NOTES

Two Golden Ages
After the Han dynasty (Wudi, Silk Road) collapsed in 220CE, China remained a divided land for about 400 years. During this period of division, China managed to escape the grim world that Western Europe was experiencing (plague, economic failures, etc.). Farm production in China expanded and technology slowly improved. Buddhism spread, while learning and the arts continued. Even Chinese cities survived despite invaders in the North, as the invaders would often adopt Chinese civilization rather than demolish it. Meanwhile, in the South, various Chinese dynasties rose and fell.

THE TANG DYNASTY
The first two Tang emperors were father (Li Yuan) and son (Li Shimin), but the son was the main force behind the dynasty. After time, Li Shimin, compelled his aging father to step down and took the throne himself, taking the name Tang Taizong. He was a brilliant general, government reformer, famous historian, and master of the calligraphy brush. He would eventually become the most admired of all Chinese emperors.

The Tang Dynasty, under the leadership of Tang Taizong, carried empire building to greater heights, conquering territories deep into Central Asia, as far as present-day Afghanistan. Chinese armies forced neighboring lands of Vietnam, Tibet, and Korea to become tributary states. A tributary state is an independent state that has to acknowledge the supremacy of another state and pay tribute to its ruler. Therefore, while these states remained independent, their rulers had to acknowledge Chinese supremacy and send regular tribute to the Tang emperor.

Government & the Economy under the Tang Dynasty
Later Tang rulers, like Empress Wu Zhao, went back to the Han system of uniform government throughout China. They rebuilt the bureaucracy and enlarged the civil service system to recruit talented officials trained in Confucian philosophy. They also set up schools to prepare male students for the exams and developed a flexible law code.
Under a system of land reform, the Tang emperors redistributed land to peasants. This policy weakened the power of large landowners. At the same time, it increased government revenues, since the peasants could now pay taxes.

**Decline of the Tang Dynasty**
The Tang Dynasty eventually weakened. Eventually, Tang emperors lost China's northwestern territories in Central Asia to the Arabs. Government corruption, heavy taxes, drought, famine, and rebellions all contributed to the end of the Tang Dynasty.

**THE SONG DYNASTY**
In 960CE, Zhao Kuangyin reunited much of China and founded the Song Dynasty. The Song ruled for 319 years, a little longer than the Tang. However, the Song controlled less territory than the Tang had. The Song faced the constant threat of invaders in the north. In the 1100's, the struggling Song retreated south of the Huang He River. There, the Song ruled for another 150 years from their new capital at Hangzhou.

The Song Dynasty was a golden age. Chinese wealth and culture dominated East Asia. The economy expanded. The center of farming shifted from wheat-growing in the north to rice paddies on the Yangzi River in the south. By growing these new strains of rice with improved irrigation methods, peasants were able to produce two rice crops each year. The rise in productivity created surpluses, allowing more people to pursue trade, learning, and the arts.

Under the Song, foreign trade flourished. Merchants arrived by land and by sea from India, Persia, and the Middle East. The Chinese built better ships, and their merchants carried goods to Southeast Asia in exchange for spices and other items. The Song were found to trade porcelain, and eventually the government started using paper money.

**Women in Song Dynasty Times**
Women had a higher status in Tang times than they did in Song times. At home, women were called upon to run family affairs. Women joined their husband's family upon marriage, and with their mother-in-law, they managed the family finances, discipline, and servants. Still, within families, boys were valued more highly than girls were. Women's lower position was reinforced in late Song times with the custom of **footbinding**. Footbinding is a practice in which the feet of young girls were bound with long strips of cloth, producing a lily-shaped foot about half the
size of a foot that was allowed to grow normally. Tiny feet and a stilted walk because a symbol of female nobility and beauty. It was very painful, yet the custom survived because parents feared that a daughter with large feet would be unable to find a husband. Not every girl in China had her feet bound. Peasants who relied on their daughters for field labor did not accept it.

