



**Aztec Women** Civilizations thrived in the period between 1200 and 1450 in two separate worlds, Afro-Eurasia and the Americas, the latter represented here by Aztec women from the Mesoamerican civilization. Everywhere, women participated in civilization even if patriarchy distinguished between roles for women and men and frequently defined women's contributions as less prestigious or important than those of men. The separate worlds of 1450 came together

after 1492, when Columbus's voyage across the Atlantic started a process that would ultimately lead to the collapse of the Aztec civilization. This sixteenth-century image reflects this coming together. It was created by a Mesoamerican artist for a European book, providing a last glimpse at a world that had disappeared within living memory. Facsimile detail from Book IV of Florentine Codex, "General History of the Things of New Spain"/Museo del Templo Mayor, Mexico City, Mexico/De Agostini Picture Library/Bridgeman Images

## CHAPTER

# 2

# Varieties of Civilizations

## Eurasia and the Americas

1200–1450

### China and Its Neighbors

China before the Mongol Takeover  
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Vietnam, and Japan

### The Worlds of Islam: Fragmented and Expanding

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### Civilizations of the Americas

The Emergence of the Aztecs  
in Mesoamerica  
The Emergence of the Incas in  
the Andes

### Reflections: “Civilization”: What’s in a Word?

By 2016, a number of American cities and the state of Vermont had transformed October 12 from a celebration of Columbus Day to a commemoration of Indigenous Peoples Day. Opposed in many places, such transformations of the holiday reflected a growing debate about the significance and legacy of Columbus. Was he “a perpetrator of genocide . . . , a slave trader, a thief, a pirate, and most certainly not a hero,”<sup>1</sup> as Winona LaDuke, president of the Indigenous Women’s Network, declared on the 500th anniversary of Columbus’s arrival in the Americas? Or should Americans celebrate Columbus, as the Latino novelist and publisher Jonathan Marcantoni recommended in 2015, remembering “his achievement of connecting the Europeans with the Americas . . . because without it, the societies we love would not exist”?<sup>2</sup>

This sharp debate about Columbus reminds us that the past is as unpredictable as the future and that it continues to resonate in the present. But it also reflects a broad agreement that the voyages of Columbus marked a decisive turning point, for better or worse, in world history and that they represent possibly the most important event of the fifteenth century.

This chapter explores the varieties of civilizations in Eurasia and the Americas in the centuries before Columbus’s momentous voyages brought them together. By 1200, most humans in both hemispheres lived in long-established civilizations whose various customs, beliefs, and traditions shaped the political, social, economic, and cultural lives

### « AP Analyzing Evidence

What does this image suggest about the roles of women in Aztec society?



of their peoples. But these civilizations were far from static. Instead they were constantly evolving, spreading, or shrinking. In East Asia, an ancient Chinese civilization continued to thrive even as newer civilizations in Korea, Vietnam, and Japan borrowed from it as they created distinctive civilizations of their own. The heartland of a politically fragmented Islamic civilization stretched from the Atlantic Ocean across North Africa and the Middle East to India, while its frontiers extended to sub-Saharan Africa and Central and Southeast Asia. In the worlds of Christendom, Byzantium was in a state of terminal decline, even as other Christian civilizations were emerging in Western Europe and Russia. Meanwhile, in the Western Hemisphere civilizations flourished in Mesoamerica and the Andes that were completely separated from those of Eurasia. It was a world of civilizations clustered into cultural zones that in the centuries after 1492 would be tied more closely together than ever before, first by Columbus's voyages and then by the transoceanic routes pioneered by other Europeans who followed him. But in 1450, these immensely transformative processes of globalization still lay in the future.

## China and Its Neighbors

Around 1200, East Asia was among the most sophisticated and dynamic regions of the world. At its core was the enormous Chinese civilization, which for centuries had experienced powerful and relatively stable states, cultural and intellectual flowering, and remarkable technological innovation and economic growth. East Asian civilization was also expanding elsewhere. Over the previous millennium, the new states and civilizations of Korea, Vietnam, and Japan had emerged along China's borders. Proximity to their giant Chinese neighbor decisively shaped the histories of these new East Asian civilizations, for all of them borrowed major elements of Chinese culture and entered, at least for a time, into tributary relationships with China. But none were fully incorporated into the Chinese state or society. Instead they created new distinct forms of East Asian civilization.

### China before the Mongol Takeover

In 1200 the **Song dynasty** (960–1279) ruled over large parts of an ancient Chinese civilization that could trace its origins back thousands of years (see Map 2.1). Since the late seventh century, China had experienced, with a few exceptions, a period of relatively stable political rule. Successive dynasties drew on much older cultural and political traditions that in turn outlasted even the Song, enduring into the twentieth century. Culturally, the Song dynasty was a “golden age” of arts and literature, setting standards of excellence in poetry, landscape painting, and ceramics, even as its scholars debated new forms of Confucian philosophy.

Politically, the Song dynasty built on earlier precedents to create an elaborate bureaucratic state structure that endured into the twentieth century. Six major ministries were overseen by the Censorate, an agency that exercised surveillance over

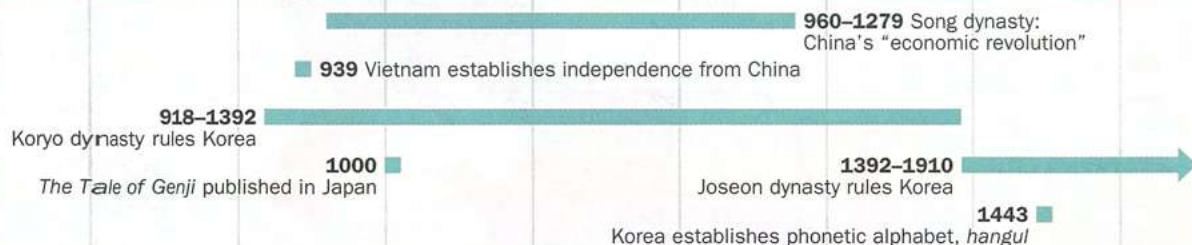
#### AP® Continuity and Change

Why are the centuries of the Song dynasty in China sometimes referred to as a “golden age”?

