

## Globalizing the Common Core

### Title: Reunification of the Tang in Medieval China

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#### Standards

**7.3.1-** Describe the reunification of China under the Tang Dynasty and reasons for the spread of Buddhism in Tang China, Korea, and Japan.

#### CCSS:

**RH6-8.1:** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

**RH6-8.2:** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

**WHST.6-8.9:** Draw information from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

**Overview:** Students will examine what characteristics cause a great empire to rise to power, stay in power, and subsequently fall from power. Specifically, students will identify major components of the fall of the Han and Sui Empires in medieval China, and discover how the fall of those empires created an environment that allowed the Tang Dynasty to rise to power.

**Historical Inquiry Question:** "Can looking at the past help rulers succeed in the future?"

**Materials:** LCD Projector/document camera to project Source 1, copies of Source Set: Source 1 to 6, copies for all students of Reflection sheet.

#### Preparation:

**Option 1:** Students will be in groups in 4. In these small groups they will analyze the "Learning from the Past" lesson packet, answer questions, and discuss. At the end of the activity, groups will share out with the class their findings.

**Option 2:** Assign students to groups of 4. Duplicate one copy of the four-page "Learning from the Past" lesson for each student. Students will work individually to complete lesson, sharing out with group/class at end of lesson.

**Activities:** Project image of the 13 Emperors Scroll (<http://scrolls.uchicago.edu/scroll/thirteen-emperors>). As a class, have students share out what they notice about the image, using "I see..." statements. Have them draw their own conclusions about the painting. Who do they think the people in the image are? What is their

relation to each other? What is the purpose of the scroll? After a class discussion, pass out the lesson which includes the image and the primary sources. Have the students read the explanation of the scroll provided on the paper and compare that to their own conclusions. Then, in their groups, students will go over the sources and answer the questions.

**Assessment:** Students will demonstrate mastery of standard 7.3.1 by writing a paragraph answering the inquiry question. Students must refer to the primary materials provided. Students will then share out to class, and together generate a list of lessons the Tang Dynasty would have learned from the Han and the Sui.

**Extensions:** Students will select a historical figure, either in US or world history – students will analyze what lessons that historical figure could have learned from previous people in their position, and what future leaders can learn from their success and weaknesses.

**Bibliography:**

Ebrey, Patricia Buckley, Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook, The Free Press, New York, 1993.

Ebrey, Patricia Buckley, Anne Walthall, James B. Palais, East Asia: A Cultural, Social, and Political History, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston & New York, 2006.

# Source Set: Learning from the Past: the Rise of the Tang Empire

## Source 1



### ***13 Emperors Scroll***

Yan Liben (600-673), Ink and color on silk, 51.3 x 531 cm  
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston  
<http://scrolls.uchicago.edu/scroll/thirteen-emperors>

Above is the image of Emperor Xuan of the Chen Dynasty on a scroll commissioned by Emperor Tang Taizong of the Tang Dynasty, who ruled from 626 to 649. The Tang rulers were able to create the world's largest empire at the time. They had a strong central government, a solid tax base, and prosperous trade along the Grand Canal. They also had a legal code based on the teachings of Confucius. ([China in World History](#), Paul S. Ropp, Oxford University Press, June 10, 2010, p.53) The image above shows thirteen previous emperors of China (not all are visible in this portion of the scroll). It is said that Emperor Tang Taizong commissioned the image to teach his son, the prince, to learn from the mistakes of his ancestors.

Read from the following sources describing some of the actions of emperors from the Han, Sui, and Tang Emperor, and compare them to Emperor Tang Taizong's views on an effective government. What could the prince have learned from these rulers in order to be a successful emperor?

