**ISLAM NOTES**

**What is Islam?**

* A religion
* 1.9 billion people practice Islam (total population is 7 billion people)
* People who practice Islam are called Muslims
* Islam means “peace through submission to god
* Islam began in the Arabian Peninsula, after the prophet Muhammad heard messages from god**.**

**What do Muslims believe?**

* Islam is a **monotheistic** religion. This means that Muslims believe in one god
* Muslims use the Arabic word for god, Allah.
* The holy book of Muslims is called the Koran (Qur’an). The Koran includes many stories from the Bible as well as messages delivered to the prophet Muhammad
* Muslims believe Jesus was a prophet, but was not divine, and did not die for their sins
* Muslims believe that Muhammad was the last prophet.

**What are Muslim practices?**

* Muslims pray in a mosque
* The most sacred mosque in Islam is called the Kaaba which is in Mecca
* The holy day of Islam is Friday
* The Koran forbids Muslims from eating pork and drinking alcohol
* Muslims must fulfill the five pillars of Islam.

1. **Shahaadah (Testimony of Faith)**

* Declaration of Faith; There is no god except Allah, Muhammad is the messenger of Allah

1. **Salat (Prayer)**

* Praying 5 times a day, facing the holy city of Mecca. Before praying, Muslims must wash their hands and feet.

1. **Zakat (Charity/almsgiving)**

* Giving charity (about 2.5% of savings) to charity, perhaps for the poor.

1. **Sawm (Fasting)**

* Muslims must not eat food or drink alcohol during the month of Ramadan during daylight

1. **Hajj (Pilgrimage)**

* Muslims must make the pilgrimage (journey) to Mecca at least once in their lifetime, if they can afford to

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| **3 Monotheistic Religions** | | | |
|  | **Islam** | **Christianity** | **Judaism** |
| **Name for follower** | Muslim | Christian | Jew |
| **God (name for God)** | Allah | God/ Yahweh | Adonai |
| **Holy Book** | Quran/Koran | Bible- made up of Old and New Testament | Torah |
| **Place of Worship** | Mosque | Church | Synagogue |
| **Key Beliefs** | Muhammad is a prophet  5 pillars of faith   * Declaration of faith * Prayer * Almsgiving * Fasting * Pilgrimage | Jesus is son of God  Trinity- God is 3 parts  Achieve salvation | Life a good life according to laws of the Torah  Commandments |
| **Sects** | Sunni and Shiite | 3 main sects   * Roman Catholic * Orthodox * Protestant   These are broken into many more! | 3 main sects   * Orthodox * Conservative * Reformed |
| **Practices, Holiday, Rituals** | 5 times daily prayer  Hajj  Ramadan | Baptism  Communion | Shabbat- holy meal and keeping Friday night to Saturday evening for rest and prayer  Yom Kippur- fasting |

**How did Islam begin?**

*Introduction*

Islam began in **Mecca**, a city in the **Arabian Peninsula**, which is a part of Southwestern Asia. The city of Mecca was located in a dry, rocky valley in the west. Mecca did not have agriculture; there was very little farming possible. Instead, Mecca became wealthy because it was a center of **trade**. Merchants traveling along trade routes stopped at the city’s market and inns. They bought spices, sheepskins, meat, dates, and other products from townspeople. Merchant families grew wealthy through trade. Over time, a handful of families had come to rule the city. These families would not share their wealth with the weaker, poorer clans who lived there.

Mecca was also a religious center. According to the Koran, Abraham had built the cube-shaped shrine, the Kaaba, centuries before, to honor God. Most Arabs followed **polytheism**, and the Kaaba had hundreds of idols (statues of different gods). People from all over the Arabian Peninsula came to worship at Mecca.

*Birth of Muhammad*

Around 570 C.E., a boy named **Muhammad** was born in Mecca. After his mother died, Muhammad’s uncle, a merchant, took care of Muhammad. As a boy, Muhammad was a shepherd, and took care of his family’s flocks of sheep and goats. When he got older, he became a successful merchant, like his uncle. When Muhammad was 25, he married Khadija, a widow who owned a successful trade business.

