The Song Dynasty

Revival of Confucian Thought
- Buddhism grew in popularity during the Tang Dynasty, however, an anti-Buddhist backlash began to change the religion’s influence towards the end of the dynasty.
- As a result, there was a major revival in Confucian thought during the Song, known as ___________________________. Many scholars tried to recover and decipher ancient Confucian texts. New academies were established to study the classical texts and libraries were established.
- The reason for this change was a backlash against foreign cultures/foreign influences changing Chinese society: __________________________________________________________.
- This was significant because Neo-Confucianists were _____________________________.

Confucius was worshipped like a god, and emphasis was placed on relationships, obligations, respect, and studying Confucian works. The Scholar-gentry elite touted themselves as the preservers of China, rewarding themselves with higher salaries, signs of status, and additional servants.

Neo-Confucianism
- Neo-Confucian scholars stressed the importance of applying _____________________________.
- They believed virtue could be attained through knowledge gained by learning from books, observation, and contact with those who set good examples of wisdom and morality.
  - It was believed that the nature of humans could be cultivated so that men could govern and superior men could teach.

Gender Roles in the Song Dynasty
- Unbalanced gender rights remained a continuity in China, however the revival of Confucianism led to a ___________________________. The reason for this change occurred as a result of Neo-Confucianism which stressed for women to be obedient and dependent on men.
- Compared to Tang times, women were less active in politics and less commonly seen in the public sphere. Song Confucian teachers argued against widows remarrying, and ___________________________. This was significant because women became subordinate to men which was demonstrated by foot binding.
- Girls left their families when they married. As long as they gave birth to sons, they were respected and would be treated as ancestors by their sons and sons’ sons. Mothers and grandmothers had important and respected places in their families. Women’s rights to property were relatively secure in Song times, and older women were often very powerful within their families.
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Song Government
- Nomadic invasions were a continuity throughout Chinese history. Different dynasties dealt with the nomadic tribes in different ways. Unlike the Tang period, the Song dynasty _____________________________. This reason for this change occurred _____________________________.
  - The Song would give ____________________________ to the nomads to stop them from invading which was a ____________________________ on the resources of the empire and the peasants. Although there was a military, funds for the army usually went to education and entertainment for the imperial court.
  - This was significant because it led to the Song ____________________________ since they no longer could defend themselves against the nomads. Once relocated, the Song lost access to the Silk Road and now relied on maritime (water) trade routes.
  - After the relocation, historians referred to this as _____________________________. Scholars, artists, scientists, and engineers continued to thrive in the Southern Song period.
**Song Economy**

- Since the Song was now cut off from the Silk Road, they turned to __________________________.
  - Shipbuilders made ships called __________________________ that had rudders, oars, sails, compasses, and rockets.
- China traded throughout the Indian Ocean and South China Sea. This also gave them contact with the West to exchange their goods.
- To protect themselves, the Song invented __________________________ to create flamethrowers and explosive rockets.
- __________________________ to increase harvest to feed the growing population.

**Analyzing Foot Binding**

Evidence of the independence and legal rights enjoyed by a small minority of women in the Tang and Song eras is all but overwhelmed by the worsening condition of Chinese women in general. The assertion of male dominance was especially pronounced in the thinking of the neo-Confucian philosophers, who became a major force in the later Song period. The neo-Confucians stressed the woman’s role as homemaker and mother, particularly as the bearer of sons to continue the patrilineal family line. They advocated confining women and emphasized fidelity for wives, and widows were discouraged from remarrying. At the same time, men were permitted to remarry if one or more of their wives died. The neo-Confucians excluded women from the sort of individual education that would allow them to enter the civil service and rise to positions of political power.

No practice exemplifies the degree to which women in Chinese civilization were constricted and subordinated as dramatically as foot binding. By the later Song era, upper-class men had developed a preference for small feet for women. This preference later spread to lower-class groups, including the peasantry. In response to male demands, on which the successful negotiation of a young woman’s marriage contract might hinge, mothers began to bind the feet of their daughters as early as five or six. The young girls’ toes were turned under and bound with silk. By the time she reached marriageable age, her foot had been transformed into the “lotus petal” or “golden lily” shapes that were presumably preferred by prospective husbands.

Bound feet were a constant source of pain for the rest of a woman’s life, and they greatly limited her mobility by making it very difficult to walk even short distances. Limited mobility made it easier for husbands to confine their wives to the family compound. It also meant that women could not engage in occupations except ones that could be pursued within the family compound, such as textile production. For this reason, the lower classes, whose households often depended on women’s labor in the fields, markets, or homes of the wealthy to make ends meet, were slow to adopt the practice. But once it was in fashion among the scholar-gentry and other elite classes, foot binding became vital to winning a husband. Because a good marriage for their daughters was a primary goal of Chinese mothers, the practice was unquestioningly passed from one generation of women to the next. Foot binding epitomized the extent to which elite women’s possibilities for self-fulfillment had been constricted by the later Song period.

**Directions:** Answer the questions below based on the reading.

1. How did neo-Confucians affect the role of women in Song China?

2. What is foot binding and how did it effect women?

3. Despite the disadvantages of foot binding, why did so many Chinese women follow the tradition?