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Tang Decline & The Rise of the Song

Empress Wei's attempted power grab was unsuccessful

Internal Revolt = Rise of Xuanzong Emperor (713-756)

Xuanzong Emperor

- Initially conscientious & effective leader
- As his rule went on he lost interest in reform & focused on the arts & court life

- Yang Guifei - Royal concubine, influenced appointment of high officials (including her family members), growing power angers other factions at court

→ Economic & Military decline - Unsuccessful Revolt (755)

Xuanzong's troops mutinied during this revolt and forced the emperor to execute Yang Guifei and members of her family

- Internal political Divisions - provincial governors & local lords begin to act as independent rulers

→ Invasions by nomadic groups from the North

→ Revolts and uprisings increase

Founding of the Song Dynasty

907 - Last Tang Emperor abdicates

"Five Dynasties"

Zhao Kuangyin = Founder of Song Dynasty

- Declares himself emperor (Emperor Taizu)
- Unifies China - Except nomadic Liao Dynasty
- Consistent problems with Northern Nomads
- Song pay tribute to Liao rulers

Song Politics

- Relatively weak military, subordinate to scholar-gentry officials
- Fear of strong military governors or independent base of military power.
- Confucian scholar-gentry = highly influential
 - Civil Service Exams
 - Growing bureaucracy

Revival of Confucian Thought

- Increased competition with Buddhism
- Focus on Confucian writings & scholarship
- Neo-Confucianism - Revival of what was believed to be ancient Confucian teachings - Focus on personal morality
 - Emphasis on tradition - hostile to foreign influence
 - Importance of social rank and obligations
 - Modeled off the traditional Chinese Family

Roots of Decline: Attempts at Reform

- Continued tribute to Northern Kingdoms
- Economic decline - Peasants hit hard by taxation

Wang Anshi - Confucian scholar/official - Attempted Reform

- Legalist approach
 - Public works projects
 - Increased taxation on upper classes
- Military Reform
- Educational Reform

Reaction & Disaster

- Reforms overturned after death of Emperor - Internal problems grow
- Jurchen - Nomadic group = overthrows Liao dynasty in 1115
 - Establish Jin Dynasty
 - Successful invasion of Song Territory - Annexation of land
- Southern Song Dynasty (1167-1279)

Tang & Song Prosperity: Basis of a Golden Age.

Grand Canal - Transportation link for Northern & Southern China

- Built during Sui Dynasty under Yangdi

Commercial Expansion / Agricultural Expansion

- Overland trade (Silk Road) expands
- Increasing Cultural diffusion
- Ocean trade grows
- Domestic trade grows
- builds Develop
- Money Economy develops further
 - Banking, Paper Money (Flying money)
- Growth of cities
- Agricultural Growth
- New crops
- New Agri. technology
- Land distributed to peasants

Family & Society in the Tang & Song Eras

- Male-dominated Extended family units (Confucian Ideal)
- Arranged marriages, marriage alliances between families
- Women subordinate but could wield power (Empress Wu, ~~Wei~~ Wei, Yang Guifei)
- Divorce allowed
- Status of women declines as Neo-Confucian influence grows
 - Increased social constraints / pressures
 - Laws written to discriminate
 - Lack of education
 - Footbinding by upperclass

Creativity & Global Influence

- Gunpowder
- Abacus
- methods of flood control
- ~~Not~~ Movable type
- Development of the compass
- Paper
- Confucian influenced landscape Art
- Growth in literature & poetry