

HISTORICAL LITERACY: HANDOUT A2

Some Important Chinese Emperors During the Tang and Song Dynasties

DISCUSSION SHEET

TANG DYNASTY RULERS

Taizong (reigned 626–649)

- Excellent scholar and calligrapher
- Emphasized Confucian ideas; but supported Daoism and Buddhism when practical
- Expanded power and trade through military force and diplomacy
- Limited public works projects and thereby reduced forced labor; lowered taxes

Wu Zeitan (reigned 690–705)

- Only woman to rule China in her own name
- Eliminated most of the extended imperial family and used secret informants to gain power
- Strongly supported Buddhism
- Generous to lower classes and gained their support
- Continued to expand Chinese power abroad

Xuanzong (reigned 713–756)

- Poet and musician
- Extended examination system to more commoners
- Established standard equal measures for silver, grain, and silk to help merchants
- Became obsessed with favorite concubine Yang Guifei and fell from power in rebellion led by General An Lushan

SONG DYNASTY RULERS

Taizu, first emperor of Song (reigned 960–976)

- Replaced military governors with civilian governors
- Created Council of State to freely debate policy
- Board of Censors controlled abuses and centralized power

Huizong (reigned 1100–1125)

- Painter and poet
- Developed "imperial style" of calligraphy
- Established first Academy of Painting
- Devout Daoist
- Captured by the Jurchen, his former allies, and imprisoned along with several thousand imperial relatives. He died a captive.

Xiaozong, emperor of Southern Song (reigned 1162–1189)

- Extended sea trade to India and Persian Gulf
- Oversaw growth of urban merchant class and increased tax revenue from trade
- Paper money system created under his administration