

A Cosmopolitan Empire

Tang Dynasty—581-907



A Cosmopolitan Empire

Turkic-Chinese general, Sui Wendi, reunified China.

The Grand Canal linked the northern and southern parts of China. In that process, China became a cosmopolitan empire with many contacts throughout the region.

New ideas were welcomed while Buddhism became more dominant.

Trade expanded and economic times were good.

NB—the text points out that the reunification was remarkable considering the two centuries of division and cultural differences between the north and south. This never occurred between the Western and Eastern Roman Empire. Justinian wasn't able to do what the Tang dynasty did.



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Code of 653

First example of a code of conduct for China containing 500 crimes and their punishments. It paralleled the Code of Hammurabi in that the penalties depended upon the social class of the victim or the perpetrator.

This favoritism toward the elites can be also seen in the civil service exams.

The bureaucracy favored the aristocracy even with the civil service exams.

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現常之世民仰德而知
遵及乎晦教歸真遠儀
越世金容掩色不鏡三
千之光臨庶象開闔空
端四心之相於是微之廣

by Wang Xizhi

A Cosmopolitan Empire

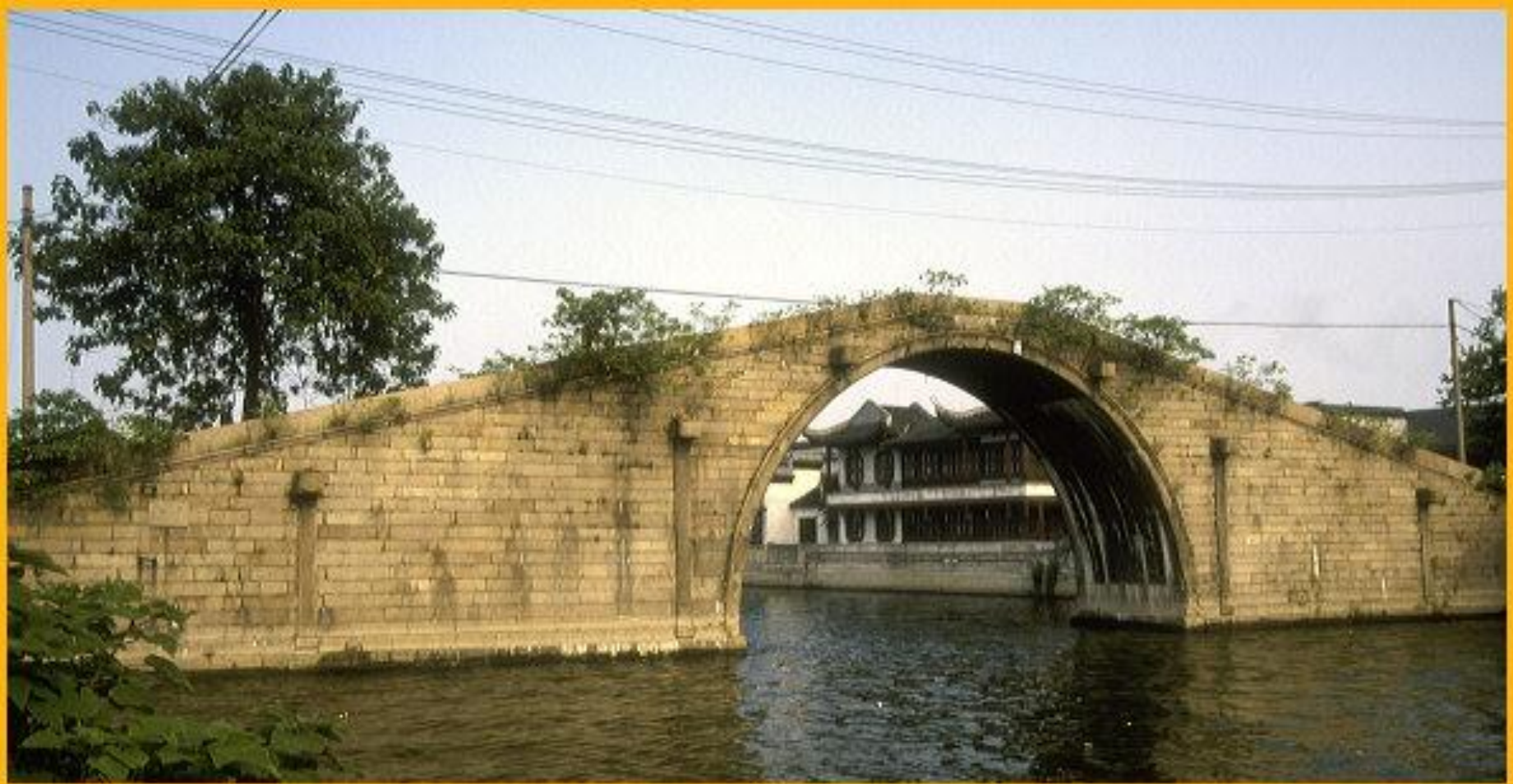


Grand Canal

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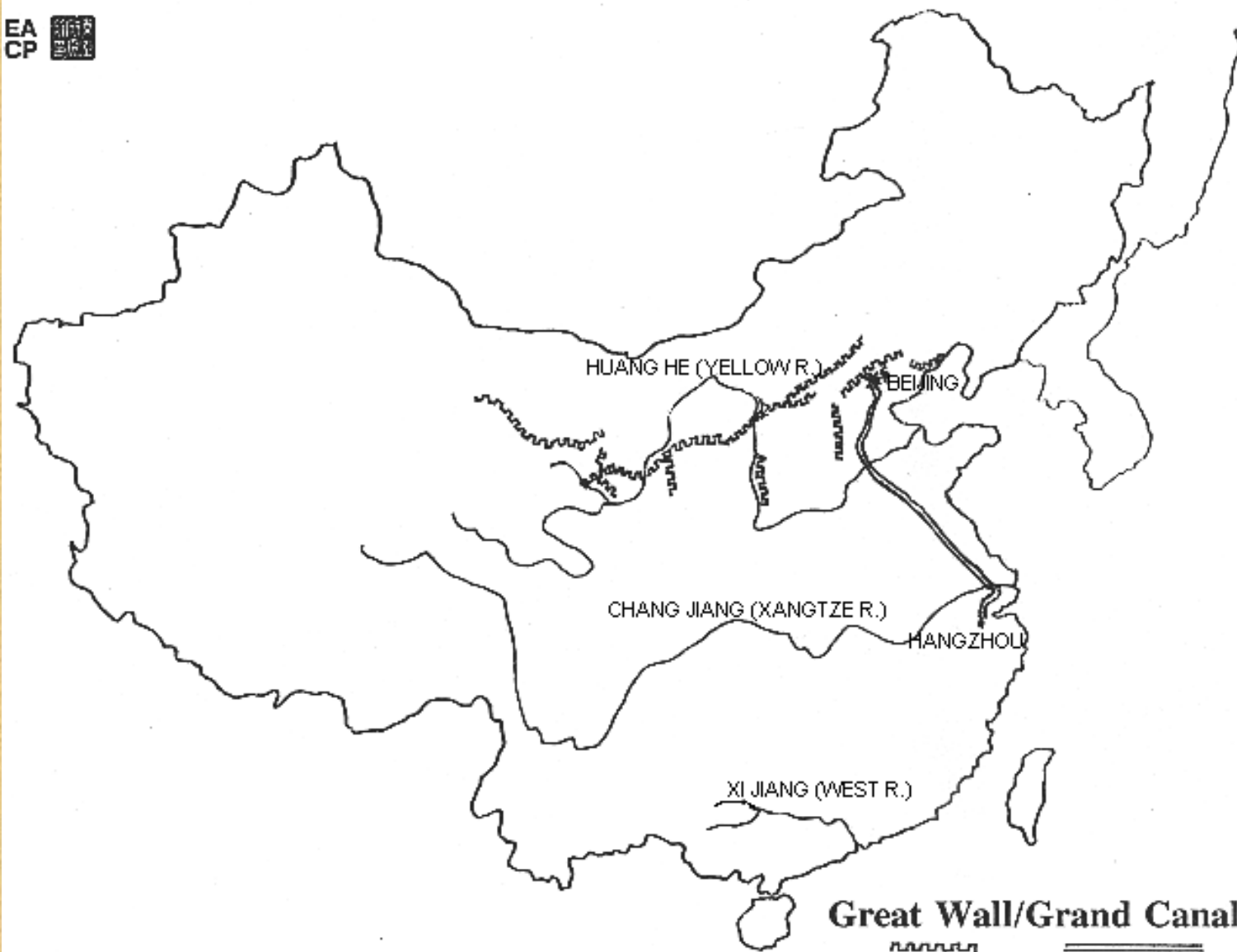
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The Grand Canal (605-609) linked the north and south together as the railroad linked America east-west.