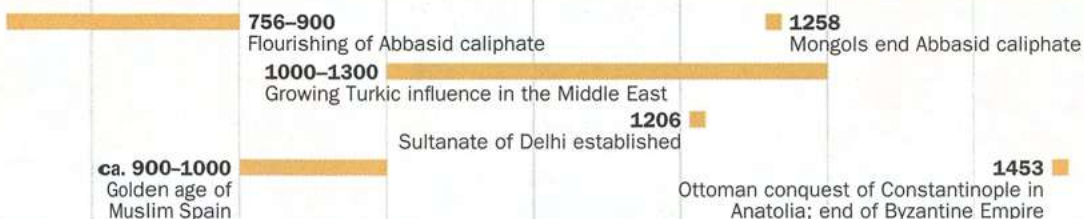
# Landmarks for Chapter 2

800 900 1000 1100 1200 1300 1400 1500

## EAST ASIA



## THE ISLAMIC WORLD



## WORLDS OF EUROPEAN CHRISTENDOM



## THE AMERICAS





**AP<sup>®</sup> Contextualization**

What does this map suggest about China's relationship with the nomadic peoples to the north?

**AP<sup>®</sup> Continuity and Change**

In what ways did the Song dynasty establish an enduring state structure?

**Map 2.1 Song Dynasty China and Its Neighbors**

In the twelfth century nomadic Jurchen peoples conquered much of northern China, giving rise to two states—the native Chinese Song in the south and the Jin in the north. Rulers of both states claimed to be heirs to the earlier Tang dynasty and thus the true emperors of China. At the same time, distinct new East Asian civilizations continued to develop in Korea, Vietnam, and Japan, all of which were decisively shaped by their proximity to their giant Chinese neighbor.

the rest of the government, checking on the character and competence of public officials. To staff this bureaucracy, an examination system first established by the Han dynasty (206 B.C.E.–220 C.E.) was revived and made more elaborate, facilitated by the ability to print books for the first time in world history. Schools and colleges proliferated to prepare candidates for the rigorous exams, which became a central



feature for men of the upper class. While candidates from privileged backgrounds were better able to access the education needed to pass exams, village communities or a local landowner sometimes sponsored the education of a bright young man from a commoner background, enabling him to enter the charmed circle of officialdom while also bringing prestige and perhaps more concrete benefits to those who sponsored him. Thus the examination system provided a modest measure of social mobility in an otherwise quite hierarchical society.

Selecting officials on the basis of merit represented a challenge to established aristocratic families' hold on public office. Still, a substantial percentage of official positions went to the sons of the privileged, even if they had not passed the exams. Moreover, because education and the examination system grew far more rapidly than the number of official positions, many who passed lower-level exams could not be accommodated with a bureaucratic appointment. Often, however, they were able to combine landowning and success in the examination system to maintain an immense cultural prestige and prominence in their local areas. (See Working with Evidence, Chapter 1, page 42, for more on the life of the "scholar-official" class.)

Underlying these cultural and political achievements was **China's economic revolution**, which made Song dynasty China "by far the richest, most skilled, and most populous country on earth."<sup>3</sup> The most obvious sign of China's prosperity was its rapid growth in population, which jumped from about 50 million or 60 million in the ninth century to 120 million by 1200. Behind this doubling of the population were remarkable achievements in agricultural production, particularly the adoption from Vietnam of a fast-ripening and drought-resistant strain of rice, known as Champa rice.

As many people found their way to the cities, China became the most urbanized country in the world. Dozens of Chinese cities numbered over 100,000, while the Song dynasty capital of **Hangzhou** was home to more than a million people. For the thirteenth-century Italian visitor Marco Polo, Hangzhou was "beyond dispute the finest and noblest [city] in the world."<sup>4</sup> (See Working with Evidence, Chapter 3, page 139, for a fuller description of Marco Polo's impressions of Hangzhou.)

Industrial production likewise soared. In both large-scale enterprises employing hundreds of workers and in smaller backyard furnaces, China's metallurgy industry increased its output dramatically. By the eleventh century, it was providing the government with 32,000 suits of armor and 16 million iron arrowheads annually, in addition to supplying metal for coins, tools, construction, and bells in Buddhist monasteries. This industrial growth was fueled almost entirely by coal, which also came to provide most of the energy for heating homes and cooking and no doubt generated considerable air pollution. Technological innovation in other fields also flourished. Inventions in printing, both woodblock and movable type, led to the world's first printed books, and by 1000 relatively cheap books had become widely available in China. Chinese navigational and shipbuilding technologies led the world, and the Chinese invention of gunpowder created within a few centuries a revolution in military affairs that had global dimensions.

**AP® EXAM TIP**

Know that for much of history China has had the world's highest population and the greatest number of urban areas with large populations.

**AP® EXAM TIP**

Understand the uses and spread of gunpowder after 1200.

**AP® EXAM TIP**

China had the world's leading economy around 1200, and you should know its features, such as paper money.





### AP Analyzing Evidence

What evidence of class differences can you identify in this image?

**Kaifeng** This detail comes from a huge watercolor scroll, titled *Upper River during Qing Ming Festival*, originally painted during the Song dynasty. It illustrates the urban sophistication of Kaifeng and other Chinese cities at that time and has been frequently imitated and copied since then. (© VIEW STOCK RF/age-fotostock)

These innovations occurred within the world's most highly commercialized society, in which producing for the market, rather than for local consumption, became a very widespread phenomenon. An immense network of internal waterways (canals, rivers, and lakes), described by one scholar as “an engineering feat without parallel in the world of its time,” stretched perhaps 30,000 miles, including a Grand Canal of over 1,000 miles linking the Yellow River in the north to the Yangzi River in the south.<sup>5</sup> (See Map 2.1.) These waterways facilitated the cheap movement of goods, allowing peasants to grow specialized crops for sale while they purchased rice or other staples on the market. In addition, government demands for taxes paid in cash rather than in kind required peasants to sell something—their products or their labor—in order to meet their obligations. The growing use of paper money, which the Chinese pioneered, as well as financial instruments such as letters of credit and promissory notes, further contributed to the commercialization of society. Two prominent scholars have described the outcome: “Output increased,



population grew, skills multiplied, and a burst of inventiveness made Song China far wealthier than ever before—or than any of its contemporaries.”<sup>6</sup>

However, the “golden age” of Song dynasty China was perhaps less than “golden” for many of its women. Confucian writers emphasized the subordination of women to men and the need to keep males and females separate in every domain of life. The Song dynasty historian and scholar Sima Guang (1019–1086) summed up the prevailing view: “The boy leads the girl, the girl follows the boy; the duty of husbands to be resolute and wives to be docile begins with this.”<sup>7</sup> For elite men, masculinity came to be defined less in terms of horseback riding, athleticism, and warrior values and more in terms of the refined pursuits of calligraphy, scholarship, painting, and poetry. Corresponding views of feminine qualities emphasized women’s weakness, reticence, and delicacy.