## Source 2 Character Counts

### Vocabulary

**Cultivates:** grows or develops

**Frugality:** being good with money; thrifty

**Subordinates:** people under the authority or control.

**Arrogant:** big-headed, stuck-up

**Extravagant:** doing or using something too much.

**Intrepid:** fearless

**Flotilla:** a fleet of boats

**Lavishness:** Spent a large amount

**Expenditures:** purchases

**Coffers:** treasury or fund

**Prosperity:** good fortune.

**Subsequent:** following.

### Emperor Taizong wrote:

*"The ruler **cultivates** his character through **frugality** and peacefulness. Restraining himself, he will not tire his people or disturb his **subordinates**. Thus, his people will not complain and his rule will not go off course....A chaotic age is marked by a ruler who is **arrogant** and **extravagant**, indulging in his desires. "*

**Source:** Patricia Buckley Ebrey, editor, *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, New York: The Free Press, 1993.

### About Emperor Sui Yangdi (r.605-618):

"Emperor Sui Yangdi, who constructed the Grand Canal, was also an **intrepid** inspector of his realm, his favored modes of transport being a dragon **flotilla** and a carriage fitted out for pleasures..., but the **lavishness** of his **expenditures** drained the nation's **coffers**. Nonetheless, the Grand Canal laid the foundation for the **prosperity** of the **subsequent** Tang dynasty (618-907)."

**Source:** *China Heritage Quarterly*, No. 9, March 2007. China Heritage Project, The Australian National University.

**How do you think Emperor Taizong felt about the way Emperor Sui Yangdi's spent his nation's money, spending so much to build the Grand Canal and to live so extravagantly?**

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**Source 3**  
**Is Violence... the Answer?**

**Vocabulary**

**Decorum:** formal behavior

**Morale:** confidence

**Discarding:** getting rid of

**Gist:** true nature of

**Tyrant:** a cruel or oppressive ruler

**Regime:** a government

**Rampant corruption:** frequent dishonest behavior by those in power

**Deteriorated:** to worsen

**Tribute:** payment made by one ruler to another

**Welter:** a confused mass

**Emperor Taizong wrote:**

*“Weapons and armor are a country’s tools of violence. A warlike country, however huge and safe it may be, will end up declining and endangering its people. Military force cannot be entirely eliminated nor used all the time. Teach people military arts when they are free from farming in order to equip them with a sense of military **decorum** and **morale**....Confucius said, “Not teaching people how to fight is the same as **discarding** them.” Hence military might serves to benefit the realm. This is the **gist** of war.”*

**Source:** Patricia Buckley Ebrey, editor, *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, New York: The Free Press, 1993.

**About Emperor Sui Yangdi(r.605-618)**

“It is generally accepted that Yangdi succeeded to the throne in 605 by eliminating his elder brother, the crown prince, and his father. As emperor, Yangdi proved to be a **tyrant**, and his **regime** was marked by **rampant corruption**. Under him relations with the Turks **deteriorated** into warfare and in 615 the Turks dealt with the Chinese in a devastating defeat. Similarly, Yangdi’s forces were beaten in Vietnam, and three efforts from 612 to 614 to conquer the Korean kingdom of Koguryo and exact **tribute** proved unsuccessful. In 617 Yangdi was almost captured by enemy forces, and a **welter** of rebellions broke out throughout the empire.”

**Source:** Hugh B. O’Neill, *Companion to Chinese History*, New York: Facts on File Publications, 1987.

**What would Taizong have thought of Emperor Sui Yangdi’s military campaigns?**

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## Source 4

### How to Act Like a Ruler

#### Vocabulary

**Lofty:** grand

**Illuminating:** shedding light on

**Majesty:** impressive

**Virtue:** goodness

**Diligently:** constant effort to accomplish something

**Acquire:** to get

**Benefit:** to help

**Coffers:** wealth a government has to spend

**Predecessors:** those that came before

**Deprive:** to not allow to have

**Confiscating:** taking away

**Profusion:** a great deal

**Hierarchy:** ranking

**Industrialists:** people who own and manage businesses

**Lucrative:** profitable

**Enterprises:** businesses

**Levied:** collected

**Evasion:** avoidance

**Conscription:** forced to serve in the military

#### Emperor Taizong wrote:

*"A country cannot be a country without people and a ruler cannot be a ruler without a country. When the ruler looks as **lofty** and **firm** as a mountain peak and as **pure, bright, and illuminating** as the sun and the moon, the people will admire and respect him,... He cannot expand his territory without **majesty** and **virtue**; he cannot soothe and protect his people without compassion and kindness....Having disciplined himself, he practices virtue and righteousness **diligently**. This is how a ruler should act."*

**Source:** Patricia Buckley Ebrey, editor, *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, New York: The Free Press, 1993.

