the Song Dynasty's flight south to Hangzhou?

What philosophical school comes to dominate the scholar-gentry in the Song period?

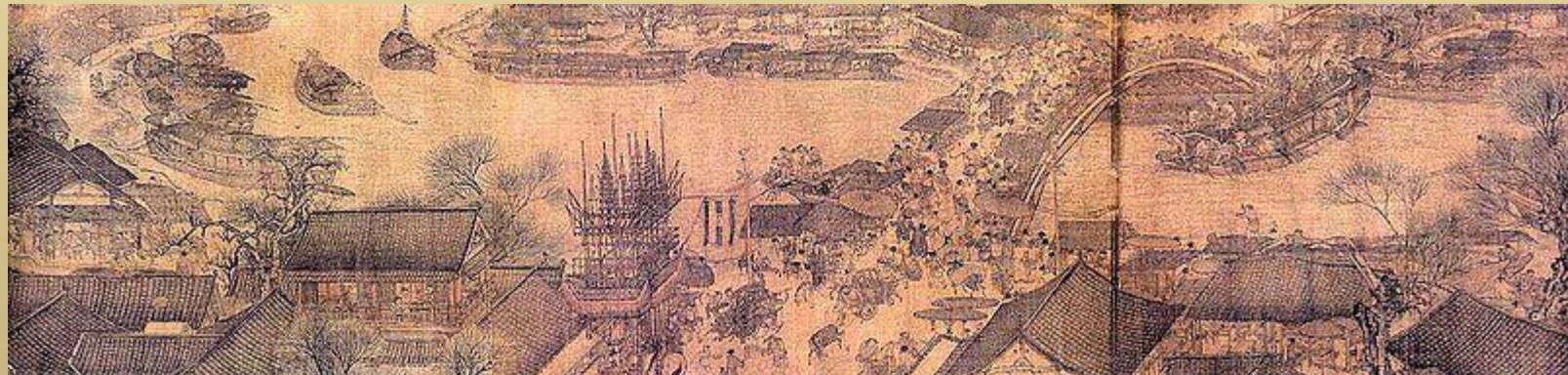
# Cultural Achievements

- Paper techniques refined
- Gunpowder and fireworks (9<sup>th</sup> c.)
- Abacus developed for counting; used by bureaucrats
- 1041: Bi Sheng develops printing with moveable type
- Scholars are now cultural producers
  - In past, Buddhists were artists
  - Secular scenes now more common (again, result of Neo-Confucians)
- Nature: common in poetry, art
- Drama: famous opera houses