Furthermore, a rapidly commercializing economy undermined the position of women in the textile industry. Urban workshops and state factories, run by men, increasingly took over the skilled tasks of weaving textiles, especially silk, which had previously been the work of rural women in their homes. Although these women continued to tend silkworms and spin silk thread, they had lost the more lucrative income-generating work of weaving silk fabrics.

The most compelling expression of a tightening patriarchy among elite women lay in **foot binding**. Apparently beginning among dancers and courtesans in the

#### AP® Continuity and Change

In what ways did women’s lives change during the Song dynasty?

#### AP® Contextualization

How does the Chinese practice of foot binding demonstrate the tightening of patriarchy in the Song dynasty?



**Foot Binding** While the practice of foot binding painfully deformed the feet of young girls and women, it was also associated aesthetically with feminine beauty, particularly in the delicate and elaborately decorated shoes that encased their bound feet. (foot: Jodi Cobb/National Geographic Creative; shoe: ClassicStock/Masterfile)



tenth or eleventh century C.E., this practice involved the tight wrapping of young girls' feet, usually breaking the bones of the foot and causing intense pain. During and after the Song dynasty, foot binding found general acceptance among elite families and later became even more widespread in Chinese society. It was associated with new images of female beauty and eroticism that emphasized small size, frailty, and deference and served to keep women restricted to the "inner quarters," where Confucian tradition asserted that they belonged. For many women, it became a rite of passage, and their tiny feet and the beautiful slippers that encased them became a source of some pride, even a topic of poetry for some literate women.

In other ways though, there were more positive trends in the lives of women during the Song dynasty. Their property rights expanded, allowing women to control their own dowries and to inherit property from their families. "Neither in earlier nor in later periods," writes one scholar, "did as much property pass through women's hands" as during the Song dynasty.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, lower-ranking but ambitious officials strongly urged the education of women, so that they might more effectively raise their sons and increase the family's fortune. Song dynasty China, in short, offered a mixture of tightening restrictions and new opportunities to its women.

**AP® EXAM TIP**

Know the interactions between major empires and the states near them, such as China with Korea and Vietnam with China.

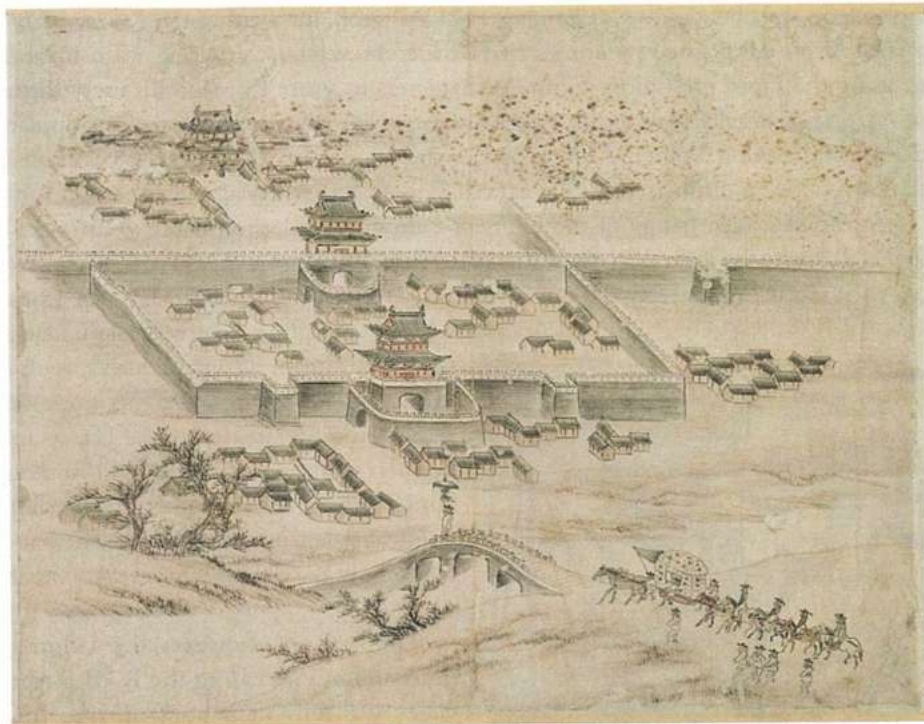
**AP® Comparison**

Evaluate the similarities and differences in the influence China had on Korea, Vietnam, and Japan. In what ways was that influence resisted?

## Interacting with China: Korea, Vietnam, and Japan

On the northern and southern borders of Song China, two new kingdoms, Korea and Vietnam, were taking shape under the influence of China. But unlike the native peoples of southern China, who largely became Chinese, the peoples of Korea and Vietnam did not. They retained distinctive identities, which have lasted into modern times. While resisting Chinese political domination, they also appreciated and adopted elements of Chinese culture and sought the source of Chinese wealth and power.

Immediately adjacent to northeastern China, the Korean peninsula and its people have long lived in close proximity to their much larger neighbor. Under a succession of dynasties—the Unified Silla (688–900), Koryo (918–1392), and Joseon (1392–1910)—Korea generally maintained its political independence while participating in a tributary relationship with China. Regular Korean missions to the Chinese imperial court acknowledged China's preeminent position in East Asia by presenting tribute—products of value produced in Korea—and performing rituals of submission. In return Chinese emperors gave their Korean visitors gifts or "bestowals" to take back to Korea, reaffirmed peaceful relations, and allowed both official and personal trade to take place between the two states. Chinese culture had a pervasive influence on Korean political and cultural life in many ways (see "Religion and the Silk Roads" in Chapter 3). For instance, efforts to plant Confucian values and Chinese culture in Korea had what one scholar has called an "overwhelmingly negative" impact on Korean women, particularly after 1300.<sup>9</sup> Early Chinese observers noticed, and strongly disapproved of, free choice marriages in Korea, as



**The Tribute System** This eighteenth-century Korean painting depicts a Korean diplomatic mission to Qing China approaching the city of Sanhaegwan on its way to offer tribute to the emperor in Beijing, 190 miles away. Such tribute missions offered opportunities for the Korean delegation to see something of China. According to diaries of Korean envoys, they categorized sites along the route to Beijing under such titles as historical, curiosity, or spectacle.