#### About Emperor Wu of Han (r.130-110 BC):

*"The means that he took to **acquire** the needed funds were not really ... to **benefit** the nation as a whole, though this was claimed for them; they were merely attempts to fill imperial **coffers** at any cost. He continued the campaign begun by his **predecessors** to **deprive** the remaining feudal lords of their power and wealth, punishing them for all manner of offenses and **confiscating** their wealth and land. He sold honorary titles, military ranks, and government offices in such **profusion** that the official **hierarchy** was reduced to chaos. He set about to crush individual traders and **industrialists** and transfer their **lucrative enterprises** to government control. High taxes were **levied** upon the rich and a system of spies set up so that at any suspicion of attempted **evasion**, their entire estates were confiscated.... These measures were successful in supplying the government treasuries, but along with the forced **conscription** and heavy labor services imposed upon the people, they reduced the nation to poverty..."*

**Source:** William Theodore De Bary & Irene Bloom, editors, *Sources of Chinese Tradition: Volume 1: From Earliest Times to 1600*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.

**What would Emperor Taizong think of the way Emperor Wu ran his government and treated his people?**

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Source 5  
Finding the Right Man for the Job

Vocabulary

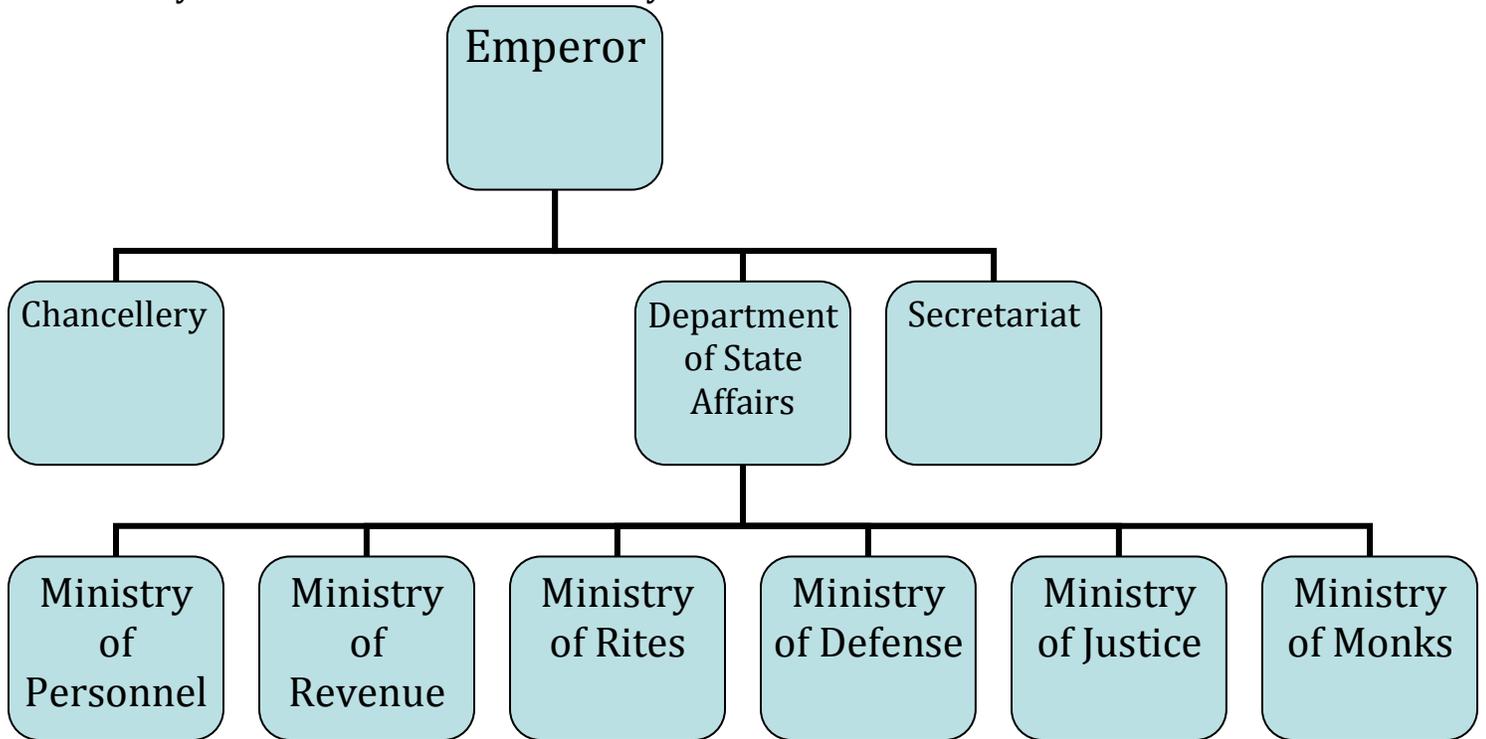
**Departmentalized:**  
broken up into parts  
**Utilizing:** using

