Objectives

- Summarize how the Tang dynasty reunified China.
- Explain how the Song dynasty grew rich and powerful despite military setbacks.
- Understand how China created an ordered society.
- Describe the cultural achievements of the Tang and Song dynasties.
Terms and People

- **Tang dynasty** – an empire in China that emerged in 618 to unify the region

- **Tang Taizong** – China’s most admired emperor, who took the throne eight years after the Tang dynasty began; he was a brilliant general, government reformer, and master of calligraphy

- **tributary state** – independent state that has to acknowledge the supremacy of another state and pay tribute to its ruler
Terms and People (continued)

- **land reform** – the process by which large agricultural holdings were broken up and redistributed to peasants

- **Song dynasty** – a unifying empire in China that began in 960 and ruled for 319 years

- **gentry** – a wealthy landowning class

- **dowry** – the payment that a woman brings to a marriage

- **pagoda** – a multistoried temple with eaves that curve up at the corners
Describe the political, economic, and cultural achievements of the Tang and Song dynasties.

The Tang and Song dynasties brought unity and cultural achievement to China.

These dynasties each lasted about 300 years and created growth in the economy and order in society.
The **Tang dynasty** was forged in China in 618.

- Li Yuan crushed rivals with his son, Li Shimin, and became the first Tang emperor.
- Eight years later, **Li Shimin took the throne** as **Tang Taizong**.
The Tang dynasty united China for the first time in 400 years.

- Tang rulers built a sizeable empire, forcing neighboring lands to become **tributary states**.
- Empress Wu Zhao and other Tang emperors restored uniform government throughout the empire and set up schools.
Tang rulers instituted **land reform** to strengthen central government and weaken large landholders.

They **broke up large land holdings** and redistributed tracts to peasants.
The Tang dynasty ended in 907. In 960, the **Song dynasty** was founded.

- It was forged by a general named Zhao Kuangyin.
- It lasted for 319 years, but controlled less territory than the Tang.
- It was a time of great wealth and cultural achievement for China.
The economy grew under the Song dynasty for many reasons.

- Its emperors had an open border policy that encouraged foreign trade and imports.
- Farming methods improved and farmers produced two crops a year, creating a surplus.
- Use of the Grand Canal linking the Huang River to the Chang River reached its height during this time.
China was a very ordered society under both the Tang and the Song dynasties.

The two main classes were the gentry, or landholders, and the peasants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The gentry studied to pass the civil service exam.</th>
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<td>The peasants worked the land and produced handicraft items such as baskets.</td>
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Some merchants became wealthy in the market towns of China.

However, they had lower social status than peasants.

This was due to Confucian tradition.
Women often managed a household’s servants and finances, but they could not keep their dowry.

The painful custom of foot binding was widely practiced and greatly limited a woman’s ability to leave the home.

Families in China valued boys more than girls, and women had a subordinate position in society.
A rich culture developed under the Tang and Song and was expressed in painting, architecture, porcelain, and poetry.

- The gentry learned to paint and do calligraphy and sought to express balance and harmony with nature in their works.

- In architecture, the Chinese **pagoda** evolved. *Sculptors expressed Buddhist themes.*
Tang and Song writers produced prose and poetry as well as works on philosophy and history.

Poetry was the most respected form of Chinese literature. The greatest Tang poet was Li Bo.

He wrote 2,000 poems about the passage of time and harmony with nature.
Section Review

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