

Great Events from History

The Middle Ages

477 - 1453

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Volume 1

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Great Events from History: The Middle Ages, 477-1453 is the second installment in the ongoing *Great Events from History* series, which was initiated in 2004 with the two-volume *Great Lives from History: The Ancient World*. The series is projected to extend to the twenty-first century, with *The Renaissance & Early Modern Era, 1454-1600*, *The Seventeenth Century*, *The Eighteenth Century*, *The Nineteenth Century*, and *The Twentieth Century* to appear in sequential installments.

EXPANDED COVERAGE

Like the rest of the series, the current volumes represent both a revision and a significant expansion of the twelve-volume *Great Events from History* (1972-1980), incorporating essays from the *Chronology of European History: 15,000 B.C. to 1997* (3 vols., 1997), *Great Events from History: North American Series, Revised Edition* (4 vols., 1997), *Great Events from History: Ancient and Medieval Series* (3 vols., 1972), and *Great Events from History: Modern European Series* (3 vols., 1973).

Each installment in the new series is being enlarged with a significant amount of new material—often more than half the contents. For *The Ancient World*, new essays numbered roughly two-thirds of the set's contents, and the same is true here: The current two volumes of *The Middle Ages, 477-1443* add 200 new essays to the original 122, for a total of 322 events. These essays were commissioned especially for the new series and appear here for the first time. In addition, the new series features a new page design, expanded and updated bibliographies, internal and external cross-references, a section containing maps of the medieval world, new appendices and indexes, plus sidebars, tables, and numerous illustrations throughout.

SCOPE OF COVERAGE

The date 477 was selected because it follows *The Ancient World's* end date, 476 (the fall of Rome), and 1453 was selected because it is the year in which several important developments—notably the proliferation of documents issuing from the newly invented printing press, the end of the Hundred Years' War, and the fall of Constantinople—draw a dividing line between the late Middle Ages and the early modern world. Within this period, the events are arranged strictly chronologically, essen-

tially forming a time line without regard to region. Hence, students can trace world history comparatively, with events in Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas comingled. To facilitate location of time periods within the publication, right-hand pages contain date-range tabs.

The events—which range from “5th or 6th century: Confucianism Arrives in Japan” to “1453: Fall of Constantinople”—fall into one or more of the following categories: Agriculture (9); Architecture (18); Communications (6); Cultural and Intellectual History (87); Diplomacy and International Relations (5); Economics (12); Education (10); Engineering (8); Environment (5); Expansion and Land Acquisition (66); Exploration and Discovery (5); Government and Politics (129); Health and Medicine (7); Historiography (9); Laws, Acts, and Legal History (24); Literature (28); Mathematics (2); Organization and Institutions (12); Philosophy (11); Religion (103); Science and Technology (15); Social Reform (15); Trade and Commerce (27); Transportation (4); and Wars, Uprisings, and Civil Unrest (83).

The scope of this set is equally broad geographically, with essays on events associated with one or more of the following locales: Africa (35); Albania (1); Arabia (5); Australia (1); Bohemia (2); Bulgaria (3); Byzantine Empire (17); Central America (7); Central Asia (18); China (49); Egypt (10); England (21); Europe, general (24); Flanders (3); France (31); Germany (14); Greece (1); Greenland (1); Hungary (2); India (24); Iran (10); Iraq (11); Ireland (5); Israel/Palestine (14); Italy (24); Japan (20); Korea (7); Macedonia (1); Middle East (3); Moravia (2); Netherlands (1); New Zealand (2); North America (8); Pacific Islands (1); Poland (1); Portugal (2); Romania (1); Russia (5); Scandinavia (2); Scotland (1); Serbia (3); South America (4); Southeast Asia (18); Spain (10); Switzerland (2); Syria (4); Tibet (6); Turkey (17).

