

Medieval Empires: Ming China

Background

- Mongols
 - o Kubilai Khan dies 1294
 - No strong rulers after
 - o 1330
 - Open Civil War
 - o Chinese hated living under Mongol rule
 - Led to General Rebellion
- Mandate of Heaven
 - o Drought in North, Flooding in South

Foundations of the Ming

- Created by Zhu Yuan-zhang
 - o Born commoner
 - o Changed Name to Hung Wu
 - AKA Ming T'ai-tsu
- Dynasty started 1368
 - o With capture of Peking
 - o Capital was Nanking
 - Peking associated with Mongols
 - Capital became Peking in 1421
- Rule of Hung Wu
 - o Paranoid
 - o Had to deal with Japanese Pirates
 - o Highly Autocratic
 - Lessened power of Ministers and Imperial Secretariat
 - Used Grand Secretaries
 - Lessened power of Eunuchs
 - o Used military to solidify rule
 - Placed them all around Empire
 - o Built up Imperial power
 - Too much power?
 - o Re-Expansion
 - Re-Built Tributary States
 - Korea
 - Vietnam
 - Tibet
 - Japan



Tributary System

- States acknowledged Chinese "superiority"
 - o In return for being able to trade, and have access to Chinese culture and technology
 - o Korea, Vietnam, Tibet, Japan, Burma, Laos, Philippines, Java, Siam, Malaca, Ceylon
 - o States still had autonomy
- Pledge
 - o Bowed in-front of "Son of Heaven"
 - Kowtow
 - In exchange for trading relationship
 - Fueled Chinese belief of superiority and authority

Forbidden City

- Home of the Emperors
- New Northern Capital
- Constructed from 1406-1420
 - o Anywhere between 200,000-1 million workers
- Opened with grand celebration
 - o Followed by fire that destroyed half
 - o And again in 1644
- Very Expensive
 - o Men
 - o Lumber
 - o Treasury



Exploration

- Zheng He
 - o Muslim from Western China
 - o Led massive treasure fleet to western Asia....and beyond?
 - 1405 C.E. to India
 - 1421 C.E. to Americas?
 - Led total of 7 expeditions
 - Mostly along India, Middle East, and East Africa
 - Brought Gifts to show splendor of Ming
 - o Trying to gain more tributary states
 - o First person recorded to use a compass
 - they had been around since 850 C.E.
- Expeditions stopped in 1433
 - o Conservatives took over China
 - o Too expensive
 - o China took isolationist stand
 - Worried about Mongols
 - o Thought China was perfect
 - Did not need outside influences
 - Did not think they had anything to gain
 - Very sure of own superiority
 - Ships burned
 - o Made way for European Dominance
 - Empire existed till 1644

