History 170A
The Song Dynasty (960-1276): A Lesser Empire?
Mural of Theater Troupe

Caption identifies this troupe as a *zaju* troupe named after the principal actress, who stands (dressed as an official) at center of group

Line of five actors in front, with five musicians behind them

From Guangsheng Monastery, Hongdong, Shanxi, built in 1324
“Lantern Play” for New Year’s Festival

This painting shows a group of three actors performing on the stage, while a troupe of musicians plays behind the scenery.

From a 13th-century painting by the court artists Zhu Yu 朱玉.
An Lushan Rebellion (755-763)

- Reign of Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 712-756): unprecedented prosperity & cultural efflorescence
- An Lushan 安祿山, Tang general of Sogdian descent, rebelled against Tang in 755
- An Lushan was assassinated in 757; but the rebellion severely crippled the Tang dynasty
Consequences of the An Lushan Rebellion

- Erosion of central government authority (demise of the Equal-Field system of state landownership)
- Aristocracy lost its dominance over government
- Economic heartland of the empire shifted to South China
- Intellectual reassessment: repudiation of Buddhism and Confucian renaissance
East Asia
c. 947

Later Jin (936-947), with capital at Kaifeng, was the third of the Five Dynasties (907-960) to rule North China.

Khitan kingdom of Liao (916-1127) controlled northern frontiers of former Tang dynasty.

South China divided into a more stable set of regional states.
Burial Dress of Liao Princess

The princess (at right), sister of the reigning Liao emperor, died in 1080 at the age of 18.

She was interred with her much older husband (left), who had died earlier (actually her uncle on her mother’s side).

Dress (gold masks and silver boots), mortuary goods, and tomb architecture reflected distinctive features of Khitan culture.
Servants in Upper-Class Liao Household

Tomb mural depicts servants wearing Chinese dress engaged in various household activities; two men at right are arranging Chinese books and antiquities.
Zhao staged a coup d'état in 959, overthrowing the Later Zhou and founding his Song dynasty (960-1276)

Zhao, himself a military leader, guided the restoration of civil government under the Song
Following defeat at hands of Liao, Song forced to accept humiliating terms of Treaty of Shanyuan (1005) recognizing Liao as “fraternal state”
Buddhist Scripture in Tangut Script

In 1036, two years before he proclaimed himself emperor of the Xixia 西夏 kingdom, the Tangut ruler Li Yuanhao 李元昊 promulgated a “national script” to signify his independence from China.

Roughly based on Chinese script, the Tangut script is much more complex.
Tangut Menservants

Li Yuanhao also issued an edict requiring Tangut men to wear their hair in traditional Tangut style.
East Asia

c. 1150

Jurchens from Manchuria overran North China and declared founding of their Jin 金 dynasty in 1127.
Population Distribution in China in 750 (left) and 1100 (right)