ESSAY LENGTH AND FORMAT

Each essay averages 1,600 words (2-3 pages) in length and follows a standard format. The top matter to every essay prominently displays the most precise available *date or date range* for the event, followed by the name of the event and the following ready-reference data:

THE MIDDLE AGES

- A *summary* paragraph, encapsulating the event's significance.
- *Locale*, or where the event occurred, including both medieval place-names and modern equivalents if the locale's name has changed.
- *Categories*, or the type of event covered, from "Agriculture" to "War and Conquest."
- *Key Figures*, a list of the major individuals involved in the event, with birth and death dates, a brief descriptor, and reign dates for rulers.

The text of each essay is divided into standard sections:

- *Summary of Event*, devoted to a chronological description of the facts of the event.
- *Significance*, assessing the event's historical impact.
- *Further Reading*, an annotated list of sources for further study.
- *See also*, cross-references to other essays within the set.
- *Related articles*, which lists essays of interest in Salem's companion publication, *Great Lives from History: The Middle Ages, 477-1453* (2 vols., 2005).

SPECIAL FEATURES

Eleven maps depicting portions of the medieval world appear grouped together in the front of each volume for easy reference. Accompanying the essays are approximately 118 additional sidebars, tables, lists, and maps, along with about 201 illustrations—photographs of artworks, battles, busts, sculptures, coins, paintings, and drawings.

A *Keyword List of Contents* appears in the front matter to both volumes and alphabetically lists all essays, permuted by all keywords in the essay's title, to assist students in locating events by name.

In addition, several research aids appear as appendices at the end of Volume 2:

- The *Time Line* lists major events in the Middle Ages; unlike the Chronological List of Entries (see below), the Time Line is a chronological listing of events by subject area; it contains both those events covered by the entries and also a substantial number of other events and developments during the Middle Ages.
- The *Glossary* defines medieval terms and concepts.
- The *Bibliography* cites major sources on the Middle Ages.

- *Web Sites* provides URLs and descriptions of Internet sites devoted to medieval studies.

- The *Chronological List of Entries* organizes the contents chronologically in one place. Because this is the same order in which the contents appear, this is essentially a full table of contents for ease of reference across volumes.

Finally, four indexes round out the set:

- *Category Index* lists essays by type of event (Agriculture, Architecture, Arts, and so on).
- *Geographical Index* lists essays by region or country.
- *Personages Index* lists major personages discussed throughout.
- *Subject Index* lists persons, concepts, terms, events, organizations, artworks, and many other topics of discussion, with cross-references to the Category and Geographical indexes.

USAGE NOTES

The worldwide scope of *Great Events from History* resulted in the inclusion of many names and words that must be transliterated from languages that do not use the Roman alphabet, and in some cases, more than one transliterated system exists. In many cases, transliterated words in this set follow the American Library Association and Library of Congress (ALA-LC) transliteration format for that language. However, if another form of a name or word was judged to be more familiar to the general audience, it was used instead. The variants for names of essay subjects are listed in ready-reference top matter and are cross-referenced in the subject and personages indexes. The Pinyin transliteration is used for Chinese topics, with Wade-Giles variants provided for major names and dynasties; in a few cases, a common name that is not Pinyin has been used. Sanskrit words generally follow the ALA-LC transliteration rules, although again, the more familiar form of a word is used when deemed appropriate for the general reader.

Titles of books and other literature appear, upon first mention in the essay, with their full publication and translation data as known: an indication of the first date of publication or appearance, followed by the English title in translation and its first date of appearance in English. If no translation has been published in English, and if the context of the discussion does not make the meaning of the title obvious, a "literal translation" appears in roman type.

In the listing of Key Figures and in parenthetical material within the text, the editors have used these ab-

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

breviations: "r." for "reigned," "b." for "born," "d." for "died," and "fl." for flourished. Where a date range appears appended to a name without one of these designators, the reader may assume it signifies birth and death dates.