(© Copyright The Korean Christian Museum at Soongsil University, Courtesy of the Academy of Korean Studies, South Korea)

#### AP Analyzing Evidence

Using this image as evidence, describe where the Chinese placed themselves in the relationship developed through the tribute system with other states. What was the role of tribute in Chinese relations with outside powers?

#### AP Continuity and Change

What cultural changes occurred in Korea in response to Chinese influence?

well as the practice of women singing and dancing together late at night. With the support of the Korean court, Chinese models of family life and female behavior based on the Confucian concept of filial piety gradually replaced the more flexible Korean patterns, especially among the elite. Korean customs—women giving birth and raising their young children in their parents' home, funeral rites in which a husband was buried in the sacred plot of his wife's family, the remarriage of widowed or divorced women, and female inheritance of property—eroded under the pressure of Confucian orthodoxy. Korean restrictions on elite women, especially widows, came to exceed even those in China itself.

Still, Korea remained Korean. After 688, the country's political independence, though periodically threatened, was largely intact. Chinese cultural influence, except for Buddhism, had little impact beyond the aristocracy and certainly did not penetrate the lives of Korea's serf-like peasants. Nor did it register among Korea's many slaves, who amounted to about one-third of the country's population by 1100. A Chinese-style examination system to recruit government officials, though encouraged by some Korean rulers, never assumed the prominence that it gained in Song dynasty China. Korea's aristocratic class was able to maintain an even stronger monopoly on bureaucratic office than its Chinese counterpart did. And in the mid-1400s, Korea moved toward greater cultural independence by developing



a phonetic alphabet, known as *hangul* (HAHN-gool), for writing the Korean language. Although resisted by conservative male elites, who were long accustomed to using the more prestigious Chinese characters to write Korean, this new form of writing gradually took hold, especially in private correspondence, in popular fiction, and among women. Clearly part of the Chinese world order, Korea nonetheless retained a distinctive culture as well as a separate political existence.

At the southern fringe of the Chinese cultural world, the people who eventually came to be called Vietnamese had a broadly similar historical encounter with China. As in Korea, the elite culture of Vietnam borrowed heavily from

China—adopting Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, administrative techniques, the examination system, and artistic and literary styles—even as its popular culture remained distinctive. And, like Korea, Vietnam achieved political independence while participating fully in the tribute system as a vassal state.

Unlike Korea, however, the cultural heartland of Vietnam in the Red River valley was fully incorporated into the Chinese state for more than a thousand years (111 B.C.E.–939 C.E.). Even in 1200, centuries after securing their independence, Vietnamese rulers carefully maintained Vietnam's tributary role, sending repeated missions to do homage at the Chinese court.

Successive Vietnamese dynasties found the Chinese approach to gov-

ernment useful, styling their rulers as emperors, claiming the Mandate of Heaven, and making use of Chinese court rituals. More so than in Korea, a Chinese-based examination system in Vietnam functioned to undermine an established aristocracy, to provide some measure of social mobility for commoners, and to create a merit-based scholar-gentry class to staff the bureaucracy. Furthermore, members of the Vietnamese elite class remained deeply committed to Chinese culture, viewing their own country less as a separate nation than as a southern extension of a universal civilization, the only one they knew.

Beyond the elite, however, there remained much that was uniquely Vietnamese, such as a distinctive language, a fondness for cockfighting, and the habit of chewing betel nuts. More importantly, Vietnam long retained a greater role for women in social and economic life, despite heavy Chinese influence. In the third century C.E., a woman leader of an anti-Chinese resistance movement declared: "I want to



**Independence for Vietnam** In 938, Vietnamese forces under the leadership of General Ngo Quyen defeated the Chinese in the Battle of Bach Dang River, thus ending a thousand years of direct Chinese rule. This image is one of many that celebrate that victory. (Pictures from History/CPA Media)

#### AP Analyzing Evidence

How does this image reflect Vietnamese national pride?

#### AP EXAM TIP

Note the differences between the ways Chinese culture was introduced into Japan and how it was introduced into Korea and Vietnam.



drive away the enemy to save our people. I will not resign myself to the usual lot of women who bow their heads and become concubines.” Female nature deities and a “female Buddha” continued to be part of Vietnamese popular religion, even as Confucian-based ideas took root among the elite.

In the centuries following independence from China, as Vietnam expanded to the south, northern officials tried in vain to impose more orthodox Confucian gender practices in place of local customs that allowed women to choose their own husbands and married men to live in the households of their wives. So persistent were these practices that a seventeenth-century Chinese visitor commented, with disgust, that Vietnamese preferred the birth of a girl to that of a boy. These features of Vietnamese life reflected larger patterns of Southeast Asian culture that distinguished it from China. And like Koreans, the Vietnamese developed a variation of Chinese writing called *chữ nôm* (“southern script”), which provided the basis for an independent national literature and a vehicle for the writing of most educated women.

Unlike Korea and Vietnam, the Japanese islands were physically separated from China by 100 miles or more of ocean and were never successfully invaded or conquered by their giant mainland neighbor. Thus Japan’s very extensive borrowing from Chinese civilization was wholly voluntary, rather than occurring under conditions of direct military threat or outright occupation. The high point of that borrowing took place during the seventh to the ninth centuries C.E., as the first more or less unified Japanese state began to emerge from dozens of small clan-based aristocratic chiefdoms. That state found much that was useful in China and set out, deliberately and systematically, to transform Japan into a centralized bureaucratic state on the Chinese model. Chinese culture, no less than its political practices, also found favor in Japan. Various schools of Chinese Buddhism took root, first among the educated and literate classes and later more broadly in Japanese society. Buddhism deeply affected Japanese art, architecture, education, medicine, views of the afterlife, and attitudes toward suffering and the impermanence of life. The Chinese writing system—and with it an interest in historical writing, calligraphy, and poetry—likewise proved attractive among the elite.



