China Reunifies

The Big Idea

The Period of Disunion was followed by reunification by rulers of the Sui, Tang, and Song dynasties.

Main Ideas

• The Period of Disunion was a time of war and disorder that followed the end of the Han dynasty.
• China was reunified under the Sui, Tang, and Song dynasties.
• The Age of Buddhism saw major religious changes in China.
Main Idea 1: The Period of Disunion was a time of war and disorder that followed the end of the Han dynasty.

- Africa is the second largest continent.
- When the Han dynasty collapsed, China split into several rival kingdoms.
- This was the Period of Disunion. War was common during this period.
- Some peaceful developments did take place.
  - Nomadic people settled in northern China. Some Chinese adopted their culture, while invaders sometimes adopted the Chinese culture.
  - In southern China, people fleeing from the north shared their culture with the southern Chinese while adopting some of the southern Chinese culture.
Main Idea 2: China was reunified under the Sui, Tang, and Song dynasties.

- **Sui dynasty**
  - Yang Jian finally ended the Period of Disunion by unifying China and creating the Sui dynasty.
  - Leaders also began the Grand Canal, linking northern and southern China.

- **Tang dynasty**
  - This was the golden age of Chinese civilization.
  - China grew to include much of Eastern Asia and part of Central Asia.
  - After the Tang dynasty fell, China became divided again.

- **Song dynasty**
  - China was reunified.
The Tang Dynasty

The Tang dynasty began when a former Sui official overthrew the old government, and lasted for nearly 300 years.

The Tang dynasty was viewed as the golden age of Chinese civilization. Many lands were conquered, the military was reformed, and laws were created. Culture also flourished.

This dynasty included the only woman to rule China. Empress Wu was sometimes vicious, but she was also intelligent and talented.
Main Idea 3: The Age of Buddhism saw major religious changes in China.

Buddhism was spreading quickly throughout the lands. It first came to China during the Han dynasty.

During the troubled time of the Period of Disunion, many turned to Buddhism. They took comfort in the teaching that people can escape suffering and achieve a state of peace.

It influenced many aspects of Chinese culture. Wealthy people donated money to build temples. It also affected art, literature, and architecture.

Buddhism came to an end there when the Tang emperor launched a campaign against it, burning texts and destroying temples.
Tang and Song Achievements

The Big Idea
The Tang and Song dynasties were periods of economic, cultural, and technological accomplishments.

Main Ideas
- Advances in agriculture let to increased trade and population growth.
- Cities and trade grew during the Tang and Song dynasties.
- The Tang and Song dynasties produced fine arts and inventions.
Main Idea 1: Advances in agriculture led to increased trade and population growth.

| Chinese civilization had always been based on agriculture. They were expert farmers. | During the Song dynasty, improvements were largely due to irrigation techniques. | The amount of land under cultivation increased, and farmers learned to grow crops more efficiently. |
| In the north, farmers grew wheat, barley, and other grains. The south was ideal for growing rice. | Farmers dug underground wells. | Farms were more productive, and food was plentiful. This led to population growth and increased trade. |
| A new kind of pump allowed one person to do the work of many. |
Main Idea 2: Cities and trade grew during the Tang and Song dynasties.

- China’s capital city, Chang’an, was a bustling trade center.
- Trade grew along with the cities, making China richer than ever before.
- The Grand Canal, a series of waterways that linked major cities, carried a huge amount of trade goods.
- During the Tang dynasty, most foreign trade went over land routes to India, Southwest Asia, Korea, and Japan.
- During the Song dynasty, sea trade allowed China to open its Pacific ports to other countries.
Main Idea 3: The Tang and Song dynasties produced fine arts and inventions.

- The artists and writers of the Tang dynasty were some of China’s greatest.
- Artists wrote poems, painted, sculpted in clay, and made porcelain items.
- Some of the most important inventions were made during this time as well.
  - Some of these influenced events around the world.
Inventions

• Woodblock printing was invented. Entire pages were carved into a block of wood, covered with ink, and pressed onto paper to create copies.

• Gunpowder and the compass were very important inventions of the Tang dynasty.
  - Gunpowder was used to make fireworks and signals.
  - The compass allowed sailors and merchants to travel vast distances.

• The Song dynasty brought about the inventions of movable type and paper money.
Confucianism and Government

The Big Idea
Confucian thought influenced the Song government.

