



# 火藥

## Gunpowder

Gunpowder was invented in China and used to develop weapons like the cannon long before the substance was heard of in Europe. Chinese alchemists (scientists who study chemicals) first discovered gunpowder in the third century by mixing sulphur, saltpeter, and charcoal and then exposing the mixture to intense heat. By the time of the Song Dynasty, which began in A.D. 960, military manuals discussed gunpowder's ingredients and its uses for military purposes. Other documents warned soldiers of fatal accidents caused by the misuse of the weapon. Chinese soldiers used gunpowder to make fire arrows and to make the catapult more dangerous to their enemies. By 1259, the Chinese had made a gun barrel of bamboo with fiber wrappings. Just a few years later, the first metal gun barrel recorded in history was used in China. The Europeans and the Arabs later copied the Chinese model of the gun.