**The Samurai of Japan** This late-nineteenth-century image shows a samurai warrior on horseback clad in armor and a horned helmet while carrying a sword as well as a bow and arrows. The prominence of martial values in Japanese culture was one of the ways in which Japan differed from its Chinese neighbor, despite much borrowing. (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-DIG-jpd-01046)

#### AP Analyzing Evidence

What characteristics define this man as a warrior, rather than a hunter?





**Lady Murasaki Shikibu** Lady Murasaki Shikibu drew on her experience as a lady-in-waiting at the imperial court to craft her famous novel, *The Tale of Genji*. She allegedly began to write the novel in 1004 at the Buddhist temple of Ishiyama-dera under the inspiration of a full moon, as depicted in this eighteenth-century woodblock print. (Ukiyo-e [Japanese woodblock print] by Harunobu Suzuki, ca. 1767/Pictures from History/Bridgeman Images)

### AP® Analyzing Evidence

Based on the evidence in this image, what can you infer about the lives of elite women in Japan in this period?

But the absence of any compelling threat from China made it possible for the Japanese to be selective in their borrowing. By the tenth century, deliberate efforts to absorb additional elements of Chinese culture diminished, and formal tribute missions to China stopped, although private traders and Buddhist monks continued to make the difficult journey to the mainland. Over many centuries, the Japanese combined what they had assimilated from China with elements of their own tradition into a distinctive Japanese civilization.

In the political realm, for example, the Japanese never succeeded in creating an effective centralized and bureaucratic state to match that of China. Although the court and the emperor retained an important ceremonial and cultural role, their real political authority over the country gradually diminished in favor of competing aristocratic families, both at court and in the provinces. As political power became increasingly decentralized, local authorities developed their own military forces, the famous *samurai* warrior class of Japanese society. Bearing their exquisite curved swords, the samurai developed a distinctive set of values featuring bravery, loyalty, endurance, honor, great skill in martial arts, and a preference for death over surrender. This was *bushido* (boo-shee-doh), the way of the warrior. Japan's celebration of the samurai and of military virtues contrasted sharply with China's emphasis on intellectual achievements and political office holding, which were accorded

higher prestige than bearing arms. "The educated men of the land," wrote a Chinese minister in the eleventh century, "regard the carrying of arms as a disgrace."<sup>10</sup> The Japanese, clearly, did not agree.

Religiously as well, Japan remained distinctive. Although Buddhism in many forms took hold in the country, it never completely replaced the native beliefs and practices, which focused attention on numerous *kami*, sacred spirits associated with human ancestors and various natural phenomena. Much later referred to as Shinto, this tradition provided legitimacy to the imperial family, based on claims of descent from the sun goddess. Because veneration of the *kami* lacked an elaborate philosophy or ritual, it conflicted very little with Buddhism. In fact, numerous *kami* were assimilated into Japanese Buddhism as local expressions of Buddhist deities or principles.

Japanese literary and artistic culture likewise evolved in distinctive ways, despite much borrowing from China. As in Korea and Vietnam, there emerged a unique writing system that combined Chinese characters with a series of phonetic symbols. A highly refined aesthetic culture found expression at the imperial court, even as the



court's real political authority melted away. Court aristocrats and their ladies lived in splendor, composed poems, arranged flowers, and conducted their love affairs. "What counted," wrote one scholar, "was the proper costume, the right ceremonial act, the successful turn of phrase in a poem, and the appropriate expression of refined taste."<sup>11</sup> *The Tale of Genji*, a Japanese novel written by the woman author Murasaki Shikibu around 1000, provides an intimate picture of the intrigues and romances of court life.

At this level of society, Japan's women, unlike those in Korea, largely escaped the more oppressive features of Chinese Confucian culture, such as the prohibition of remarriage for widows and seclusion within the home. Japanese women continued to inherit property; Japanese married couples often lived apart or with the wife's family; and marriages were made and broken easily. None of this corresponded to Confucian values. When Japanese women did begin to lose status in the twelfth century and later, it had less to do with Confucian pressures than with the rise of a warrior culture.

### AP® Comparison

In what different ways did Japanese and Korean women experience the pressures of traditional Confucian teachings?

## The Worlds of Islam: Fragmented and Expanding

By around 1200, a dynamic and expanding Islamic world was firmly established along a vast and continuous expanse of Afro-Eurasia stretching from Spain and Morocco in the west to northern India in the east, with its heartland in the Middle East and Egypt. With the exception of India, these territories had largely been incorporated into the Islamic world through the construction of the Arab Empire in the century and half following Muhammad's death in 632, even if wide-scale conversion of subject peoples to the faith took considerably longer (see Chapter 1). From around 1000, a second major expansion by conquest occurred into India, Anatolia, and a little later the Balkans, this time spearheaded by Turkic-speaking groups who had recently converted to the Muslim faith. By 1200, Islam was also spreading far beyond these regions of conquest into Southeast and Central Asia and sub-Saharan Africa through the activities of Muslim merchants and missionaries (see Map 2.2; see Chapter 3). Between 1200 and 1450, the Arab Empire was politically fragmented, but Islamic culture and religion remained vibrant in the Middle East, while cultural encounters with established Hindu and Christian civilizations occurred on the frontiers of this Islamic heartland in India and Spain.

### AP® Causation

What features of the Muslim faith would account for the appeal of the religion across such diverse populations (see Chapter 1)?

