

**EXCERPTS FROM THE ATTRACTIONS OF THE CAPITAL
(HANGZHOU)**

Introduction

The Song period (960-1276) was a time of economic growth, population growth, and urbanization. Song cities, centers of government and commerce, were among the largest cities of the world. The document excerpted below, by an unknown author, describes the Southern Song capital of Hangzhou — a city of between seven and eight square miles — in 1235.

Document Excerpts with Questions

From *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, edited by Patricia Buckley Ebrey, 2nd ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1993), 178-185. © 1993 The Free Press. Reproduced with the permission of the publisher. All rights reserved.

Excerpts from The Attractions of the Capital (Hangzhou)

Markets

During the morning hours, markets extend from Tranquility Gate of the palace all the way out to the north and south sides of the New Boulevard. Here we find pearl, jade, talismans, exotic plants and fruits, seasonal catches from the sea, wild game — all the rarities of the world seem to be gathered here.

Commercial Establishments

Various businesses are designated by the word “company,” which is a taxation category imposed by the government and is used for all businesses dealing in commodities, regardless of their size. Even physicians and fortunetellers are included. ...

In general, the capital attracts the greatest variety of goods and has the best craftsmen.

Restaurants

Most restaurants here are operated by people from the old capital, like the lamb rice shops which also serve wine. ...

Primary Source Document with Questions (DBQs) on

EXCERPTS FROM THE ATTRACTIONS OF THE CAPITAL (HANGZHOU)

The so-called southern style is a misnomer. These restaurants were originally established in the old capital to serve southerners who were not used to the northern diet. Now that they *are* in the south, the term southern style becomes misleading. At any rate, noodles and seafood are the specialty of these restaurants, and each has its own house menu.

Questions:

1. What impression does the author give you of the city?
2. What is the relationship between government and business, as far as you can tell from these excerpts?
3. Do the descriptions here fit with an image of a China dominated by Confucian philosophy? Why or why not?
4. To what extent and in what ways might Confucian philosophy be relevant to the shopkeepers and restaurateurs of the capital?