For the next 15 years, Muhammad worked as a merchant. He also cared about spirituality. He often spent time praying and meditating in the mountains around Mecca. He was concerned about the effects of wealth and the worship of the idols on his city. He believed the wealthy were greedy should have been doing more to help the poor.

*Origins of Islam*

In about 610 C.E., when Muhammad was 40, he went to meditate in a cave in the mountains. There, according to Islamic teachings, the angel Gabriel visited Muhammad. Gabriel told Muhammad, “You are the messenger of God.” At first Muhammad feared that he might be going crazy. But Khadijah supported Muhammad and told him that she believed that Allah had chosen him as a **prophet** to spread Allah’s words to the people.

Gradually, a small group of followers of Islam (Muslims) developed at Mecca. For Muslims, Islam was a way of life and the basis for creating a fair society. For example, at the time women had few rights. Muslims granted more rights to women.

Around 613 C.E., Muhammad began to speak to other people in Mecca. He taught that people must worship one God, Allah, that all believers in God were equal, and that the rich should share their wealth. He urged people in Mecca to take care of the poor and to improve the rights of women. Some members of Muhammad’s family became Muslims. People from other families joined him also.

Most people of Mecca, however, rejected Muhammad’s teachings. Mecca’s leaders did not want to share their wealth. They also feared that if Muhammad grew stronger, he would take power away from them. Muhammad’s **monotheistic** teachings also angered people who did not want to stop believing in many gods.

To stop the spread of Muhammad’s teachings, some people called Muhammad a liar. Some people attacked his followers. Despite this treatment, the Muslims would not give up their faith. As Muslims came under more attacks, Muhammad looked for a new home. In 622, Muhammad and his followers left Mecca and traveled to the city of Medina on a journey known as the **hijrah** (HEEJ-rah). Medina was a city ready to accept Muhammad and Islam. In Medina, Muhammad created a new Muslim community as more people converted to Islam. Although they did not follow Islam, Muhammad asked Muslims to respect Christians and Jews. They, like the Muslims, believed in the one god.

By 630, Muhammad had gained many followers of Islam. He and his followers returned to Mecca and defeated those who opposed him. After this time, Islam continued to grow and spread across the Arabian Peninsula.

**What happened after Muhammad died?**

* After the death of Muhammad, Islam faced a crisis
* Muhammad had no sons to lead after him, and did not leave instructions on how to choose next caliph, or leader of Islam
* Muslims split into two sects, or groups because they disagreed on how to choose a leader.
  + Sunni
  + Shia

**What did Sunni Muslims want?**

* The Sunni believed that the next caliph of Islam should be chosen by the Muslims
* This person would be the person most qualified person for the job
* Sunni Muslims wanted Abu Bakr, one of Muhammad’s closest advisors to be the next caliph

**What did Shia Muslims want?**

* The Shia believed that the next caliph of Islam should be someone directly descended from Muhammad
* It was a normal custom at the time to pass down leadership through male family members
* They wanted Sonni Ali, Muhammad’s son-in-law to become the next caliph

**What happened between the Sunni and Shia?**

* Fighting continues between the Sunni and Shia even today.
* By the mid-600s, the Sunni, who were larger in number, had control
* Despite the violence between the two denominations, throughout this time, Islam began to spread quickly through Europe, Asia, and Africa

**Why did Islam spread so quickly?**

* Life in the desert was harsh.
* People lived nomadic lives, they moved from place to place in search of food and water.
* People stopped at towns to trade
* The caliphs wanted to spread their empire both politically and religiously
* They used military force and often faced weak empires
* To many Muslims, this signaled god’s support for Islam, and they were able to gain support of conquered people
* Islam also appealed to many people.
  + Basic Beliefs
  + Equal Rights
  + Rights for Women
  + Charity
* Some people were forced to convert to Islam
* Others were required to pay taxes if they did not convert
* Muslims had good relations with conquered “People of the Book”
  + Jews and Christians

SPREAD OF ISLAM: The Ottoman Empire

There were a number of Islamic Empires that rose and fell after the death of Muhammad. One of the largest and most powerful Islamic Empires was the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans were a Turkish-speaking nomadic group. The Ottoman Empire spread across Asia and into southeastern Europe. The most important leader of the Ottomans was Suleiman the Magnificent. Under Suleiman’s rule, the Ottoman Empire reached its largest extent. He was a brilliant military leader. Suleiman encouraged law, and arts and architecture. Muslim society flourished under him.

