

Era 5: Part 2

The Resurgence of the Orient²

China

A. Three dynasties restored peace to China in between periods of chaos and disorder.

1. The Sui (SWAY, 581-618) dynasty re-established a strong government after a series of civil wars. The emperor built—with heavy taxes and forced labor—the Grand Canal linking the Yellow and Yangtze Rivers.
2. The Tang dynasty (618-907), stable for 300 years, renewed trade in silk and porcelain over the Silk Road. The empire expanded westward into Tibet, demanded tribute from Korea in the northeast, and established diplomatic and trade relations with the states of Southeast Asia.
3. The Song dynasty took over in the 900s and vastly increased crop yields and trade. What they couldn't increase, though, was their territory; in fact, they lost land.

B. The Chinese emperors failed to put the interests of the people above their own interests. The emperors ruled with a complex bureaucracy. Each successive empire faced growing unrest from within and invasions from without the longer they ruled, each leading to their collapse.

C. The relative peace created by an efficient government fostered economics and arts.

1. A new social class, the scholar-gentry, replaced the old landed aristocracy, controlled much of the land, and produced most of the candidates for the civil service. It compares to the middle class of Europe that led to the breakdown of feudalism.

2. New technology developed products (steel and gunpowder) and stimulated trade (printed paper money; exported tea, silk, and porcelain).
3. The invention of wood block printing ushered in a era of literature, especially poetry celebrating the beauty of nature, the changes of the seasons, and the joys of friendship.



http://fourriverscharter.org/projects/inventions/images/china_gunpowder2.jpg

Japan

- A. The geography of Japan, like most nations, influenced its history. As an archipelago, Japan avoided many conflicts with neighbors. As volcanic mountains, the islands offered fertile soil but isolated districts. Its small size and isolation hindered the development of trade.
- B. The feudal period of Japan parallels that of Europe. Emperors, leaders of powerful clans, structured the economy based on taxes levied on farmland. Local aristocrats turned to samurai ("those who serve") to secure their holdings. Like their European counterparts, the samurai lived and fought under a strict code — Bushido ("the way of the warrior"). The rivalries between Japanese noble families, led by daimyo, led to frequent civil wars. To counter the feuding nobles, the emperor centralized control under a military governor—the shogun.
- C. The religion of Shinto contributed to emperor worship, while Buddhism's spirituality appealed to other Japanese.

Korea

- A. The early history of Korea was marked by the presence of dominating neighbors. Rival Korean kingdoms kept the peninsula weak and unable to repel foreign influence. The Chinese "contributed" basics for language and shared political institutions. The Mongols allowed the Koryo dynasty to remain in power (but it couldn't exercise much authority). It wasn't until the 14th century that Korea established a lasting independent government.
- B. Korea, though, developed differently than its neighbors. A powerful nobility maintained influence in politics. A sharp division existed between the noble families and the peasants—no real middle or gentry class developed. Likewise, Korea blended traditional ideas and customs with those introduced by foreigners. (E.g. religion; language; art).

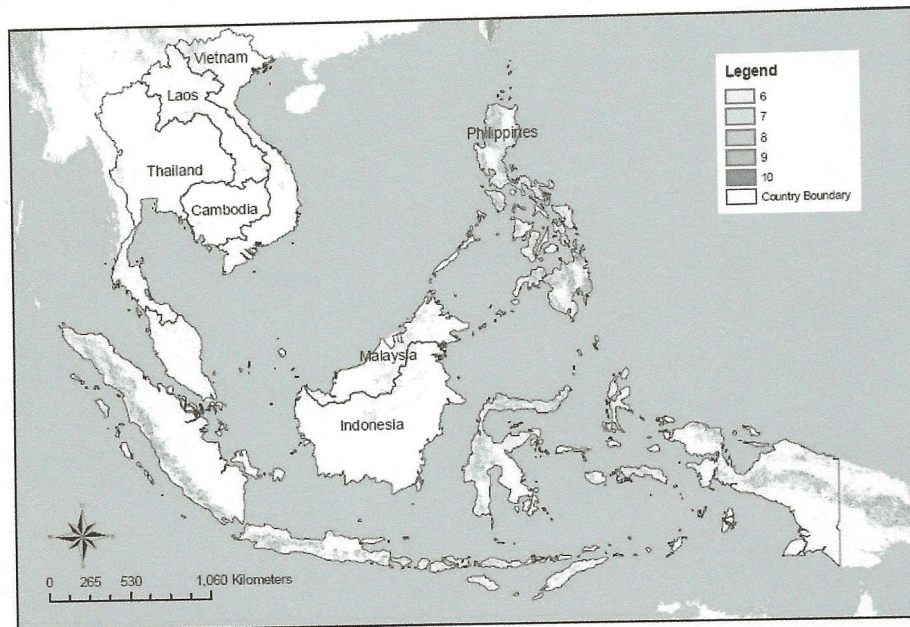
India

- A. Competing religions impacted India more than other nations. India fragmented into many states in the medieval periods. Hinduism and Buddhism, the native religions of India, became threatened by the spread of Islam into the northwestern part of India. The invading Muslims encountered fractured kingdoms and defeated the Hindu warriors (Rajputs) defending India.

- B. India's location made it a center for trade between Southwest Asia and East Asia. Like European manorialism, the king—in theory—owned all the land; landlords collected taxes from peasants who worked the land. Wars limited internal trade, but foreign trade prospered. Intellectual goods—religion and language—spread throughout Asia from India.

Southeast Asia

- A. The geographical barriers of Southeast Asia created separate kingdoms rather than a centralized government. (dense jungles, archipelagoes, densely-forested mountains).
- B. New states were influenced by the Chinese and Indian examples in both government and religion. Vietnam clung to their own culture even after being conquered by the Chinese. The kingdom of Angkor (Khmer)—modern day Cambodia—was the most powerful kingdom in the region for nearly 600 years. The Thai, with their Indian influenced, replaced the dominant Chinese-based kingdoms. Burma's location along a center of trade routes made it a dominant kingdom. The Malay and Indonesian archipelagoes struggled to create centralized governments, but faced limited foreign intervention.
- C. Southeast Asia has been referred to as the "golden region." Mainland kingdoms relied on agriculture; coastal and island kingdoms based their economies on trade. Mariners valued the islands as ports to re-supply and for safety. The trade in spices was profitable for several southeastern Asian states.



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