Main Ideas
• Confucianism underwent changes and influenced Chinese government.
• Scholar-officials ran China’s government during the Song dynasty.
Main Idea 1: Confucianism underwent changes and influenced Chinese government.

- The dominant philosophy in China was Confucianism, based on the teachings of Confucius.
- His teachings focused on proper behavior.
- Confucius taught that people should conduct their lives according to two basic principles.
  - One was *ren*, or concern for others.
  - The other was *li*, or appropriate behavior.
After his death, Confucius’s ideas were spread by his followers, but as Buddhism became more popular, Confucianism lost some influence.

Buddhism stressed a more spiritual outlook that promised escape from suffering.

Neo-Confucianism developed due to a desire to improve Chinese government and society.

It was similar to the older philosophy but emphasized spiritual matters.

Neo-Confucianism became more influential under the Song, and became official government teaching after the Song dynasty.
Main Idea 2: Scholar-officials ran China’s government during the Song dynasty.

- The Song dynasty improved the system by which people went to work for the government.
- These workers formed a large bureaucracy, or a body of unelected government officials.
Civil Service Examinations

- Officials joined the bureaucracy by passing civil service examinations.
- Civil service means service as a government official.

- These were a series of written examinations that tested students’ grasp of Confucianism and related ideas.
- The tests were difficult, and students spent years preparing.
- Passing the exam meant life as a scholar-official, an educated member of government.
Scholar-Officials

- Scholar-officials were elite members of society and were widely admired for their knowledge and ethics.
- They performed many important jobs in the government.
- Benefits included being respected and having reduced penalties for breaking the law.
- Many became wealthy from gifts given by people seeking their aid.
- This system helped the stability of the Song government.
The Yuan and Ming Dynasties

The Big Idea
The Chinese were ruled by foreigners during the Yuan dynasty, but they threw off Mongol rule and prospered during the Ming dynasty.

Main Ideas
- The Mongol Empire included China, and the Mongols ruled China as the Yuan dynasty.
- The Ming dynasty was a time of stability and prosperity.
- China under the Ming saw great changes in its government and relations with other countries.
Main Idea 1: The Mongol Empire included China, and the Mongols ruled China as the Yuan dynasty.

- Genghis Khan organized the Mongols into a powerful army and led them on bloody expeditions of conquest, including China.
- By the time of his death, all of northern China was under his control.

- Kublai Khan became ruler of the Mongol Empire and completed the conquest of China.
- He declared himself emperor of China in 1279, which began the Yuan dynasty.
Yuan Dynasty

The Chinese resented being ruled by foreigners who spoke a different language, worshipped different gods, and had different customs.

- Although Khan made sure to keep control of the Chinese, he did not force them to accept Mongol ways of life.
- Some Mongols adopted Chinese culture.
- Tax money went for public-works projects that required the labor of many Chinese.
- Trade routes were kept safe by Mongol soldiers.
- The Yuan dynasty ended when a rebel army defeated the Mongols in 1368.
Main Idea 2: The Ming dynasty was a time of stability and prosperity.

- Zhu Yuanzhang defeated the Mongols and started the Ming dynasty.
- During this dynasty, the Chinese improved their ship and sailing skills thanks to the greatest sailor of the time, Zheng He.
- Zheng He boasted about his country during his travels and brought back gifts.
- The Ming were known for their grand building projects.
- The Forbidden City in Beijing is one example of their skill. Within some buildings were 9,000 rooms.
Great Building Projects

- The Ming were also known for their grand building projects, such as the Forbidden City.
- It was a symbol of China’s glory, and the common people were not allowed to enter.
- Ming rulers also directed the restoration of the Great Wall of China.
- This kept the Chinese people safer against northern invasions.
Main Idea 3: China under in Ming saw great changes in its government and relations with other countries.

- The Ming emperors were powerful and abolished the offices of some powerful officials.
- The Ming appointed censors. They were officials who would judge the behavior of local leaders and inspect the schools and other institutions.
- The Ming emperors tried to eliminate all foreign influences.
- China entered a period of isolationism, a policy of avoiding contact with other countries.
- Due to a lack of progress during this period, China grew weak. The Western world had made huge technological progress and began to take power in some parts of China by the late 1800s.
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