THE EDITORS AND CONTRIBUTORS

In compiling the table of contents, Salem enlisted a group of scholars who provided their knowledge on different areas of the medieval world: Brian A. Pavlac (general editor), Department of History, King's College, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania; Byron Cannon (Middle East), Department of History, University of Utah; David A. Crain (the Americas), Department of History, South Dakota State University; Jeffrey W. Dippmann (China), Department of Philosophy, Central Washington University; Catherine Cymone Fourshey (Africa), Department

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Salem Press would like to extend its appreciation to these editors and to all who have been involved in the development and production of this work. Each essay was written by an academician who specializes in the area of discussion, and without their expert contribution, a project of this nature would not be possible. A full list of contributors and their affiliations appears in the front matter of this volume.

5th or 6th century

CONFUCIANISM ARRIVES IN JAPAN

Confucianism played a leading role in the attempt of Japanese rulers to centralize power in the sixth and seventh centuries and has continued to exert considerable influence on Japanese scholarship, political life, and social relations into the modern period.

LOCALE: Japan

CATEGORIES: Cultural and intellectual history; philosophy; religion

KEY FIGURES

Shōtoku Taishi (574-622), imperial prince, regent to the empress Suiko

Wani (fl. late fourth-early fifth century), Korean Confucian scholar

SUMMARY OF EVENT

The system of thought known as Confucianism in the West developed in China between 1000 and 250 B.C.E. and was introduced to Japan from Korea in the fifth or sixth century C.E., most likely in 404. The philosopher Confucius (551-479 B.C.E.) combined earlier traditions with his own innovations and interpretations to create a system of thought.

The essence of the teachings of Confucius is that there are natural forces underpinning all social relationships, including those between rulers and subjects. He taught that leaders were bound to rule by moral example, and if they did not, their countries would fall into ruin. He also put forward the idea that people should cultivate themselves by studying classical virtues as well as music and traditional rituals. The *Lunyu* (late sixth-early fifth centuries B.C.E.; *The Analects*, 1861), a collection of the philosopher's sayings compiled by his disciples, is the most direct expression of Confucian philosophy. In addition, Confucius is said to have written or edited a number of other important works such as *Yijing* (eighth to third century B.C.E.; English translation, 1876; also known as *Book of Changes*, 1986), *Shujing* (compiled after first century B.C.E.; English translation in *The Chinese Classics*, Vol. 5, Parts 1 and 2, 1872; commonly known as *Classic of History*), *Shijing* (compiled fifth century B.C.E.; *The Book of Songs*, 1937), and *Chunqiu* (fifth century B.C.E.; *The Ch'un Ts'ew with the Tso Chuen*, 1872; commonly known as *Spring and Autumn Annals*). The works, along with several other volumes put together by the disciples of Confucius such as the *Xiaojing* (fifth cen-

tury B.C.E.; *The Classic of Filial Piety*, 1899) and *Liji* (compiled fifth century B.C.E.; *The Liki*, 1885; commonly known as *Classic of Rituals*), became the canon that came to serve as the foundation of intellectual life across most of Asia.

During the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.E.-220 C.E.), Confucian thought became the dominant philosophical force in Chinese political life. Careful study of the Confucian classics was necessary to pursue a career in the civil service. During this period, the culture of China was widely considered to be more advanced than those of its neighbors, and Chinese thought and administrative practices were held in high regard.

During the fourth century C.E., Confucian thought spread to the Korean peninsula, where it gained considerable influence among the ruling class. Tradition states that Wani, a Confucian scholar, traveled from the Korean kingdom of Paekche to Japan in the early fifth century; one likely date accepted by most scholars is 404. Wani brought with him *The Analects* of Confucius and other important texts. According to the chronicles *Kojiki* (712 C.E.; *Records of Ancient Matters*, 1883) and the *Nihon shoki* (compiled 720 C.E.; *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697*, 1896; best known as *Nihon shoki*), Wani became an influential administrator at the court of the Yamato emperor. The books that he brought with him, however, came to have an even greater influence. They played a leading role in the diffusion of the Chinese writing system in Japan, thereby making the country literate, and they also brought a new direction to the political life of the Japanese archipelago.