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EA
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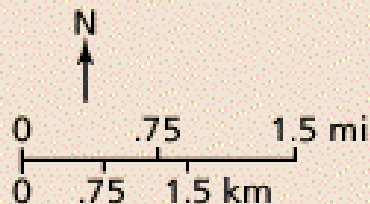
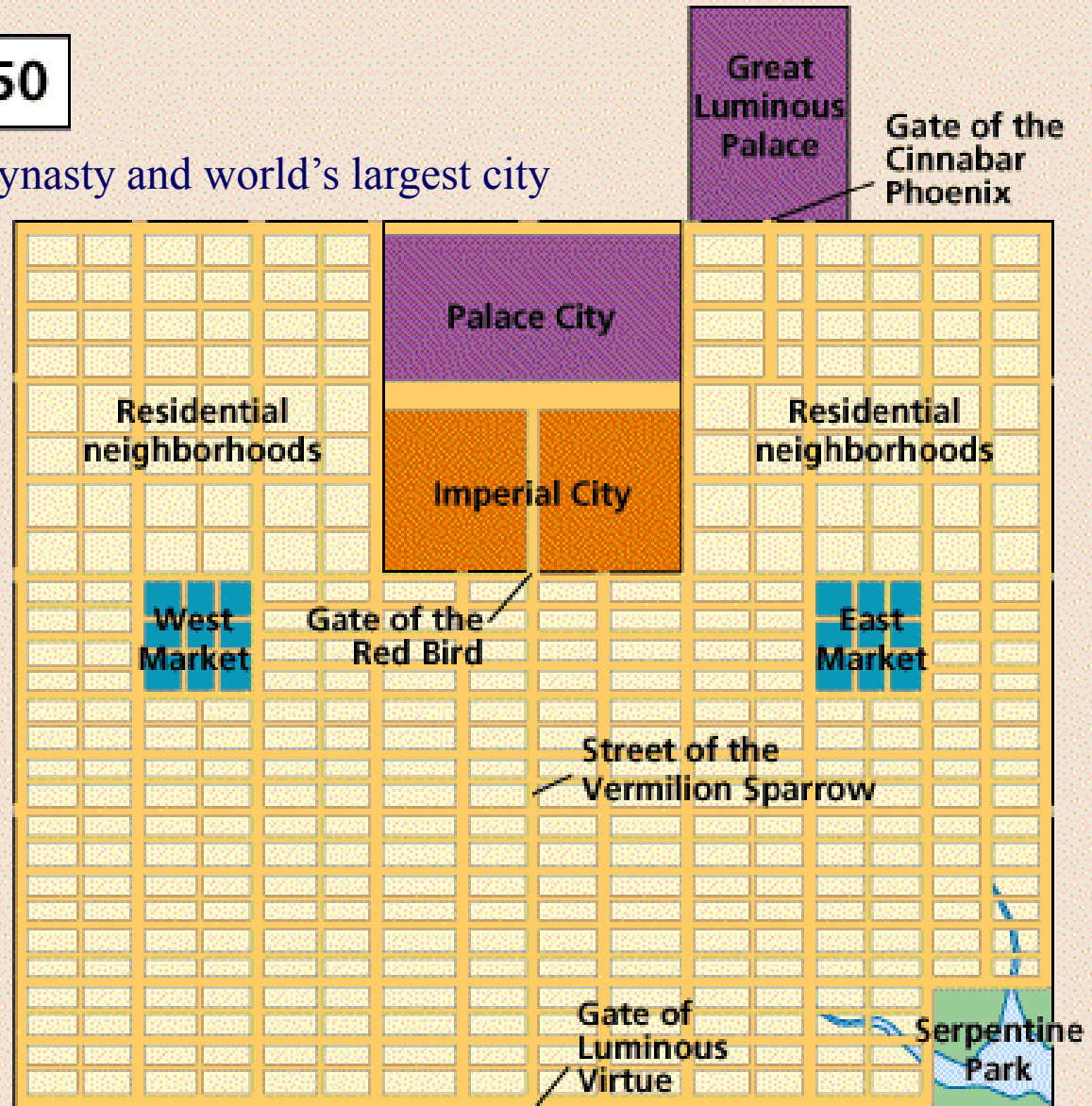
Empress Wu's rise to power paralleled Theodora (Justinian's wife). She created the Zhou dynasty. She also proclaimed that Buddha would be reincarnated in a female empress thus ushering in a new age of world peace and happiness.

