The Mongols attacked China twice, yet the spread of Buddhism among the Mongols may have done more to counter their love of war. The Great Wall extends for about 1500 miles, and it averages about 3.5 feet high and 20 feet across, with watchtowers every 1/4 of a mile.

Tibet asked the Mongols for military assistance when needed, and in return they spread Buddhism among the Mongols that pacified Mongol lords to some extent. Civil service examinations: based on the study of Confucian classics. They were the examinations of the prefecture, the provincial and capital lands. They were very competitive exams where only 2-10% of those taking them actually passed. Agricultural land generally remained the highest form of wealth in China. The politically active class was the scholars, and they were educated men throughout China. They were still very eager to enter into government, which was done through the civil service exams. They had to pass these tests in order to become officials, as the Ming dynasty wanted officials to represent the interests of the country, so they used a quota for students to be invited to the capital exams. Exams involved writing essays on classics, and drafting decrees for the state, etc. thereby encouraging meritocracy.

Family still remained central to the lives of many people. Large cities began to proliferate during this dynasty, while villages manufactured printing and textiles as well as luxury goods. The printing press transformed the lives of the middle class during the Ming dynasty; prominent novels included the Water Margin and the Romance of the Three Kingdoms. Bread supplied most of the calories of those in southern and central China, and increased the harvest of rice. The consequences of this were steady population growth and the growth of markets.

Issues beset the Ming dynasty in the 16th and early 16th century, as the government went bankrupt by aiding Korea in defending against Japan. There were also natural disasters and a mini ice age, which limited their harvests. Food was limited, which led to the development of gangs in search of food, and also led to a raise in taxes. There was also a drop in the supply of silver, which led to a inflation in the dynasty, and a growing number of riots by urban workers. In the early 17th century, in 1644, the rebels messed with the dams in the yellow river, which led to flooding. The last emperor took his life in 1644, leading to a new dynasty.