China and Mongols: Significant Changes
Objectives & Key Terms
- Describe China’s accomplishments under the Tang and Song dynasties
- Illustrate the changes that occurred after the Mongol invasion

Key Terms:
Neoconfucianism, porcelain, compass, movable type, Kublai Khan, Yuan dynasty, Marco Polo
Chinese Civilization

- After decline of Han dynasty Chinese civilization experienced warring states & three empires: Sui, Tan & Song
- These empires restored and revived: Grand Canal, Great Wall & many Han dynasty accomplishments
- Buddhism becoming popular, Confucian scholars combined Buddhist ideas w/ Confucianism: resulted in Neo (new) Confucianism
Technology

- China was the most advanced civilization in the world as this time
- Developed gunpowder, compass, new crops, block printing, artwork and porcelain
- China’s own military technology was used against them by Mongol invaders (Genghis Khan started this, last class referenced)
Kublai Khan

- Grandson of Genghis Khan, assumed title of Great Khan in 1260
- Great Khan “ruled” entire Mongol Empire
  - In reality, empire split into 4 Khanates, semi-independent states
- Kublai khanate included Mongolia, Korea, Tibet, Northern China (Khanate of the Great Khan); fulfilled goal of grandfather-to conquer China
Kublai Become Emperor

- Chinese held off Kublai for many years
- China always defending from northern nomadic invasions
- China lost territory to nomadic group who ruled entire country, never happened before
Yuan Dynasty

- Mongol ruler Kublai Khan (grandson of Genghis)
- 1st emperor of the Yuan Dynasty and first emperor of unified China in 300 years—considered one of China’s great emperors
- Yuan dynasty lasted 1279-1368
- Control of Mongols opened China to foreign contacts/trade
- Mongols and Chinese distrusted each other; yet tolerated Chinese culture (tolerance of people conquered)
Yuan Dynasty cont...

- Kublai moved capital of Mongolia to China—sign Kublai intended to make his mark as emperor of China
- By 1368 Mongol rule of China ended with a rebellion that restored China’s rule to the Chinese
Japan

- After conquering China, Kublai tried his hand at ruling Japan
- In 1274 and 1281 Great Khan sent huge fleets against Japan
- Mongols forced Koreans to build, sail and provide provisions for boats (cost $$, ruined Korea)
- Both times Japanese “defeated” Mongols
- Second attempt, typhoon swept across Sea of Japan and Mongol ships upended, sank
- Japanese speak of “divine wind” that saved Japan
- *Wind and Waves* book
Mongol Rule in China

- Kublai faced problems as emperor
- Mongols/Chinese kept their separate identities—increased distrust of each other
- Chinese kept out of government office, yet used for local positions—highest positions went to Mongols or foreigners
- Foreign trade increased under Kublai
- Due to Mongol Peace (Pax Mongolica)
Mongol Rule in China Cont…

- Traders transported Chinese silk, porcelain—greatly valued in Europe and west Asia via Silk Roads
- Also Chinese inventions—gunpowder, compass, paper currency, printing and playing cards
- Foreign merchants invited to China by K.K. from India (Muslims), Central Asia, Persia and European traders/travelers
Marco Polo

- Most famous European to visit China
- Young Venetian trader
- Traveled by caravan on Silk Roads with father & uncle
- Arrived at Kublai Khan’s court around 1275
- Spoke many languages, K.K. sent him to various Chinese cities on government missions
- Served the Great Khan for 17 years
- Travel stories (like Ibn Battuta) recorded and turned into book—very popular in Europe; people believed them not to be true
Weakness began in last years of K.K. reign
Tried to continue “conqueror” campaign, but met humiliating defeats
Spent lots of $$$ on wasteful wars, public works, luxuries for court
Chinese resentful and over taxed
Problems for K.K. & successors; could not solve
The End Cont…

- K.K. dies 1294 & after death the Yuan dynasty began to disintegrate
- Family members argued who would rule
- Rebellions broke out in China-long resented Mongol rule
- Finally 1368 Chinese rebels overthrew the Mongols
Marco Polo
Sources

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marco_Polo