**Emperor Taizong wrote:**

*“Government affairs should be **departmentalized** to make the best use of officials’ abilities. A tripod large enough for an ox should not be used to cook a chicken, nor should a raccoon good only at catching rats be ordered to fight against huge beasts....If the right person is given the right task or responsibility, the empire can be governed with ease. This is the proper way of **utilizing** people. Whether the emperor gets hold of the right person for the right task determines whether his empire will be well governed...”*

**Source:** Patricia Buckley Ebrey, editor, *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, New York: The Free Press, 1993.

Bureaucracy Flow Chart from Han and Sui Dynasties:



Do you think Emperor Taizong would agree with this model of government used by the previous dynasties? Why or why not?

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Source 6  
Mapping it Out

Maps of The Han, Sui, and Tang Dynasty Empires:

Source: Minneapolis Institute of Arts



1. Looking at the maps of China during 3 dynasties: the Han, Sui, and Tang, how does the size of the Empire change over time?

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2. What was happening in China in the time between the fall of the Han and the rise of the Sui?

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3. Looking at the size of the Tang Dynasty, what can you infer about the success of the Tang Dynasty? Do you think that Emperor Taizong knew what he was talking about when he wrote down advice for his heir (the prince), such as *“He cannot expand his territory without **majesty** and **virtue...**”*? Why or why not?

