Chapter 8 – China and the World East Asian Connections

Big Picture Questions

1. How can you explain the changing fortunes of Buddhism in China?
2. How did China influence the world of the third-wave era? How was China itself transformed by its encounters with a wider world?
3. How might China’s posture in the world during the Tang and Song dynasty era compare to its emerging role in global affairs in the twenty-first century?
4. In what ways did Tang and Song dynasty china resemble the earlier Han dynasty period, and in what ways did China change?

Main Point Question

1. Chinese history has often been viewed in the West as impressive perhaps, but largely static or changeless and self-contained or isolated. In what ways might the material in this chapter counteract such impressions?

Margin Review Questions

1. Why are the centuries of the Tang and Song dynasties in China sometimes referred to as a “golden age”?
2. In what ways did women’s lives change during the Tang and Song dynasties?
3. How did the Chinese and their nomadic neighbors to the north view each other?
4. What assumptions underlay the tribute system?
5. How did the tribute system in practice differ from the ideal Chinese understanding of its operation?
6. In what ways did China and the nomads influence each other?
7. In what ways did China have an influence in Korea, Vietnam, and Japan? In what ways was that influence resisted?
8. In what different ways did Japanese and Korean women experience the pressures of Confucian orthodoxy?
9. In what different ways did Korea, Vietnam, Japan, and northern nomads experience and respond to Chinese influence?
10. In what ways did China participate in the world of Eurasian commerce and exchange, and with what outcomes?
11. What facilitated the rooting of Buddhism within China?
12. What were the major sources of opposition to Buddhism in China?

Chapter 9 – The Worlds of Islam

Big Picture Questions

1. How might you account for the immense religious and political military success of Islam in its early centuries?
2. In what ways might Islamic civilization be described as cosmopolitan, international, or global?
3. “Islam was simultaneously both a single world of shared meaning and interaction and a series of separate, distinct, and conflicting communities.” What evidence could you provide to support both sides of the argument?
4. What changes did Islamic expansion generate in those societies that encountered it, and how was Islam itself transformed by those encounters?
5. What distinguished the early centuries of Islamic history from a similar phase in the history of Christianity and Buddhism?

Main Point Questions

1. In what ways did the civilization of Islam draw on other civilizations in the Afro-Eurasian world? And in what respects did it shape or transform those civilizations?

Margin Review Questions

1. In what ways did the early history of Islam reflect its Arabian origins?
2. What did the Quran expect from those who followed its teachings?
3. How was Arabia transformed by the rise of Islam?
4. Why were Arabs able to construct such a huge empire so quickly?
5. What accounts for the widespread conversion to Islam?
6. What is the difference between Sunni and Shia Islam?
7. In what ways were Sufi Muslims critical of mainstream Islam?
8. How did the rise of Islam change the lives of women?
9. What similarities and differences can you identify in the spread of Islam to India, Anatolia, West Africa, and Spain?
10. In what ways was Anatolia changed by its incorporation into the Islamic World?
11. “Islam had a revolutionary impact on every society that it touched.” What evidence might support this statement, and what might challenge it?
12. What makes it possible to speak of the Islamic world as a distinct and coherent civilization?
13. In what ways was the world of Islam a “cosmopolitan” civilization?

Chapter 10 – The Worlds of Christendom: Contraction, Expansion, and Division

Big Picture Questions

1. What accounts for the different historical trajectories of the Byzantine and West European expressions of Christendom?
2. How did Byzantium and Western Europe interact with each other and with the larger world of the third-wave era?
3. In what respects was the civilization of the Latin West distinctive and unique, and in what way was it broadly comparable to other third-wave civilizations?
4. How does the evolution of the Christian world in the third-wave era compare with that of Tang and Song Dynasty in China and of the Islamic World?

Main Point Question

1. In what different ways did the history of Christianity unfold in various parts of the Afro-Eurasian world during the third-wave era?

Margin Review Questions

1. What variations in the experience of African and Asian Christian communities can you identify?
2. How did Eastern Orthodox Christianity differ from Roman Catholicism?
3. How did links to Byzantium transform the new civilization of Kievan Rus?
4. What replaced the Roman order in Western Europe?
5. In what ways was European civilization changing after 100?
6. What was the impact of the Crusades in World History
7. How did the historical development of the European West differ from that of Byzantium in the third-wave era?
8. In what ways did borrowing from abroad shape European civilization after 100?
9. Why was Europe unable to achieve the kind of political unity that China experienced? What impact did this have on the subsequent history of Europe?
10. In what different ways did classical Greek philosophy and science have an impact in the West, in Byzantium, and in the Islamic World?

Chapter 11 – Pastoral Peoples on the Global Stage: The Mongol Movement

Big Picture Questions

1. What accounts for the often negative attitudes of settled societies toward the pastoral peoples living on their borders?
2. Why have historians often neglected pastoral peoples’ role in world history? How would you assess the perspective of this chapter toward the Mongols? Does it strike you as negative and critical of the Mongols, as bending over backward to portray them in a positive light, or as a balanced representation?
3. In what different ways did Mongol rule affect the Islamic world, Russia, China, and Europe? In what respects did it foster Eurasian integration?
4. Why did the Mongol Empire last only a relatively short time?
5. In what ways did the Mongol Empire resemble previous empires (Arab, Roman, Chinese, or the Greek empire of Alexander, for example), and in what ways did it differ from them?

Main Point Question

1. What has been the role in world history of pastoral peoples in general and the Mongols in particular?

Margin Review Questions

1. In what ways did pastoral societies differ from their agricultural counterparts?
2. In what ways did pastoral societies interact with their agricultural neighbors?
3. In what ways did the Xiongnu, Arabs, Turks, and Berbers make an impact on World History?
4. Identify the major steps in the rise of the Mongol Empire.
5. What accounts for the political and military success of the Mongols?
6. How did Mongol rule change China? In what ways were the Mongols changed by China?
7. How was Mongol rule in Persia different from that in China?
8. What was distinctive about the Russian experience of Mongol rule?
9. What kinds of cross-cultural interactions did the Mongol Empire generate?
10. Disease changes societies. How might this argument apply to the plague?