Medieval Empires: Ming China

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

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

Tributary System
- States acknowledged Chinese “superiority”
  - In return for being able to trade, and have access to Chinese culture and technology
  - Korea, Vietnam, Tibet, Japan, Burma, Laos, Philippines, Java, Siam, Malaca, Ceylon
  - States still had autonomy
- Pledge
  - 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
  - Anywhere between 200,000-1 million workers
- Opened with grand celebration
  - Followed by fire that destroyed half
  - And again in 1644
- Very Expensive
  - Men
  - Lumber
  - Treasury

Exploration
- Zheng He
  - Muslim from Western China
  - 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
        - Trying to gain more tributary states
  - First person recorded to use a compass
    - they had been around since 850 C.E.
- Expeditions stopped in 1433
  - Conservatives took over China
  - Too expensive
  - China took isolationist stand
    - Worried about Mongols
  - Thought China was perfect
    - Did not need outside influences
    - Did not think they had anything to gain
      - Very sure of own superiority
    - Ships burned
  - Made way for European Dominance
    - Empire existed till 1644