The power of the imperial family at the Yamato court was limited, and influential regional clans presented an obstacle to truly centralized rule. In the sixth and seventh centuries, there was an attempt to centralize power, and Confucianism proved to be an effective tool in this struggle. In the mid-sixth century, the Soga family, a powerful regional clan, attempted to institute Buddhism, another philosophical and religious system that came to Japan from the continent, sparking a serious conflict with two other clans, the Nakatomi and Mononobe, who had a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. After a bout of fierce fighting, the Soga emerged victorious. Through their power at court, the prestige of Buddhism, and strategic marriages within the imperial family, the Soga came to hold sway over the court. Therefore, it was to their advantage to press for a stronger central government.



Confucius (551-479 B.C.E.). (Hulton|Archive by Getty Images)

In 604, Shōtoku Taishi, a member of the Soga family and the regent for the empress Suiko (r. 593-628), promulgated the Seventeen Article Constitution, designed to increase the power of the central court. Shōtoku Taishi was a devout Buddhist, and although there are many references to that faith in the document, the work's political content is obviously Confucian in character. The document enforces the idea that loyalty to one's lord and one's father, a fundamental part of Confucian ethics, is to be valued above all else. The work also stresses the idea that Japan's leaders are bound to provide just rule, another concept that can be considered a cornerstone of Confucian ideology. The presence of Confucian ideas in the Seventeen Article Constitution shows just how great a role the Chinese system of thought had come to play in Japanese political and ethical philosophy in the few centuries after Confucianism was introduced from Korea.

Within a few centuries of the introduction of Confucianism to Japan, the Chinese ideological system had become an important part of almost all aspects of Japanese political life.

SIGNIFICANCE

The impact on Japanese culture of the introduction of Confucian thought in the sixth century was as great, if not greater, than the changes brought on by contact with Western ideas in the nineteenth. Aside from its tremendous influence on Japanese politics and institutional history, Confucianism shaped Japanese social relations and such fundamentally important ideas as the concept of gender roles. Confucianism shares with Buddhism and Shintō, the native faith, a dominant role in shaping the Japanese cultural tradition.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the ideas of the ancient Chinese philosopher came to hold sway over Japanese intellectual life in the form of neo-Confucianism. During these two centuries, a series of military leaders were trying to bring the fragmented political landscape under some type of central control. However, even before neo-Confucianism became the new intellectual orthodoxy, Confucian rhetoric had played a large role in the house laws and edicts of the various regional lords of the Warring States period (1467-1615). In addition, *bushidō*, the philosophy of the warrior class, with its emphasis on loyalty and moderation in personal conduct, bears the unmistakable mark of Confucian influence.

During the Tokugawa period (1603-1867), the influence of Confucian ideas was not limited to the political life of the nation. The Confucian texts were widely read, and many members of both the upper and lower classes used the texts to learn to read. This resulted in Confucian concepts being ingrained in the thought of all classes. Some modern-day scholars have even argued that Confucian ideas inculcated in the merchant class something akin to what German sociologist Max Weber termed the Protestant work ethic. The presence of these values in Japanese economic life has been used to explain the tremendous economic growth that the nation experienced after 1868, the beginning of the Meiji period (1868-1912). In addition, some scholars have identified aspects of Confucian ideology that have continued to influence Japanese business relationships and organization in the post-World War II period.

Finally, Confucian ideology underlay the system of imperial government that developed after the fall of the Tokugawa shogunate. The bond of loyalty that was expected to exist between citizens, soldiers, and the emperor was most often defined in Confucian terms. Important documents such as the "Imperial Rescript on Education" and the "Imperial Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors" were masterworks of Confucian rhetoric.

The strength of Confucian thought in Japanese society weakened considerably in the twentieth century. The introduction of universal male suffrage in 1926 and the liberal reforms introduced by the United States after World War II weakened the Confucian influence on politics and law.

—Matthew Penney

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RELATED ARTICLE in *Great Lives from History: The Middle Ages, 477-1453*: Shōtoku Taishi.

