

# The Sui, Tang, Zhou, and Song Dynasties: The “Golden Age” of China

(because historians like coming up with flashy titles for stuff)

# Return of Dynastic Rule

- No one dynasty over all China since 220AD (Han)
- Emperor Wen of Sui unified it again in 589AD (Sui dynasty)
- Dynasty did not last long
- Fell because of brutal policies
  - Forced labor
  - High taxes
  - Failed Military Campaign



609 CE

● Sui Dynasty

# Sui Reforms

- Strengthening of Confucian Values
- Return to a Civil Service Exam system
  - Replaced a system of appointment based on heredity
  - Why was this better?
- New legal code
- Repaired the Great Wall
- Constructed the Grand Canal
- Began a network of Roads and Canals



Think-Pair-Share:

What benefits would the grand canal and other transportation have offered?

On the other hand, how might it have contributed to the downfall of the Sui?

# Rise of the Tang

- Li Yuan (later Emperor Gaozu) was governor of Tang
- Rebelled against Sui when their reign weakened
  - Helped militarily by his daughter Princess Pingyang
- Established the Tang dynasty (618-907AD)







## Du Fu Poem!

What is the poem about?

What does that tell us about the Tang government and life in the Tang Dynasty?

What are some problems with this as a source?

# Official at Stone Moat Village

At dusk, I stopped to rest at Stone Moat village,  
An officer came that night to capture men.  
The old man escaped by climbing over the wall,  
The old wife went to look outside the door.  
How angrily the officer now shouted,  
How bitterly the wife did weep out loud!  
I heard the words the wife was sending forth:  
"Three sons of mine were sent to defend Yecheng.  
From one of my sons, a letter has arrived,  
The other two have recently died in battle.

The one who survived has kept alive for now,  
The dead ones though have met their final end.  
Inside this house, there are no people left,  
There's just a grandson suckling on the breast.  
The grandson's mother also cannot go,  
She goes about without a skirt intact.  
Although I'm an old woman with failing strength,  
I ask you to take me with you tonight.  
If you should need workers at Heyang,  
I can prepare the morning meal for you."  
Her voice then died away into the night,  
I seemed to hear her sob and whimper still.  
At dawn, before I set upon the road,  
It's only from the old man that I part.

# Tang Reforms

- Expanded the Civil Service System
  - Still had to be pretty wealthy to afford education
- Modified and expanded the Sui legal code
  - Specified a number of different crimes
  - Different Punishments based on severity
  - Why was this good?
- Extensive central and state bureaucracies
- Urbanization (ten cities of over 1 million)
- Expanded network of roads and canals

# Wu Zetian

- Tang dynasty is interrupted by Zhou Dynasty
- Wu went from a consort of emperor Taizong (age 13) to Empress of China
  - Ruthless
    - May have killed her own daughter to frame a political opponent
    - Did kill one son and deposed two more
- Controlled Emperor starting in 655, ruled from 690-705





# Decline of the Tang

- Rebellions hurt military power
  - Two between 755 and 784
  - One from 874-884
- Challenges to Mandate of Heaven
  - Bandit activity in 845
  - Flood along Grand Canal in 858
  - Famine in 873
- Last Emperor deposed by Military governor in 907

# The Northern Song

- After Tang collapsed there was disorder and many different states
- In 960AD much of China was unified under the Song Dynasty
- In 1127 forced to move capital south
  - Pressure from a kingdom to the North
  - Dividing line (timewise) between Northern and Southern Song

**Guess What This Slide Title Is. Just  
Bloody Guess!**

# Guess What This Slide Title Is. Just Bloody Guess!

- Continued many developments from Tang
  - Civil Service
  - Population Growth
- Detailed Mapping of the Empire
  - Why would that be important?
- Development of a powerful navy



# Silk Road Trade

- From the Tang:

- Ceramics (particularly porcelain)
- Tea
- Silk (duh- its called the silk road)

- From the Abbasids

- Cobalt
- Polo (the sport, not from Ralph Lauren)
- Gold, Silver, Copper, Iron
- Cotton