Under the Ottoman Empire, Istanbul became a very powerful Muslim city. Istanbul became not only a political and military capital, but because of its position near Europe, Africa, and Asia, it became one of the great trade centers of the world. This was a time of great wealth.

**What was the Golden Age of Islam?**

* **During the Golden Age of Islam, Muslims made advances in economics, art, literature, and science**

**What achievements did Muslims have during the Golden Age?**

* Economics- Muslims built a vast trading network across the Muslim world and beyond.
* ART- Muslims artists perfected skills in calligraphy and arabesque
* In Jerusalem, Muslim architects built the Dome of the Rock, a great shrine capped in magnificent dome.
* Arab writes wrote fables and told tales
* Muslims made advances in Mathematics, Astronomy and Medicine
* The greatest Muslim mathematician is al- Khwarizmi, who pioneered the study of Algebra.
* Muhammad al-Razi was a famous physician, who wrote many medical books and studies small pox and measles

**Africa Notes**

**Geography of Africa**

* Africa is a land of many landscapes, from lush rainforests , to tropical savannas, to deserts that stretch for hundreds of miles
* There is more to the land of Africa than you think!
* Africa is the second largest continent
* Africa covers 1/3 of all the worlds surface

**Climate Zones of Africa**

* The geography of Africa is diverse and has many different types of climates
* Major Climates of Africa
  + Rainforest
  + Desert
  + Savanna

**Climate Zones of Africa- Savanna**

* Africa’s largest climate zone is the Savanna
* The Savanna is a large grassland that has good soil which allows people and animals to survive off the land

**Climate Zones of Africa- Desert**

* The Sahara desert is the largest desert in the world.
* It covers most of North Africa
* The desert made travel difficult for many years for the people in North Africa

**Natural Resources of Africa**

* Africa is a land full of natural resources
* Gold, copper , Iron and salt were all valuable to people
* Later on in Africa’s history, ivory and diamonds will become important resources as well

**Spread of Islam**

* During the Middle Ages, Muslim traders spread Islam into North Africa
* Islam replaced Christianity as the dominate religion of North Africa
* North Africa benefited from the Muslim civilization and culture
  + Mosques
  + Libraries
  + Trade Network
* Muslim traders from North Africa spread Islam into West Africa

**Gold and Salt Trade**

* There were two main products that dominated Saharan Trade- Gold and Salt
* Salt was needed to prevent dehydration . Some areas had a lot of salt. Many people even built their homes with salt
* Yet, in other areas, there was not enough salt- which made it a valuable item for trade
* Gold was another important commodity, or item, which was abundant in West Africa
* Men dug up the soil, while women washed the soil to extract the gold. The gold dust was then stuffed into feather quills to safely transport it

**Kingdoms of West Africa**

* 3 kingdoms dominated the Salt and Gold trade during the Middle Ages
* These kingdoms were:
  + Ghana
  + Mali
  + Songhai

**The Gold Wealth of Ghana**

* This kingdom is locate in what is Southern Mauritania and Western Mali today
* Ghana is first mentioned in texts in 830 CE but is believed to have begun much earlier
* The rulers of the Soninke village united many farming villages to create the kingdom of Ghana
* Around the 800s, the introduction of the camel as a form of transport changed the kingdom
* Now goods could be traded
* The extensive gold, salt, and ivory of West Africa was sent North to be traded for manufactured goods
* Ghana grew extremely wealthy because of its trade
* Its economy was based mostly on merchants
* Ghana developed a system to tax the goods that came through the kingdom
* Ghana was known as “the land of gold”
* It is said that though the king was a just ruler, he hoarded a lot of his wealth
* It is said that he kept all the gold nuggets and allowed his people only to have gold dust