## The Islamic Heartland

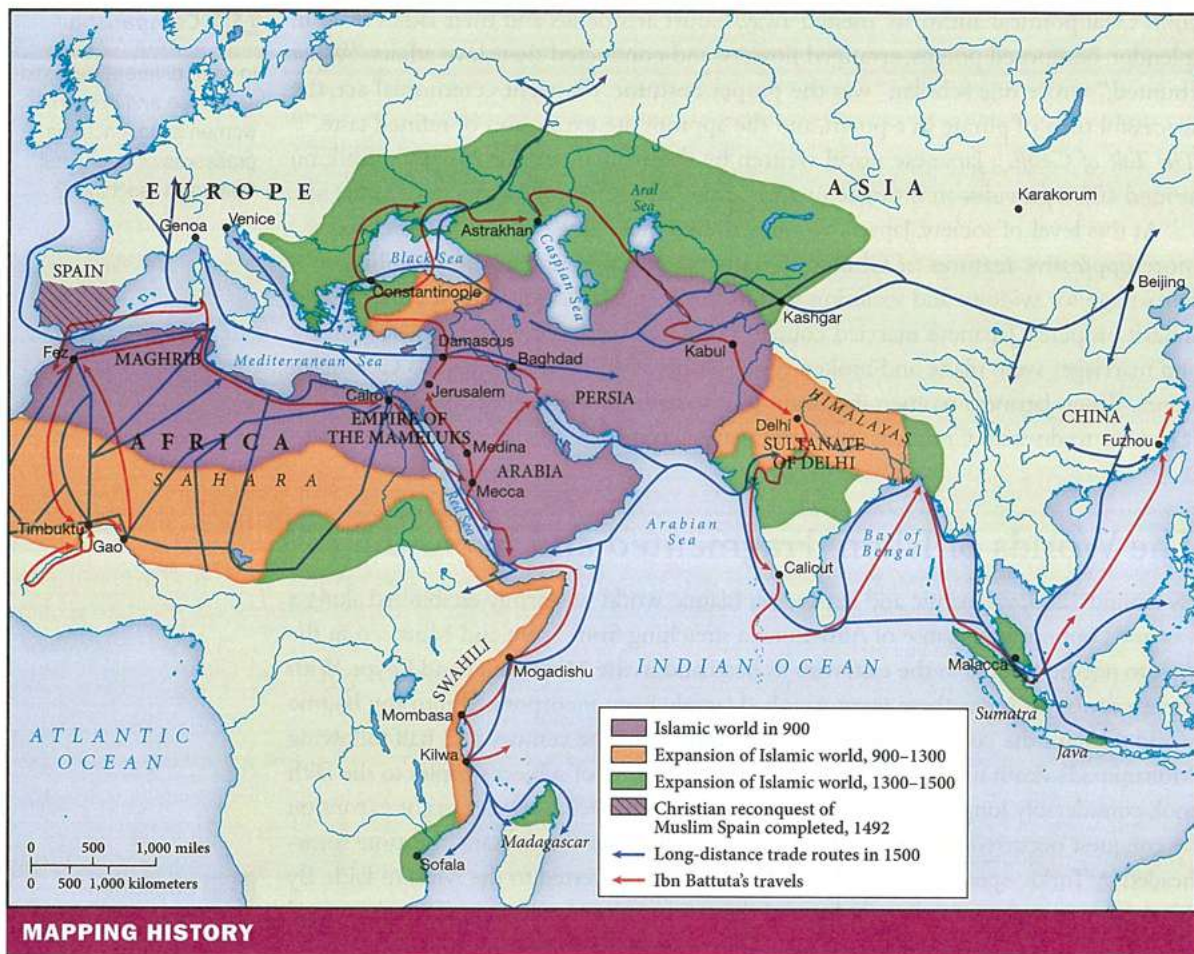
In 1200, the **Abbasid caliphate**, an Arab dynasty that had ruled the Islamic world in theory if not practice since 750, was a shadow of its former self. At the start of their rule, the Abbasids built a splendid new capital in Baghdad, from which the dynasty presided over a flourishing and prosperous Islamic civilization. But for all its accomplishments, the Abbasid dynasty's political grip on the vast Arab Empire slipped away quickly. Beginning in the mid-ninth century, many local governors or military commanders asserted the autonomy of their regions, while still giving formal allegiance to the caliph in Baghdad.

A major turning point in both the political and cultural history of the Islamic Middle East was the arrival starting around 1000 of Turkic-speaking pastoralists

### AP® EXAM TIP

Understand the extent of the spread of Islam.





**Map 2.2 The Growing World of Islam, 900–1500**

Islam as a religion, a civilization, and an arena of commerce continued to grow even as the Arab Empire fragmented. The journeys made during the fourteenth century by Ibn Battuta, an Arab scholar, merchant, and public official, reveal how long-distance trade routes linked the Islamic heartland (in purple) to its frontiers and regions beyond.

**READING THE MAP:** Where did Ibn Battuta's travels take him outside the worlds of Islam?

**INTERPRETING THE MAP:** Between 900 and 1500, Islam primarily spread along trade routes. To what extent does the map support this statement?

### AP Contextualization

To what extent were Ibn Battuta's travels influenced by trade routes and the expansion of the Islamic world?

from the steppes of Central Asia into the fragmenting political landscape of the Abbasid Empire. At first, they served as slave soldiers within the Abbasid caliphate, and then, as the caliphate declined, they increasingly took political and military power themselves. In the **Seljuk Turkic Empire** of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, for instance, rulers began to claim the Muslim title of *sultan* (ruler) rather than the Turkic *kaghan* as they became major players in the Islamic Middle East.



Even as their political power grew, the Turks were themselves experiencing a major turning point in their history as ever more groups of Turkic-speaking warriors converted to Islam between the tenth and fourteenth centuries. This extended process represented a major expansion of the faith and launched the Turks into a new role as a major sustainer of Islam and carrier of the faith to new regions.

By 1200, the Islamic heartland had fractured politically into a series of “sultanates,” many ruled by Persian or Turkish military dynasties. In the thirteenth century, the Mongols, another pastoral people, invaded the region, put an official end to the Abbasid caliphate in 1258, and ruled much of Persia for a time (see Chapter 4). In the long run, though, it was the **Ottoman Empire**, a creation of one of the many Turkic warrior groups that had migrated into Anatolia, that brought greater long-term political unity to the Islamic Middle East and North Africa. By the mid-fifteenth century, the Ottoman Turks had already carved out a state that encompassed much of the Anatolian peninsula and had pushed deep into southeastern Europe (the Balkans), acquiring in the process a substantial Christian population and a capital city in Constantinople. (See Zooming In: 1453 in Constantinople.) During the sixteenth century, the Ottoman Empire extended its control to much of the Middle East, Egypt, coastal North Africa, the lands surrounding the Black Sea, and even farther into Eastern Europe. This impressive and enduring new empire lasted in one form or another from the fourteenth to the early twentieth century.