# Tang and Song Commercial Expansion

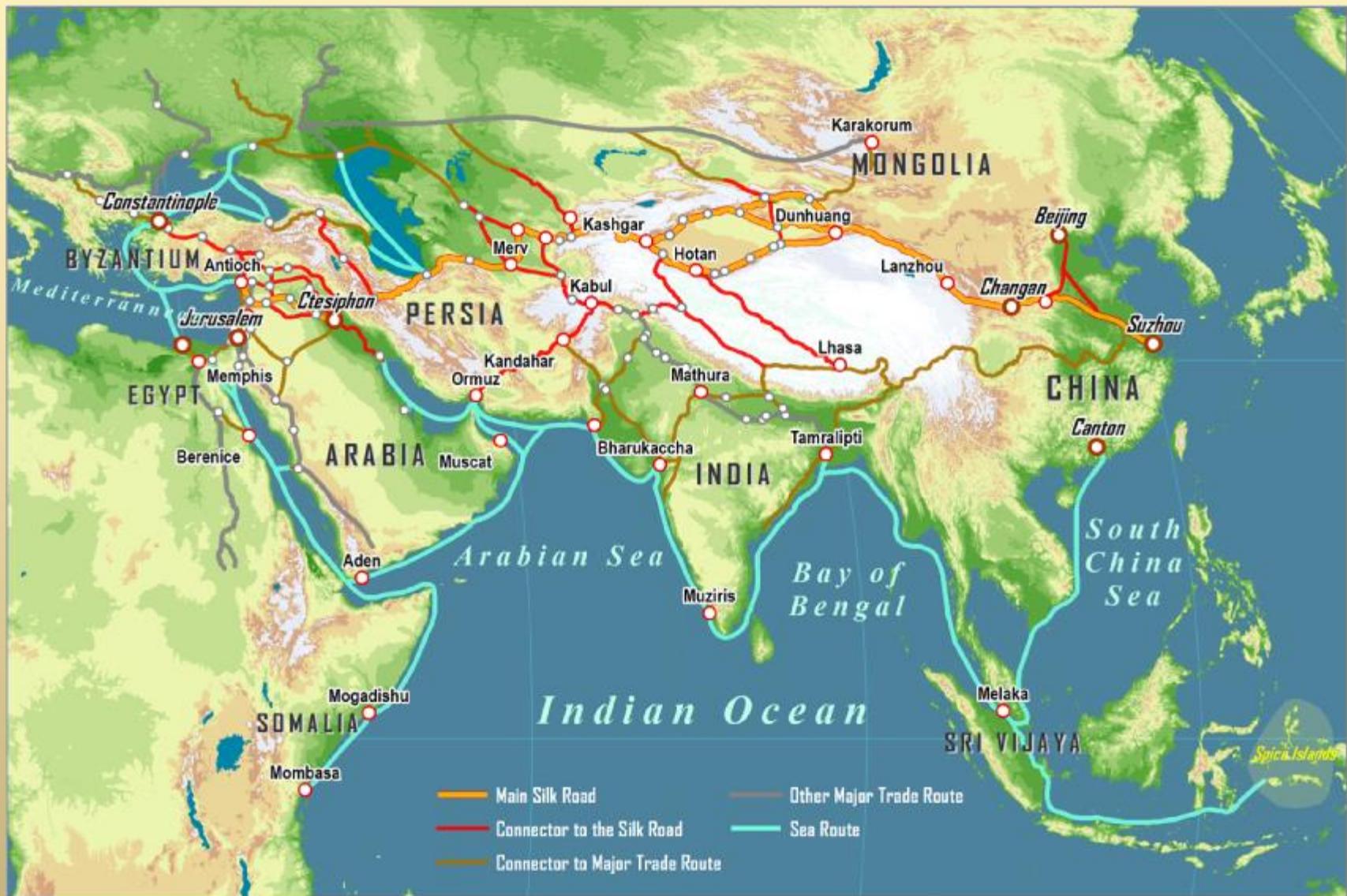
- Between canal systems and Silk Roads, commercial expansion and trade was booming
- Banks, credit, flying money
- Urban growth and sophistication
  - Changan (Tang capital): 2 million, largest city in world at its time
  - Hangzhou (Southern Song capital): restaurants, opera houses, gardens, parks



# Silk Roads

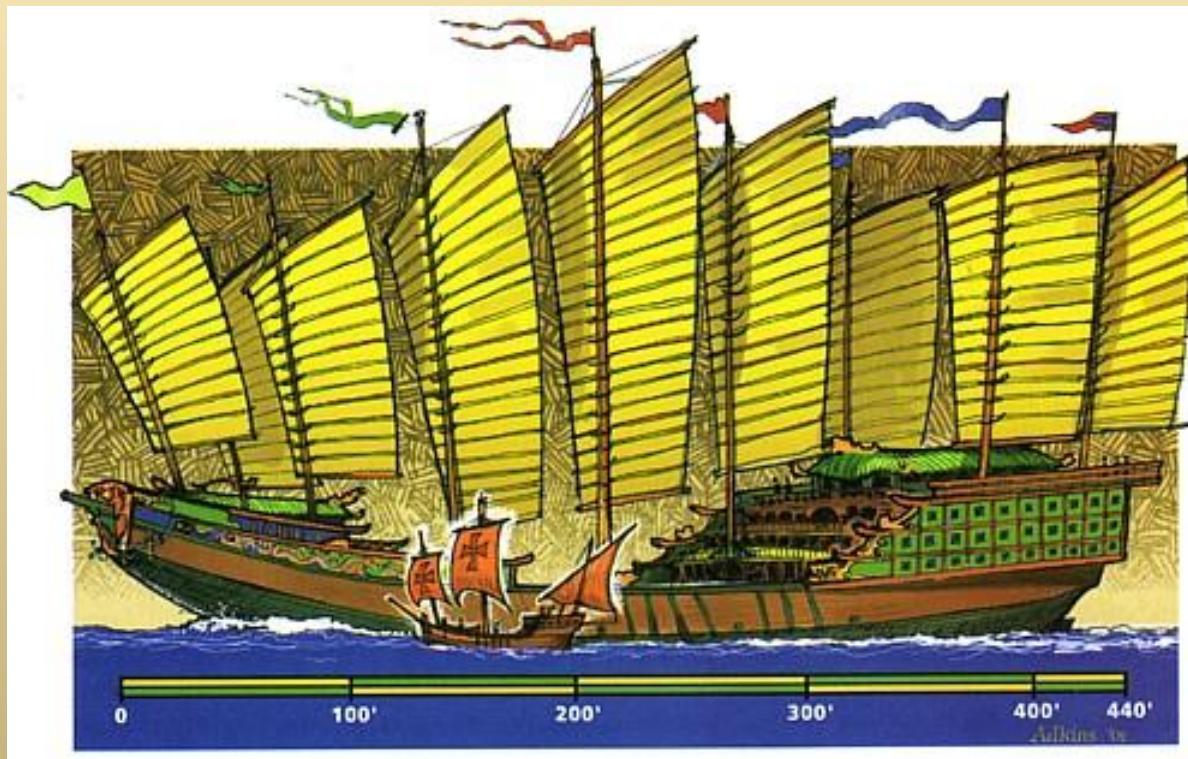
- Dangerous: tribal societies along the Silk Roads were drawn to its riches. Many tribes became skilled at raiding traders.
- Chinese rulers protect trade and travelers on Silk Roads
- Cities developed along the Silk Roads as trading posts and as rest stops for travelers
- From Persia: dates; saffron; pistachio; rugs; tapestries
- From Africa: frankincense; aloe; gold; salt; timber
- From India: sandalwood; jasmine; cloth
- From China: silk; porcelain; paper; tea
- Transmission of art, language, and religion (Buddhism; Christianity; Islam)