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WHITE HUNS RAID INDIA

The invasions of the White Huns, a Central Asian nomadic people, disrupted the Gupta Empire of northern and north-central India.

LOCALE: Northern India

CATEGORIES: Expansion and land acquisition; wars, uprisings, and civil unrest

KEY FIGURES

- Skanda Gupta* (d. 467), Indian prince who rallied Gupta forces against the White Huns, r. c. 455-467
- Toramana* (fl. early sixth century), first king of the White Huns in India
- Mihirakula* (fl. mid-sixth century), son of Toramana

SUMMARY OF EVENT

To Western readers, the word “Huns” generally brings forth images of Attila and his nomadic raiders, sweeping westward from the Central Asian plains to ravage the Roman Empire in its latter years. However, in India, the

term “Huns” or “Hūṇas” is often applied to another group of Central Asian nomads who troubled northern India during the fifth and sixth centuries, at roughly the same time as Belisarius was conquering the Western Empire for Justinian of Byzantium. Those Byzantines who knew about this invasion from Persian sources referred to them as Hephthalites, and the Chinese called them the Ye-Ta or Ye-Tai.

It is uncertain if the Huns who raided India are related to the Huns who raided the Roman Empire. Little of either people's language and culture has been preserved, and without the data for comparative linguistic and anthropological studies, scholars can offer only conjecture. Because both groups arose in the region of Central Asia now occupied by Kazakhstan and southern Siberia, it is possible that they sprang from a common cultural source, but the similarities between their names and their nomadic lifestyles may be pure coincidence. One particularly telling detail is the fact that the Huns who raided In-

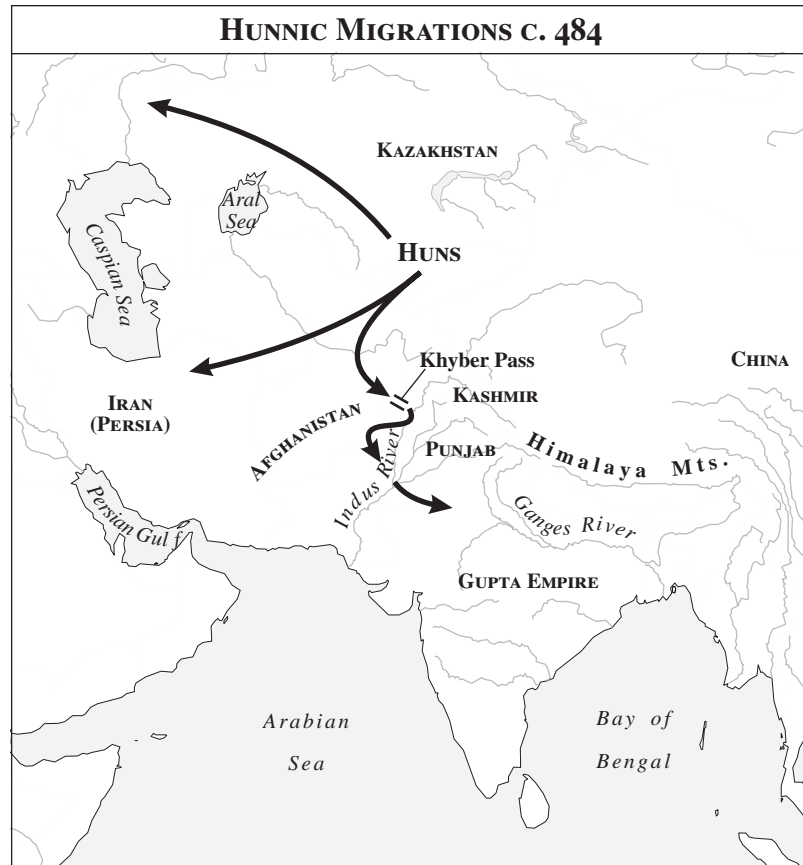
dia are often referred to as the White Huns because their features were more European, without the strong epicanthic fold of the eye that marked many of the other Central Asian peoples. There are also references to their having unusually shaped heads, but this appears to have been the result of cradling, a practice of placing tight bands on the infant head so that it is forced to grow in a particular shape, rather than genetic differences.