**Assignment #1**

**Questions for Review:** After you read and review the notes provided, please answer the following questions in a Google Doc. Share it with me (kwelgoss@wscschools.org) upon completion.

1. What was China like after the Han Dynasty collapsed in 220CE? (Provide three dot jots).
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2. Who started the Tang Dynasty? What were some of the qualities of Tang Taizong as a person AND as a leader?
3. What is a tributary state? What neighboring lands did the Tang Dynasty make tributary states?
4. Later rulers, after Tang Taizong, went back to the Han system of government. Identify 4 actions they took.
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5. What was the impact of redistributing land to the peasants?
6. How did the Tang Dynasty decline?
7. How did the Song Dynasty respond to the constant threat of invaders in the north?
8. What was the impact on Song society when the government switched from growing wheat to growing rice?
9. Describe trade under the Song Dynasty.
10. What is foot-binding? What did footbinding symbolize in Song society?
Spread of Civilizations in East Asia: The Mongols

The MONGOLS
The Mongols were a nomadic people from the steppes of Central Asia. Known as fierce horsemen and warriors, the Mongol clans were united in 1206 by the powerful chief Temujin, later known as Genghis Khan. Genghis Khan was a very powerful ruler. He imposed strict military discipline and demanded absolutely loyalty. Under his leadership, Mongol armies were victorious. They were tough, skilled warriors, who lived in the saddles of their horses. They could travel for days at a time eating only a few handfuls of grain and drinking mare's milk.

Assignment #2 (see below graphic organizer)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Impact of Mongols</th>
<th>Negative Impact of Mongols</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The Mongols really did reinvigorate cross-Eurasian trade. The Silk Road trading routes that had existed for about 1000 years by the time the Mongols made the scene had fallen into disuse, but the Mongols valued trade because they could tax it, and they did a great job of keeping their empire safe.</td>
<td>1. Here is Genghis Khan’s definition of happiness: “The greatest happiness is to vanquish your enemies, to chase them before you, to rob them of their wealth, to see those dear to them bathed in tears, to clasp to your bosom their wives and daughters.”</td>
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<td>2. The Mongols increased communication throughout Eurasia by developing this pony express-like system of weigh stations with horses and riders that could quickly relay information. It was called the yam system and also included these amazing bronze passports, which facilitated travel.</td>
<td>2. Is an extension of one. The Mongols were seriously brutal conquerors. I mean, not uniquely brutal, but still: The Mongols destroyed entire cities, and most historians estimate the numbers they killed to be in the millions.</td>
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<td>3. Another thing that travelled along the Mongol trade routes was cuisine. For example, it was because of the Mongols that rice became a staple of the Persian diet.</td>
<td>3. Their empire didn’t last. Within 80 years they’d left China and been replaced by a new dynasty, the Ming. And in Persia they blended in so completely that by the 15th century they were totally unrecognizable. I mean, they’d even taken up agriculture!</td>
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<td>4. The Mongols forcibly relocated people who were useful to them, like artists and musicians and, especially administrators. As you can imagine, the Mongols were not much for administrative tasks like keeping records so they found people were good at that stuff and just moved them around the empire.</td>
<td>4. They also weren’t particularly interested in artistic patronage or architecture.</td>
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<td>5. The Mongols were almost unprecedentedly tolerant of different religions [...] you could find Muslims and Buddhists and Christians and people of any other religion you can think of prospering throughout the Mongol empire.</td>
<td>5. The Mongols were probably responsible for the Black Death. By opening up trade they also opened up vectors for disease to travel, in the case of the Plague via fleas infected with Yersinia pestis [the bacteria that causes the Plague]...it was the fleas on the rats in the holds of Black Sea ships that were trading with Europe [that spread the Plague]. But that trade only existed because of the Mongols.</td>
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Assignment #2 - Based on the arguments presented above, do you think the Mongols have had a positive or negative impact on world history? State your claim in a one-page double-spaced essay. Explain your reasoning and cite at least 3 reasons for your claim (from the above chart) in a Google Doc, and share it with me (kwelgoss@wscschools.org).