**Decline of Ghana**

* Due to a lack of sources it’s difficult to know exactly how Ghana began to decline
* Probably occurred around 1076 when they were attacked by another empire
* The remains of Ghana became a part of the next major trading kingdom- Mali

**The Kingdom of Mali**

* After the fall of Ghana, the Mandinka trive on the upper Niger suffered a bitter defeat by a rival leader. Their king and all but one of his sons were executed.
* The only survivor was Sundiata, who by 1235 had crushed his enemies and founded the Kingdom of Mali.
* Mali was an important kingdom from the 1200s-1600s
* Mali is an Arab word that means “where the king dwells.”
* Mali began to control the Gold and Salt Trade
* They had three large gold mines within their territory
* It became the world’s leading source of gold

**Mali Under Mansa Musa**

* The greatest emperor of Mali was Mansa Musa who took the throne in 1312
* Mansa-Musa reigned for25 years. He worked to ensure peace and order, he expanded Mali’s borders
* He converted to Islam and based his system of justice on the Quran.
* In 1324, Mansa Musa fulfilled one of the five pillars of Islam by making the hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca.
* Through his pilgrimage, he showed his devotion to Islam and developed strong economic and political relations with other Muslim states
* The Hajj made Mali well known and increased its wealth
* Timbuktu became a leading center of learning

**Decline of Mali**

* Around 1610, an important ruler of Mali died
* It is said that his three sons fought over control of the kingdom
* This broke the kingdom apart

**Songhai- A New Empire**

* In 14th century Songhai became the new trading empire in West Africa.
* The soldier king Sonni Ali used his army to build a largest state that has ever existed in West Africa.
* He did not adopt the religion of Islam, he followed traditional African beliefs.

**Songhai Grows**

* Songhai became the largest trading kingdom
* Songhai was able to maintain its power over trade because of a strong military
* They established a clan system
* The clan you belonged to determined your job
* Soon after his death, the emperor Askia Muhamad set up a Muslim dynasty.
* Askia Muhammad also made a pilgrimage to Mecca.
* He encouraged the development of Timbuktu as an important center of learning
* He was known for giving to the poor

**Songhai Falls**

* Songhai prospered until the mid 1600s
* Civil War began to tear Songhai apart
* Morocco invaded upon a weakened Songhai

**MESOAMERICA NOTES**

**What does Mesoamerica mean?**

* Meso= Middle
* America= North and South America

**Where is Mesoamerica located?**

* Mesoamerica is located in the region that is now Mexico and Central America

**Who were the Maya?**

* The Maya were a people that lived in present day Mexico
* They flourished from 300 AD- 900 AD
* The Maya did not have an empire, they lived in a series of city-states

**How did they farm?**

* Mayan farming methods were very advanced.
* Slash and Burn Farming — Maya cut down the plants in the rainforest, burned them and used the resulting field to plant in. They used the ashes as soil nutrition.
* The Mayan’s complex farming system produced enough corn or maize and other crops to support the growing city.
* Mayan crops included: corn, squash, and beans

**What were Mayan achievements?**

* The Maya made many advances
* Math— Developed the concept of zero
* Architecture- Built great pyramids topped with temples to the gods in the capital city of Tikal
* Astronomy- Charted the movement of the sun, moon, planets, and stars, and used what they learned to create an accurate 365-day calendar
* Writing- Developed a hieroglyphic writing system and kept records

**Why did the Maya decline?**

* The cause of Maya decline is unknown but scholars have theories
* Environmental damage due to overuse of natural resources
* Warfare over competition for land that destroyed crops
* Abuse of power by kings causing rebellions

**The Inca**

The Incan Empire began around 1400 AD high in the Andes Mountains of South America. They were not a mesoamerican civilization, but shared similar characterisitics.The empire declined in the mid 1500s. Much like the Mayans, the Incas had a very complex society. The social structure of the Incas was very inflexible. The leader of the empire was a man called the ‘Inca’. The Inca was thought to be a direct descendant of god and had absolute power in society. **Pachacuti**, a skilled warrior and leader, was the founder of the Incan empire. He declared himself both emperor, and a god. At the very bottom of the social ladder were the common people. These common people were forced to build an extensive system of roads and farmlands throughout the Andes.