The White Huns first invaded India near the end of the Gupta Empire (c. 312-c. 550) and are traditionally credited with having destroyed this empire. However, many modern historians have argued that there is ample evidence that the Gupta Empire was cracking from within as a result of factional struggle between various branches of the royal family and that the stress of the invasion only hastened an inevitable breakdown. As evidence, these historians point to the existence of various contradictory succession lists in the Gupta genealogies of the period, which suggest multiple rival claimants to the throne who may have engaged in wasteful competition or outright civil war. As a result, the invasion of the White Huns may have been more a matter of dividing and conquering than breaking a strong central state.

When the White Huns invaded Gupta-held territories, Skanda Gupta was able to rally the Gupta military forces for a time and hold the defenses. However, after his death, the situation deteriorated rapidly in the absence of strong leadership. In the manner typical of nomadic barbarians throughout the history of warfare before gunpowder, the White Huns ravaged every town and village they passed, destroying buildings and murdering or enslaving their inhabitants. The Gupta capital of Pataliputra, once a proud city, was depopulated and reduced to little more than a backwater village. By the middle of the sixth century, the Gupta kingdom had been reduced to a small area, and north and most of central India had fallen into Hunnish hands.

The kings of the White Huns are known primarily from inscriptions on monuments and from the coinage

HUNNIC MIGRATIONS C. 484



they ordered struck. The first king of the White Huns in India was Toramana, who lived during the early sixth century. Inscriptions bearing his name are found as far south as Eran (Madhya Pradesh), which indicate that his influence, if not his actual rule, was felt well into the subcontinent. His son Mihirakula apparently adopted some native Indian devotional practices, either alongside or in place of traditional nomadic religion. However, Buddhist traditions of the period record him as having been uncouth and cruel in his rule and warmaking habits, which indicate that he remained culturally a nomadic warrior.

By the end of the sixth century, native Indian leadership began to recover, and the White Huns were forced back north into Kashmir and Punjab. There they maintained a capital at Sakala (Sialkot, Pakistan). In time, they became assimilated and adopted sedentary agricultural patterns of life, losing their distinctive nomadic culture. Only the occasional trace of unusual religious or cultural practices among certain subcastes of the area indicated that they had descended from these invaders. However, there remained a break in the material culture

of the area, and later historians would have to laboriously reconstruct the preinvasion history of the Guptas and other dynasties of the area without the aid of a continuing living tradition. Any semblance of continuity is an illusion of religious and political factors. The Brahman religious leaders had simply found it advantageous to their purposes to treat all the new aristocratic clans as though they were direct descendants of the Kṣatriyas (warrior caste) of the Vedic scriptures, whatever the truth of that particular group's social origin. In time the neologism Rājput, literally "king's son," became a synonym of the Vedic Kṣatriyas.

SIGNIFICANCE

The invasion of the White Huns put India in contact with Central Asian tribes from the area that is modern Kazakhstan. This led to cultural cross-fertilization between the two cultures as well as additional peaceful migrations of Central Asian peoples into the Indian subcontinent. For example, the Gurjaras of this period may be identified with the Khazars, a Central Asian and southern Siberian tribe that adopted a simplified form of Judaism rather than choose between Christianity and Islam. However, not all of the changes brought about by the White Huns were positive.

The invasions severely disrupted trade routes in the area and destroyed the income many northern Indian princes and merchant families had derived from it. Because of the direct and indirect effects of the invasion, many northern Indian tribes migrated to safer regions to the south, taking with them tribal customs that led to further social changes among the southern Indian peoples. The Rājput families and Kṣatriyas dynasties of central India traced their ancestry from the migration of these tribal chieftains, although for religious and political purposes they claimed descent from the Vedic Kṣatriyas classes.

—Leigh Husband Kimmel

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