The Ottoman Empire was a state of enormous significance in the world of the fifteenth century and beyond. In its huge territory, long duration, incorporation of many diverse peoples, and economic and cultural sophistication, it was one of the great empires of world history. In the fifteenth century, only Ming dynasty China and the Incas matched it in terms of wealth, power, and splendor. That empire represented the emergence of the Turks as the dominant people of the Islamic world, ruling now over many Arabs, who had initiated this new faith more than 800 years before. In adding “caliph” (successor to the Prophet) to their other titles, Ottoman sultans claimed the legacy of the earlier Abbasid Empire. They sought to bring a renewed unity to the Islamic world, while also serving as protector of the faith, the “strong sword of Islam.” (See Chapter 5 for more on the Ottoman Empire.) Along with the Safavid dynasty that emerged to the east in Persia

### AP® Continuity and Change

Describe the changes and continuities in pastoral societies after the rise of Islam.

### AP® EXAM TIP

You should know examples of the Ottoman Empire's economic, cultural, and political significance.



**Seljuk Tiles** Among the artistic achievements of Turkic Muslims were lovely ceramic tiles used to decorate mosques, minarets, palaces, and other public spaces. They contained intricate geometric designs, images of trees and birds, and inscriptions from the Quran. This one, dating from the thirteenth century, was used in a Seljuk palace, built as a summer residence for the sultan in the city of Konya in what is now central Turkey. (© Images & Stories/Alamy)

### AP® Causation

What does this tile reveal about Turkish culture after settlement in Anatolia?





### AP<sup>®</sup> Comparison

What does this image reveal about the characteristics of the Ottoman Janissaries as a military force?

**Ottoman Janissaries** Originating in the fourteenth century, the Janissaries became the elite infantry force of the Ottoman Empire. Complete with uniforms, cash salaries, and marching music, they were the first standing army in the region since the days of the Roman Empire. When gunpowder technology became available, Janissary forces soon were armed with muskets, grenades, and handheld cannons. This Turkish miniature painting dates from the sixteenth century. (Topkapi Palace Museum, Istanbul, Turkey/Album/Art Resource, NY)

### AP<sup>®</sup> DIGGING DEEPER

In the practice of *devshirme*, the Ottomans took Christian boys from their families as a form of tax. These children were then educated as civil servants and professional soldiers (called Janissaries). This system gave the young men access to power. They could even achieve the rank of grand vizier, second in power only to the sultan.

in the sixteenth century (see Chapter 4), the Ottomans brought to the Islamic Middle East a greater measure of political coherence, military power, economic prosperity, and cultural brilliance than it had known since the early centuries of Islam.

## Cultural Encounters in India and Spain

Even as Turkish political and cultural influence increased in the Islamic heartland, Turkic-speaking warrior groups were also spreading the Muslim faith through conquest into India, initiating an enduring encounter with an ancient Hindu civilization. Beginning around 1000, those conquests gave rise to a series of Islamic regimes that governed much of India into the nineteenth century. The early centuries of this encounter were violent indeed, as the invaders smashed Hindu and Buddhist temples and carried off vast quantities of Indian treasure. With the establishment of the Sultanate of Delhi in 1206 (see Map 2.3), Turkic rule became more systematic, although the Turks' small numbers and internal conflicts allowed only a very modest penetration of Indian society.



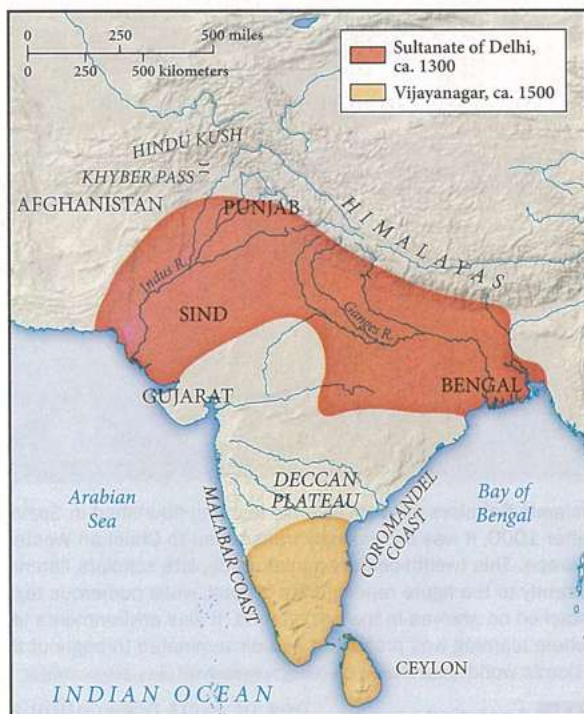
In the centuries that followed, substantial Muslim communities emerged in northern India, particularly in regions less tightly integrated into the dominant Hindu culture. Aside from the spiritual attractions of the faith, the egalitarian aspects of Islam attracted some disillusioned Buddhists, low-caste Hindus, and untouchables (people considered beneath even the lowest caste), along with those just beginning to make the transition to settled agriculture. Others benefited from converting to Islam by avoiding the tax imposed on non-Muslims. Muslim holy men, known as Sufis, were particularly important in facilitating conversion, for India had always valued “god-filled men” who were detached from worldly affairs.

Unlike the earlier experience of Islam in the Middle East and North Africa, where it rapidly became the dominant faith, in India it was never able to claim more than 20 to 25 percent of the total population. Furthermore, Muslim communities were especially concentrated in the Punjab and Sind regions of northwestern India and in Bengal to the east. The core regions of Hindu culture in the northern Indian plain were not seriously challenged by the new faith, despite centuries of Muslim rule. Muslims usually lived quite separately, remaining a distinctive minority within an ancient Indian civilization, which they now largely governed but which they proved unable to completely transform. These religious and cultural boundaries proved permeable in at least some contexts. Many prominent Hindus, for instance, willingly served in the political and military structures of a Muslim-ruled India.

Further to the south, well beyond the boundaries of the Delhi sultanate and its successors, several Hindu states flourished. Perhaps the most impressive was the powerful Vijayanagar empire (1336–1646), which at its height controlled nearly all of southern India from a thriving capital city of perhaps half a million people, described by one sixteenth-century European visitor as “the best provided city in the world . . . as large as Rome and very beautiful to the sight.”<sup>12</sup> Formed in part to resist Muslim incursions from the north, the Vijayanagar empire was also a site of sustained and more peaceful Hindu-Muslim encounters. Muslim merchants were a prominent presence in many trading ports, and a scholar has recently described a Muslim district of the capital as being “as vibrant as the Hindu precincts of the city.”<sup>13</sup> As in northern India, the Hindu faith predominated, but a permanent Muslim presence in the south fostered an ongoing encounter between the two faiths and cultures.