Agriculture was tough business in the Andes Mountains. Flatlands were rare. So, they simply created flat land by building steps of land for agriculture down the mountainside. This system of carving up the mountains was called **terraced farming**. This was great for irrigation, or the watering of soil. Instead of rainwater running down the mountainside, the Inca channeled it through each step. They also built aqueducts to carry water where it was needed. The Incas grew corn and potatoes, and raised llama and alpaca for food and for labor.

The Inca also created one of the greatest road systems in history. Their paved roads allowed armies and news to move quickly throughout the long empire. At regular stations, runners waited to carry messages throughout the empire. While they didn’t have a written language, the Inca developed an advanced system of recording information. To carry messages along their great road system, the Incas developed a system of writing using a series of knots on string. This system was called **Quipu** (Kwee-Pu). The type of knot, color of string, and number of knots all symbolized different information for travelers.

**Who were the Aztecs?**

* The Aztec were a people that lived in present-day Mexico from 1350-1519 about 300 years after the Maya.

**What was the capital of the Aztecs?**

* The capital city of the Aztecs was Tenochtitlan
* Tenochtitlan was located on an island in Lake Texcoco
* At the height of the empire, Tenochtitlan held 30,000 people, and the empire held 30 million!
* According to Aztec legend, the gods had told them to search for an eagle perched atop a cactus holding a snake in its beak.
* They finally saw the sign on a swampy land island in Lake Texcoco.

**How did the Aztecs farm?**

* The Aztecs built chinampas, artificial islands made of earth piled on reed mats that were anchored to the shallow lake beds. On these floating gardens, they raised corn, squash and beans.

**What was the Aztec religion?**

* The Aztecs were polytheistic and believed that their gods controlled things such as drought, darkness, rain, and happiness.
* Their most important god was Huitzilopochtli, the sun god.
* The Aztecs believed that in order to give the sun the power to rise each day, they had to offer the hearts of tens of thousands of victims to the sun god. Most of the victims were prisoners of war
* The Aztecs went to war regularly in order to use the captured soldiers as a source of sacrifice victims

**What were Aztec achievements?**

* In addition to the construction of the great city of Tenochtitlan and chinampa farming, the Aztecs had many achievements.
* Doctors learned to set bones and dentists learned to treat cavities
* Engineers created bridges to connect the island capital together.
* They developed an accurate calendar
* Their army expanded the Aztec empire.

**Emperor Qin**

* China had a long history of conflict over land
* There were many groups that wanted to control China
* In 221 BC a new leader united all of China
* His name was Qin (pronounced Chin)
* Qin came to power and took the throne at the age of 13

**Qin and the Great Wall**

* China shared a border with the neighboring country of Mongolia
* The Mongolians were fierce fighters and a threat to China’s safety
* Qin built the Great Wall of China to protect China from invaders to the North
* The wall took 100s of years to complete
* It is said that thousands of people worked on the wall
* Thousands of these people also died while working on the wall and are now buried in it
* Many other Chinese dynasties (family of powerful leaders) added to the Great Wall of China, expanding its length beyond what Emperor Qin had built
* The wall was meant to keep out invaders, as well as small groups of nomads from the North who wished to steal from small villages.
* It was successful at scaring the small groups and protected many of China’s small villages.

**Mongol Invasion**

**1 Genghis Khan**

**Many people think of Genghis Khan as a tyrant and bloodthirsty villain**. During his lifetime he killed around 40 million people. However, his accomplishments were nothing short of extraordinary. During his lifetime he conquered more territory than any other leader in history. His successors went on to establish the **largest empire** that the world had ever seen. No matter how he is viewed, Genghis Khan was a charismatic and dynamic leader whose influence can be felt today throughout Asia and even in parts of Europe.

**2 Early Life**

That Genghis Khan could have earned such prominent place in history is remarkable given that the first three decades of his life were fraught with hardship. Genghis Khan was the son of a Mongol chief. He was born in 1167 and was given the name Temujin which means “iron.” Legend says that when Temujin was born he was clenching a blood clot in his fist. The Mongols believed that symbol meant he was destined to be a great warrior.

