

The Song Dynasty and the importance of inventions.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Song_dynasty

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Here is a Short Video on the Song Dynasty:

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/world-history/medieval-times/song-china/v/prosperity-in-song-china-960-1279>

This video shows an overview of the Song Dynasty and it's inventions to help aid understanding.

The Song Dynasty.

The Song dynasty was an imperial dynasty it ruled Ancient China from 960 to 1279 AD. It followed the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period. Ancient China was the most advanced civilization in the world during the rule of the Song dynasty.

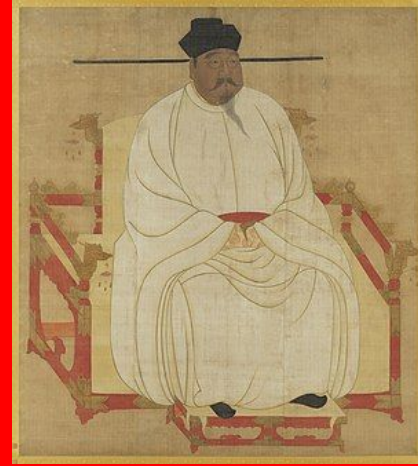
The Song Dynasty was famous for its many inventions and advances, but eventually collapsed and was conquered by the Mongol barbarians to the north. The Song Dynasty often came into conflict with the Liao, Western Xia and Jin dynasties to the north. The Song Dynasty was eventually conquered by the Mongol-led Yuan dynasty, under the rule of Kublai Khan and his armies in 1279 during the Battle of Yamen, the Mongol invasion was the cause of the re-unification of China.

The Song Dynasties' government was the first in world history to issue banknotes or true paper money nationally and the first Chinese government to establish a permanent standing navy. This dynasty also saw the first known use of gunpowder, as well as the first discernment of true north using a compass.

The history of the Song dynasty is usually divided up between the Northern Song and the Southern Song.

The Song Dynasty and it's emperors:

- The Song dynasty was founded by Zhao Kuangyin who became Emperor Taizu, he reigned from 960 AD- 976 AD The last Emperor of the Song Dynasty was Zhao Bing who reigned from 1278BC-1297BC. The Last Emperor of the Northern Song Dynasty was Emperor Qinzong, he reigned from 1126BC to 1127BC. The first emperor of Southern Song was Emperor Gaozong, his reign was 1127 BC to 1162 BC.



Northern Song:

The Song dynasty was founded by a general named Zhao Kuangyin. He was a military general who launched a mutiny against the Zhou Dynasty and was successful. He established the Northern Song Dynasty and he became Emperor Taizu. Emperor Taizu and his brother Emperor Taizong managed to unify the territories in China within two decades.

Legend has it that his troops no longer wanted to serve the current emperor and begged Zhao to wear the yellow robe. After refusing three times eventually he took the robe and became Emperor Taizu, establishing the Song dynasty. Emperor Taizu reunited much of China under his rule. However, he also appointed scholars to lead his army. This weakened his army and eventually caused the fall of the Northern Song to the Jin peoples.

Southern Song:

When the Jin conquered the Northern Song, the son of the last emperor escaped to the south. He established the Southern Song in southern China. The Southern Song paid a fee each year to the Jin in order to maintain the peace. After paying the Jin for over 100 years, the Southern Song allied with the Mongols to conquer the Jin. This plan backfired, however. Once the Mongols had conquered the Jin, they turned on the Southern Song and captured all of China.

Power:

In theory, the emperor's political power was absolute, but even during the Han dynasty, he shared executive powers with civilian officials and normally based his decisions on the advice and formal consensus of his ministers. During the Song dynasty, a national examination system (Civil Service Exam) managed by scholar-bureaucrats was used to recruit officials; those who passed the palace examination – the highest-level examination in the empire – were appointed directly by the emperor to the highest central government positions. Like commoners, these senior officials had to obey his edicts as law or be punished. However, senior officials not only challenged the emperor over policy, but restrained him by invoking the ideal Confucian mores and values of the literati gentry class from which they came.

Culture:

The arts flourished under the Song dynasty. Poetry and literature were especially popular with the invention of moveable type and the availability of books to many people. Painting and the performing arts were also very popular. A high value was put on education and many of the nobles were very well educated.

Tea and Rice:

It was during the Song dynasty that rice became such an important crop for the Chinese. Drought-resistant and fast-growing rice was introduced to southern China. This new rice allowed farmers to have two harvests in a single year, doubling the amount of rice they could grow.

Tea became popular during this time as well due to the efforts of tea lover Emperor Huizong. He wrote the famous "Treatise on Tea" which described the tea ceremony in detail.

Technology and Inventions:

The period of rule under the Song dynasty was a time of great advancements and invention. Some of the most important inventions in the history of Ancient China were made during this time including moveable type, gunpowder, and the magnetic compass.

The invention of moveable type allowed for mass printings of documents and books. Millions of copies were made of some popular books allowing books to become affordable to everyone. Other products were printed on paper in great quantities including paper money, playing cards, and calendars.

The magnetic compass was part of many improvements in boating and navigation. The Song dynasty had the first standing navy in world history. They built large ships over 300 feet long that had watertight compartments and onboard catapults that could toss huge rocks onto their enemies.

Gunpowder had a lasting impact on warfare. The Song used gunpowder for fireworks, but also found ways to use it in battle. They developed various bombs, rockets, and fire arrows. Unfortunately for the Song, the Mongols copied their ideas and ended up using these weapons against them.

Problems with the Song Dynasty:

Problems with the Song Dynasty included; Political corruption and invasions from external tribes, like the Mongols and civilian uprisings greatly weakened the Northern Song Dynasty. In addition to this, due to weak military strength the Northern Song were not able to withstand the invasion from the Jin Dynasty.

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