#### AP® EXAM TIP

Understand the political and cultural features of states such as the Delhi sultanate.



**Map 2.3 The Sultanate of Delhi and Vijayanagar Empire**

Between 1206 and 1526 a number of Muslim dynasties ruled northern India as the Delhi sultanate, while an explicitly Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar arose in the south after 1340. It drew on north Indian Muslim architectural features and made use of Muslim mercenaries for its military forces.



**AP Comparison**

How was Islam similar and different in Spain and India?

In the far west of the Islamic world, Spain, called **al-Andalus** by Muslims, was also the site of a sustained cross-cultural encounter, this time with Christian Western Europe. But here Muslims, Christians, and Jews mixed more freely than in India, even as periods of toleration fluctuated with persecution of other faiths. Conquered by Arab and Berber forces in the early eighth century during the first wave of Islamic expansion, Muslim Spain became a vibrant civilization by the 900s. Its agricultural economy was the most prosperous in Europe during this time, and its capital of Córdoba was among the largest and most splendid cities in the world. Muslims, Christians, and Jews alike contributed to a brilliant high culture in which

astronomy, medicine, the arts, architecture, and literature flourished. Furthermore, social relationships among upper-class members of different faiths were easy and frequent. By 1000, perhaps 75 percent of the population had converted to Islam. Many of the remaining Christians learned Arabic, veiled their women, stopped eating pork, appreciated Arabic music and poetry, and sometimes married Muslims. During the reign of Abd al-Rahman III (r. 912–961), freedom of worship was declared, as well as the opportunity for all to rise in the bureaucracy of the state.

But this so-called golden age of Muslim Spain was both limited and brief. Even assimilated or Arabized Christians remained religious infidels and second-class citizens in the eyes of their Muslim counterparts, and by the late tenth century toleration began to erode. The Córdoba-based regime fragmented into numerous rival states. Warfare with the remaining Christian kingdoms in northern Spain picked up in the tenth and eleventh centuries, and more puritanical and rigid forms of Islam entered Spain from North Africa. Under the rule of al-Mansur (r. 981–1002), an official policy of tolerance turned to



**Islamic Scholars at Work** Islamic learning flourished in Spain, where, after 1000, it was increasingly transmitted to Christian Western Europe. This twelfth-century miniature depicts scholars listening intently to the figure reading from a book, while numerous texts lie stacked on shelves in the background. It was environments like this where learning was preserved and disseminated throughout the Islamic world. (Arabic miniature, 12th Century/De Agostini Picture Library/Bridgeman Images)

**AP Analyzing Evidence**

What can one learn about the transmission of knowledge in the Muslim world from this image?

one of overt persecution against Christians, which now included the plundering of churches and the seizure of their wealth, although al-Mansur employed many Christian mercenaries in his armies. Social life also changed. Devout Muslims now avoided contact with Christians; Christian homes had to be built lower than those of Muslims; priests were forbidden to carry a cross or a Bible, lest they offend Muslim sensibilities; and Arabized Christians were permitted to live only in particular places. Thus, writes one scholar, “the era of harmonious interaction between



Muslim and Christian in Spain came to an end, replaced by intolerance, prejudice, and mutual suspicion.”<sup>14</sup>

That intolerance intensified as the Christian reconquest of Spain gained ground after 1200. The end came in 1492, when Ferdinand and Isabella, the Catholic monarchs of a unified Spain, took Granada, the last Muslim stronghold on the Iberian Peninsula. Despite initial promises to maintain the freedom of Muslims to worship, in the opening decades of the sixteenth century the Spanish monarchy issued a series of edicts outlawing Islam in its various territories, forcing Muslims to choose between conversion or exile. Many Muslims were thus required to emigrate, often to North Africa or the Ottoman Empire, along with some 200,000 Jews expelled from Spain because they too refused to convert. In the early seventeenth century, even Muslim converts to Christianity were likewise banished from Spain. And yet cultural interchange persisted for a time. The translation of Arab texts into Latin continued under Christian rule, while Christian churches and palaces were constructed on the sites of older mosques and incorporated Islamic artistic and architectural features.

Thus Spain, unlike most other regions incorporated into the Islamic world, experienced a religious reversal between 1200 and 1450 as Christian rule was reestablished and Islam was painfully eradicated from the Iberian Peninsula. In world historical terms, perhaps the chief significance of Muslim Spain was its role in making the rich heritage of Islamic learning available to Christian Europe. As a cross-cultural encounter, it was largely a one-way street. European scholars wanted the secular knowledge—Greek as well as Arab—that had accumulated in the Islamic world, and they flocked to Spain to acquire it. That knowledge of philosophy, mathematics, medicine, optics, astronomy, botany, and more played a major role in the making of a new European civilization in the thirteenth century and beyond. Muslim Spain remained only as a memory (see “Reason and Renaissance in the West”).

## The Worlds of Christendom

Much like the worlds of Islam, between 1200 and 1450 the worlds of Christendom were both spreading and contracting. Since 600 C.E. the Christian faith had expanded dramatically in Europe even as it contracted sharply in Asia and Africa, where many had converted to Islam. The **Byzantine Empire**, or Byzantium (bihz-ANN-tee-hum), which for centuries had been the most sophisticated and powerful Christian empire and civilization, had by 1200 entered a state of terminal decline. But even as this ancient Christian state disappeared, its religious, political, and cultural traditions profoundly influenced the Rus, an emerging civilization in Eastern Europe. Meanwhile, the trajectory of civilization in Western Europe traced an opposite path to that of Byzantium. While civilization contracted in Western Europe as the Roman Empire collapsed, by 1200 that region was emerging as an especially dynamic, expansive, and innovative civilization, combining elements of its Greco-Roman-Christian past with the culture of Germanic and Celtic peoples to produce a distinctive hybrid or blended civilization.

### AP® EXAM TIP

The ways that dominant cultures treat outsiders or “others,” as seen here, are frequent topics on the AP® exam.

### AP® Argument Development

“Islam had a revolutionary impact on every society that it touched.” What evidence might support this statement, and what might challenge it?

### AP® EXAM TIP

It is important to understand the spread and contraction of Christianity over time.