**3 Unity among the Mongols**

By 1206, Temüjin had managed to unite or subdue several big nomadic tribes and small countries. He united the different Mongol tribes and became known **“Genghis Khan,” or the “Universal Leader.”** In order to create unity among the Mongols, **Ghengis Khan created an official writing script for his empire. He also allowed people in his empire to have some freedom of religion. This encouraged people of various religions, including Muslims, to participate in the rule and benefit of the empire**. He relied heavily on intelligence gathering, rapid communication through a system of horse riding messengers, and educated and wise advisers. In order to understand rival empires and to understand how to rule his own empire, he listened to teachers and advisers including religious teachers. He also encouraged the use of technology and weapons of the enemies he encountered, and he integrated foreign technicians into his army. In this way, he was able to conquer large cities. His realized that his army was now big and strong enough to attack the large more civilized empires to the west, south and east.

**4 Genghis conquers the Chinese**

Genghis Khan was a ruthless warrior. “Life's greatest joy,” Genghis Khan remarked, “is in victory: to conquer one's enemies, to pursue them, to deprive them of their possessions, to make their beloved weep, to ride on their horses and embrace their wives and daughters.” Genghis Khan was a very strong leader, which helped his army take over much of China. Genghis Khan's horsemen were feared throughout China. His army could travel up to **100 miles a day on horseback**, while the Chinese traveled by walking. The Mongolian army also used **bows and arrows to fight**, and were extremely skilled at shooting them on horseback. Genghis Khan also had brilliant military tactics. One tactic was a **fake retreat**. Genghis Khan and his army would pretend to turn away from the oncoming Chinese army. When the Chinese believed the Mongols were retreating, Genghis would order his army to turn back and fight when his enemies were most weak. When Genghis Khan defeated a group, he murdered the leaders, but **invited the warriors of his enemies to join his own army**, thus expanding his territory and the size and skill of his army.

After Genghis Khan died, his **grandson Kublai Khan** continued to take over much of China. Kublai Khan began his own dynasty in China, the Yuan Dynasty and was the leader of much of China for many years.

**The Tang and Song Dynasty**

* The Tang and Song Dynasties restored culture and prosperity in China
* The Tang dynasty lasted for nearly 300 years between 618 A.D. and 907 A.D.
* Tang rulers created a more stable economy by giving land to the peasants and breaking up large pieces of land to reduce the power of their owners.
* The Tang had a highly organized government and employment system called the Civil Service System
* In this system, the government allowed anyone, even commoners, to take an exam. A high enough score on the exam meant a government job.
* Because of this system, the government became filled with highly qualified and intelligent people.

**Accomplishments of the Tang and Song Dynasty**

* During the Tang and Song Dynasties, the Chinese invented new technoloy and other items that improved the way they lived and our lives today
  + **Compass**
  + **Gunpowder**
  + **Block Printing/ Moveable Type**
* They traded with the West along the Silk Road, a trade Network that connected the East (China) with the West (Europe)
* Many goods and ideas were traded across the Silk Road

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| From the West (Europe) to the East (China) | From the East (China) to the West (Europe) |
| * Furs * Perfumes * Glass * Bronze Weapons * Horses * Ceramics * Christianity and Islam | * Tea * Compass * Block Printing * Silk * Gun Powder * Paper * Buddhism |

**Silk Road**

THE MECHANT’S TALE

I am Nanivandak, a merchant from Samarkand, and a city under the rule of the Bagdad Caliphate (modern day Iraq).  I travel for many months from my hometown to Chang'an (in China) to buy and sell goods.  Along the route I meet many different people from all over Eurasia.  Yet, although we all come from various places, we all speak the language of the Silk Road - Arabic.  Ever since I was a young man, I have traveled to Chang'an.  I can even remember my first trip with my uncle.  We had to take the Northern Silk Road, rather than the Southern.  Other merchants and travelers warned us about the Tibetan troops near Kashgar.

