

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.

Key Concept 3.2. Continuity and Innovation of State Forms and Their Interactions

- I. Empires collapsed and were reconstituted; in some regions new state forms emerged.