


# The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition in Chinese History (Harvard East Asian Monographs)

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This volume seeks to study the connections between two well-studied epochs in Chinese history: the mid-imperial era of the Tang and Song (ca. 800-1270) and the late imperial era of the late Ming and Qing (1550-1900). Both eras are seen as periods of explosive change, particularly in economic activity, characterized by the emergence of new forms of social organization and a dramatic expansion in knowledge and culture. The task of establishing links between these two periods has been impeded by a lack of knowledge of the intervening Mongol Yuan dynasty (1271-1368). This historiographical "black hole" has artificially interrupted the narrative of Chinese history and bifurcated it into two distinct epochs.

This volume aims to restore continuity to that historical narrative by filling the gap between mid-imperial and late imperial China. The contributors argue that the Song-Yuan-Ming transition (early twelfth through the late fifteenth century) constitutes a distinct historical period of transition and not one of interruption and devolution. They trace this transition by investigating such subjects as contemporary impressions of the period, the role of the Mongols in intellectual life, the economy of Jiangnan, urban growth, neo-Confucianism and local society, commercial publishing, comic drama, and medical learning.

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**The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition in Chinese History (Harvard East Asian Monographs) From Harvard University Asia Center Bibliography**

- Rank: #713130 in Books
- Published on: 2003-06-15
- Released on: 2003-07-15
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.16" h x 1.50" w x 6.56" l, 1.97 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 552 pages

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