The journey itself is dangerous.  The mountains though beautiful are full of pit falls and freezing temperatures.  As we move closer to the Tarim Basin in China the terrain and climate once again changes.  This spring the melting snows caused avalanches and icefalls.  The journey is not only hard on us, but also our animals.  We need to collect fresh horses and yaks every so often.  At times you have to deal with crooked horse traders, and pay more than you need.  Soon we will be exchanging our horses for camels.  Camels are the only animals that can carry the goods and us across the desert.  Yet, they are expensive, and we need to provide for their care on top of paying 14 bolts of silk for each animal.  We are held responsible for any injury or death that occurs to our camels.  I have seen my uncle willing to sacrifice a man or woman if it meant saving a camel.

My uncle and I whenever possible, travel with other merchants.  Safety in numbers is my uncle's motto.  When you hear enough horror stories about the lack of water, sudden windstorms and even sandstorms, you really believe in his motto.  Occasionally we come across the bones of small groups who broke away or decided to take a less traveled road.  The greatest threat is the bandits.

Once a small group of merchants left the caravan early to try to get a head start on business in the town.  They never made it.  They were ambushed, killed and the goods stolen by bandits.  At other times we can see how difficult it is to live along the route with abandoned towns, decaying bodies, human and animal bones.  It teaches you to listen and learn survival tactics.  We just came across a water well that contained salty water.  You couldn't drink it without boiling it.  My uncle boiled dough strings in the water that absorbed most of the salt, and made it drinkable.

Yet, the trip is worthwhile if we survive.  We take home the profits and more goods to be sold back to our homeland.  We brought with us brass, amber and coral to sell in Chang'an.  The Chinese officials used the brass for ornaments for the girdles on their official robes, while the Buddhist monks need the brass for their statues.  The Persian golden ornaments created by our native Samankands are all the rage in Chang'an.  Chang'an is a merchant's paradise.  The market place has 3000 stalls representing the 200 merchant guilds in the city.  The city is beautiful as will and fruit trees, as well as a beautiful lake surrounding it.  Soon with the help of the magnificent one, I will be there in the comfort and beauty of the city.

**Confucius the Wise**

* During the Tang and Song dynasties, much of government policy was based on a Chinese philosopher named Confucius
* Confucius was born during a time when China was being torn apart.
* He believed that if society is orderly and has good leaders things could improve.
* His teachings focused on respect for relationships and education
* Confucius believed that society functioned best if everyone respected laws and behaved according to their place in society
* Confucius taught that harmony resulted when people accepted their in society.

**Five Relationships**

* Confucius stressed 5 relationships

1. Ruler and Subject

2. Parent and Child

3. Husband and Wife

4. Older brother and younger brother

5. Friend and Friend

* The only equal relationship was friend to friend

**Government Role**

* Confucius also taught that it was a ruler’s responsibility to provide good government
* In return, the people would be respectful and loyal subjects.
* Confucius said that the best ruler was a virtuous one and that rulers should be well educated

**The history of foot binding**

Many people have looked at beautifully decorated silk shoes from [China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China) and wondered if they were for a child or a doll. They are surprised to find that these pairs of shoes, some of which are only a little over three inches in length were actually meant to be worn by grown women. But how could a woman get her feet that small? Extremely small feet were achieved through a process known as foot binding.

Foot binding was first practiced in about the 10th century. The process was a lengthy and dangerous one and many girls actually died from having their feet bound. The arch was often broken and the toes folded underneath and bound into place. This was started before a girl’s feet had time to fully form. The average age that girls began the process was anywhere from four to seven years of age. If a girl was lucky, the process would be performed during the winter. Cold weather could numb the feet and help to ease some of the pain.

The process of binding the feet to make them as small as possible would take years to complete. They were unwrapped often and cared for. It was not uncommon for gangrene to set in and for the flesh to rot in some areas. Foot care took place daily in rich families but may have only taken place once or twice a week in families that were less financially well off.

The ideal length for a woman’s foot was three inches long. Women who had longer feet were often considered less desirable and may not have been able to marry as well as women with perfectly bound feet. A woman who had her feet bound could walk on them although it was difficult. In fact, women who were from a higher social class were often more likely to have their feet bound since it showed that the family was affluent enough to afford servants to help the woman and they would not need to walk.

