

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_

# Chapter 12

# Golden Ages in China and Japan

## ◆ Section 1 (pages 277-283)

### THE POEMS OF PO CHU-I

Po Chu-I (772-846) was a poet who lived in China during the golden age of the T'ang dynasty. Although most of his fame came from his longer poems, Po himself preferred his shorter poems. So much did he value simplicity that he is said to have read all of his poems to an old peasant woman and changed any lines or words she could not understand.

#### Escorting Candidates to the Examination Hall

At dawn I rode to escort the Doctors of Art;  
In the eastern quarter the sky was still grey.  
I said to myself, "You have started far too soon,"  
But horses and coaches already thronged the  
road.

High and low the riders' torches bobbed;  
Muffled or loud, the watchman's drum beat.

Riders, when I see you prick  
To your early levee, pity fills my heart.  
When the sun rises and the hot dust flies  
And the creatures of earth resume their great  
strife,

You, with your striving, what shall you each  
seek?

Profit and fame, for that is all you care.  
But I, you courtiers, rise from my bed at noon  
And live idly in the city of Ch'ang-an.  
Spring is deep and my term of office spent;  
Day by day my thoughts go back to the hills.

#### After Passing the Examination

For ten years I never left my books;  
I went up . . . and won unmerited praise.  
My high place I do not much prize;  
The joy of my parents will first make me proud.  
Fellow students, six or seven men,  
See me off as I leave the City gate.  
My covered coach is ready to drive away;  
Flutes and strings blend their parting tune.  
Hopes achieved dull the pains of parting;  
Fumes of wine shorten the long road . . .  
Shod with wings is the horse of him who rides  
On a Spring day the road that leads to home.

許 盤 膝

1. According to your text (page 278), what are the "examinations" to which both poems refer?

2. In the first poem, what does the early morning scene convey about the number of people seeking advancement through exams?

3. In the first poem, the candidates "seek profit and fame." On a separate sheet of paper, tell what advice the poet seems to be offering the candidates now that his term of office is over.

4. How long did the scholar in the second poem study? \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is more important to him than high places? \_\_\_\_\_