

## Outline Lecture Fourteen—The Tang Bureaucracy

General Chronology:

Official end of the Han—220 CE

Three Kingdoms—3<sup>rd</sup> century

Period of Division or Six Dynasties—4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> centuries

Northern Wei—4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> centuries

Sui Unification—589-618

Tang Dynasty—7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup>

### I) The Process Towards Reunification

#### a) Northern Wei

##### i) Momentum for political integration

(1) Political adoption of Confucian statecraft

(2) Cultural adoption of Chinese language and rituals

(3) Religious adoption of Buddhism

##### ii) Domestic Management Patterns

(1) Strengthening central authority, undermining local power

(a) Rule of Avoidance

(b) Edict of 485—“Nationalization of agricultural land”—*Juntian* system

(c) Edict of 486—standardized social organization

(2) Impact of centralization

#### b) Sui Unification 589

##### i) The Sino-Turkic founder of the Sui, Wendi

(1) Rebuilt Great Wall

(2) The Grand Canal—integrated commerce of north and south

(a) Strained limited state resources

### II) Tang Dynasty 618-906

#### a) Hallmarks of Imperial Power

i) Unparalleled wealth, cosmopolitanism, religious tolerance, and expansion

##### ii) Centralized Bureaucracy

(1) Establishment of a highly structured and professional meritocracy

(a) Introduction of the rigorous *Jinshi* exam

(2) Well-defined bureaucratic structure

##### iii) Absolutism of the emperor

#### b) Two examples

##### i) Taizong (626-649)

(1) Practical imperatives of ruling, not empty symbols

(2) Conscientious pursuit of good government

##### ii) Xuanzong (713-756)

(1) Life in Xuanzong’s palace

(2) Obsession with Yang Guifei

(3) An Lushan Rebellion 755

### III) China’s Greatest Anomaly—Empress Wu (626-706)

- a) Wu Zetian's or Empress Wu's background
  - i) Entered Taizong's palace as an unranked concubine
- b) Rise to Power during Gaozong's reign
  - i) Empress Wang vs. Wu Zetian
    - (1) "Let those witches get drunk to the bone!"
  - ii) Purges of princes—even her own son!
  - iii) Symbols of female power
    - (1) *Feng-shan* ceremony
    - (2) "Precious Chart"
- c) Excesses of Power
  - i) In 690, founder of a new Zhou dynasty (690-705)
  - ii) Indulgence towards Xue Huaiyi
  - iii) Network of informants and spies—reign of terror
  - iv) Infatuation with Zhang brothers
- d) Empress Wu's complex legacy
  - i) Role of male prejudice
  - ii) Aspirations of the "Twelve-point Memorial"
    - (1) Infused rigor in bureaucracy
    - (2) Treatises on dignity of women
  - iii) Record of her reign