There have been many stories that explained the origin of foot binding. One legend states that Yao-niang, a **consort** of the ruler Li Yu had performed a dance on feet that had been wrapped in silk cloth. This type of foot wrapping was very similar to the toe shoes that ballet dancers wear today. It became desirable to have feet shaped like a crescent moon.

Foot binding in some form was practiced for approximately 1000 years. Women who were born as late as the 21st century had their feet bound although the practice was outlawed in 1949. Some women who had bound feet did remove their wrappings but this also caused great pain and left the women disabled. There are still women who are living in China today who have the distinctive small feet that were once so prized for a thousand years.

**Geography of Japan**

* Japan is located on an archipelago or chain of Islands about 100 miles off the Asian mainland and east of the Korean Peninsula.
* The surrounding seas have both **protected and isolated** Japan

**Religions of Japan**

**Shinto**

* This is the worship of the forces of nature spirits known as “kami”
* Shinto means “way of the gods”

**Buddhism**

* Began in India by a man named Siddhartha
* It was brought to Japan from China
* Buddhism is a religion that believes that life is full of suffering
* You should follow the eightfold path to reach Nirvana or happiness

**Cultural Borrowing**

* The Japanese borrowed many cultural traits from China
  + Rich Japanese spoke Chinese and dressed in Chinese clothing
  + Their cooks also served Chinese food on Chinese style dishes
  + Tea drinking and tea ceremonies were borrowed from China.
  + Japanese official and scholars wrote history with Chinese characters.

**Heian Period**

* This was the time period from 794-1185
* It was a time when Japan created its own culture
* Rich men and women lived in pavilions or garden court
* Rules of etiquette and manners were stressed.
* Beauty and elegance were very important.

**Feudalism in Japan**

* Feudalism is a political and military system in which you exchange land for loyalty and protection.
* In the 1100s, a feudal system developed in Japan

1. Emperor
2. Shogun and Daimyo
3. Samurai
4. Peasants
5. Merchants

Feudalism

1.1) The emperor was an important political and religious figure in Japan. However, by the 1100s, the emperor’s power was so weakened that Japan collapsed into civil war. Unable to control the lords (landowners) of Japan, the emperor lost his political power. A system of feudalism arose in Japan and lords and their private armies became very powerful.

1.2) By 1192, Japan’s most powerful lord or noble had the emperor appoint him as Japan’s “Supreme Military Governor” or Shogun. For the next 600 years, the Shoguns were the real rulers of Japan, while the emperors acted as mere figureheads. The emperor had high status, but had little political power. The Shogun stood at the top of the Japanese feudal system. He was the most powerful lord in Japan and a military dictator. 1.3) The highest nobles next to the shogun were the daimyos. A daimyo was a noble landowner or a lord. Daimyo controlled larges estates, or pieces of land. Daimyo also had private armies or armies of warriors fought for the daimyo. The daimyo gave land to warriors or samurai, which means “one who serves” in exchange for loyalty and protection. Samurai were warriors on horseback and fearless soldiers who carried swords. They believed that to die in battle was an honor. Samurai practiced the Code of Bushido.

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1.4) The Code of Bushido was the samurai’s code of honor. The Code of Bushido demanded that a samurai be loyal to his lord and brave. A samurai had to obey orders and practice self-discipline, or control over one’s feelings and actions. Many samurai practiced Buddhism because of its stress on meditation and devotion to duty. Honor was the most important thing in a samurai’s life. If a samurai lost his honor, he had to commit seppuku. He had to kill himself with his own sword. The Japanese believed that seppuku restored or brought back honor.

1.5) After the samurai, the next position on the hierarchy of feudalism were the peasants. The peasants were mostly farmers or fishermen, and they made up about 90% of the population. Since the peasants were the producers of food on which the whole population and all the feudal classes depended, they were considered an honorable class. The peasants were placed higher in the hierarchy and enjoyed more privileges than the merchants who sold goods in the market. The merchants made up the lowest class. They were not considered honorable as they did not produce anything themselves.