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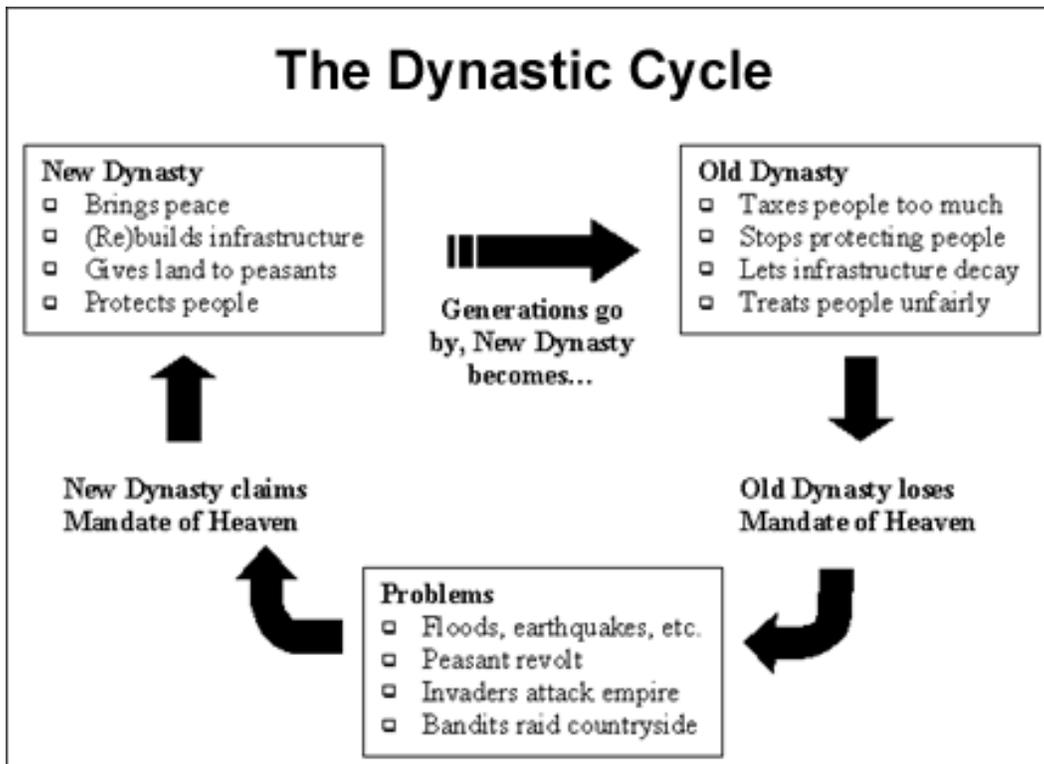
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## Reflection

After reading though and analyzing all of the documents, what do you think are the two most important lessons that the Emperor was trying to impart to (teach) the prince? Give evidence from the documents to support your response.

*"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." George Santayana*



Source: <http://regentsprep.org/regents/global/themes/goldenages/china.htm>

THE DYNASTIES OF CHINA		
	Shang Dynasty 1766 B.C.-1122 B.C.	Writing on oracle bones tells of events and customs of the period. Wheeled chariots are introduced in warfare. Silk weaving is invented. Chinese writing develops.
	Zhou Dynasty 1122 B.C.-221 B.C.	Iron casting is invented, as are the multiplication tables. Irrigation is introduced on a large scale. The great philosopher Confucius teaches a code of behavior that spreads widely.
	Qin Dynasty 221 B.C.-206 B.C.	A warrior king unites much of China into one empire. A strict law code and tax system is designed. Writing, weights and measures are standardized. Building of the Great Wall begins.
	Han Dynasty 206 B.C.-A.D. 220	Buddhism is brought to China from India. Trade routes to India and Persia are established. Paper is invented. For the next 370 years, warring kingdoms keep China in disorder.
	Sui Dynasty A.D. 589-618	Powerful emperors reunite China. A great transportation network is built, including the Grand Canal linking the Huang and Chang rivers. Gunpowder is invented.
	Tang Dynasty A.D. 618-907	Tang emperors extend China's control to neighboring areas. Height of Silk Road trade. A golden age of art and learning develops. A half-century of disorder follows.
	Song Dynasty A.D. 960-1279	Age of high culture: printing, poetry, calligraphy. Movable type and paper money are developed; invention of compass.
	Yuan Dynasty A.D. 1279-1368	Genghis Khan leads Mongols from the northwest in an attack on China. His grandson Kublai Khan founds the Yuan Dynasty. His elaborate court is visited and described by Marco Polo.
	Ming Dynasty A.D. 1368-1644	European traders arrive. Commerce flourishes. Ming emperors build the Forbidden City in Beijing and extend the Great Wall.
	Qing Dynasty A.D. 1644-1912	Manchu invaders come from the north and set up the Qing Dynasty. Foreign trade and industry grows but nationalist uprisings bring on final collapse.

Source: <https://empoweryourknowledgeandhappytrivia.wordpress.com/2014/10/13/timeline-of-chinese-history-and-dynasties/>

OR

Google Image Search "Dynasties of China Chart"