# Silk Roads



# Indian Ocean Trade

- Chinese Junks – refined in late Tang and Song
- Established market networks along Indian ocean coast
- Rival Arab control of Indian Ocean
- Compasses used to increase accuracy in navigation



A typical junk compared to Columbus' Santa Maria

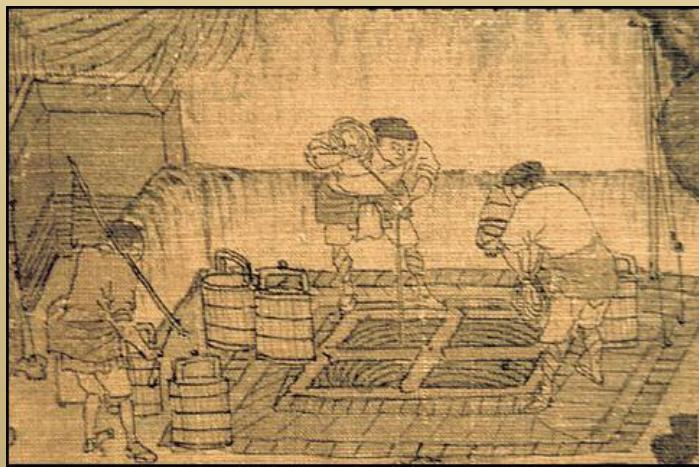
# QUICK REVIEW QUESTION

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List Chinese cultural and economic accomplishments in the Tang and Song period.

# Expanding Agrarian Production

- Vibrant economy stimulated by advances in farming
- Tang and Song rulers try to promote agricultural production
  - New areas cultivated as China expands; government encouraged people to settle in barren lands
  - Wang Anshi issues edict declaring state-funded irrigation to be expanded
  - New seeds, fertilizer, wheelbarrow
- Canals help transport produce quickly
- Tang and Song break up aristocratic estates → divided land among peasants more equally



# Family in the Tang-Song Era

- Extended family households preferred; ancestor worship still practiced
- Elite women had more opportunities
  - Examples: Empress Wu and Yang Guifei
- Neo-Confucian support of patriarchy
  - Role of women reduced in Song period
  - Physical confinement: stress women's role as homemakers and mothers
  - Virtues: virginity for girls, fidelity for wives, chastity for widows
  - Men allowed great freedom, favored in inheritance and divorce
  - Education: Girls not educated, boys are emphasis



- Illustrates degree to which women were subordinated, controlled, and physically confined
- Feet of girls 2-5 years old are bound
- Ideal length: 3 inches
- Bone-breaking, muscle-deforming process
- Extremely painful, severely limit mobility
- Considered highly attractive and erotic by men
- Originates in Five Kingdoms period, possibly among court dancers, but then spreads in Song
- Dies out in early 20<sup>th</sup> century; changing social norms with Communists

# Foot-binding





# QUICK REVIEW QUESTION

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According to Neo-Confucian values, what was the purpose of foot-binding?