Wu's reign was interesting given Confucius' notion that a woman ruler would be like having "a hen crow like a rooster at daybreak."

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Changan, 750

Capital of the Tang Dynasty and world's largest city



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Tang dynasty was open to new ideas including many world religions and the arts.



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Xuanzong (r.712-56) love for Yang Guifei resulted in his overthrow and the end of this cultural highpoint of China.

An Lushan forced Xuanzong to relinquish his rule over China.

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Chinese Mulian Plays

目連救母研究資料概要索引

Resources for Studies of Ritual and Performance



Fei Peng and Gary Seaman

彭飛

西蒙雅禮

Mulian journey into hell to retrieve his mother. Chinese still put food out to feed the spirits from hell.

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余乃身居無恙... 諸佛方便力... 向... 三乘
惟有一佛乘... 息... 故... 二... 今... 法... 所得... 乘...
為佛一切智... 富... 發... 大... 精... 進... 女... 證... 一切... 智... 十... 力... 苦... 佛... 法...
共... 三... 十二... 劫... 乃... 是... 真... 實... 法... 諸... 佛... 之... 真... 師... 為... 息... 說... 諸... 佛...
說... 知... 是... 息... 已... 引... 入... 於... 佛... 息...

妙法蓮華經卷第三

右大法海國... 解... 故... 浴... 法... 白... 高... 明... 寺... 斯... 聖... 唯...
受... 持... 願... 戴... 福... 則... 是... 蓮... 華... 經... 善... 為... 佛... 某... 聖... 則... 是...
以... 大... 法... 師... 講... 行... 信... 午... 末... 之... 日... 至... 心... 發... 願... 故... 寫... 法...
在... 一... 乘... 之... 宗... 全... 故... 滅... 罪... 之... 文... 故... 昔... 真... 實... 之... 般... 論...
伽... 立... 之... 法... 合... 或... 行... 深... 信... 伯... 卷... 經... 論... 奉... 明... 顯...
退... 報... 曰... 思... 救... 辟... 品... 然... 假... 體... 如... 浮... 雲... 乎... 亦... 似...
電... 光... 未... 畢... 其... 事... 合... 玉... 化... 化... 美... 乎... 尊... 仁... 菩... 不...
麻... 風... 樹... 之... 傷... 故... 行... 光... 顯... 柱... 長... 聖... 明... 金... 輪...
之... 化... 與... 乳... 樹... 凡... 動... 女... 連... 之... 靜... 乎... 劫... 石... 妙... 蓮...
蓮... 願... 焉... 故... 曰... 思... 梳... 法... 華... 之... 中... 善... 說... 之... 則... 蒙...
灌... 頂... 乃... 奉... 降... 魔... 廣... 及... 生... 盡... 道... 有... 欲... 離... 苦...
得... 樂... 者... 宜... 見... 道...

妙法蓮華經卷第三

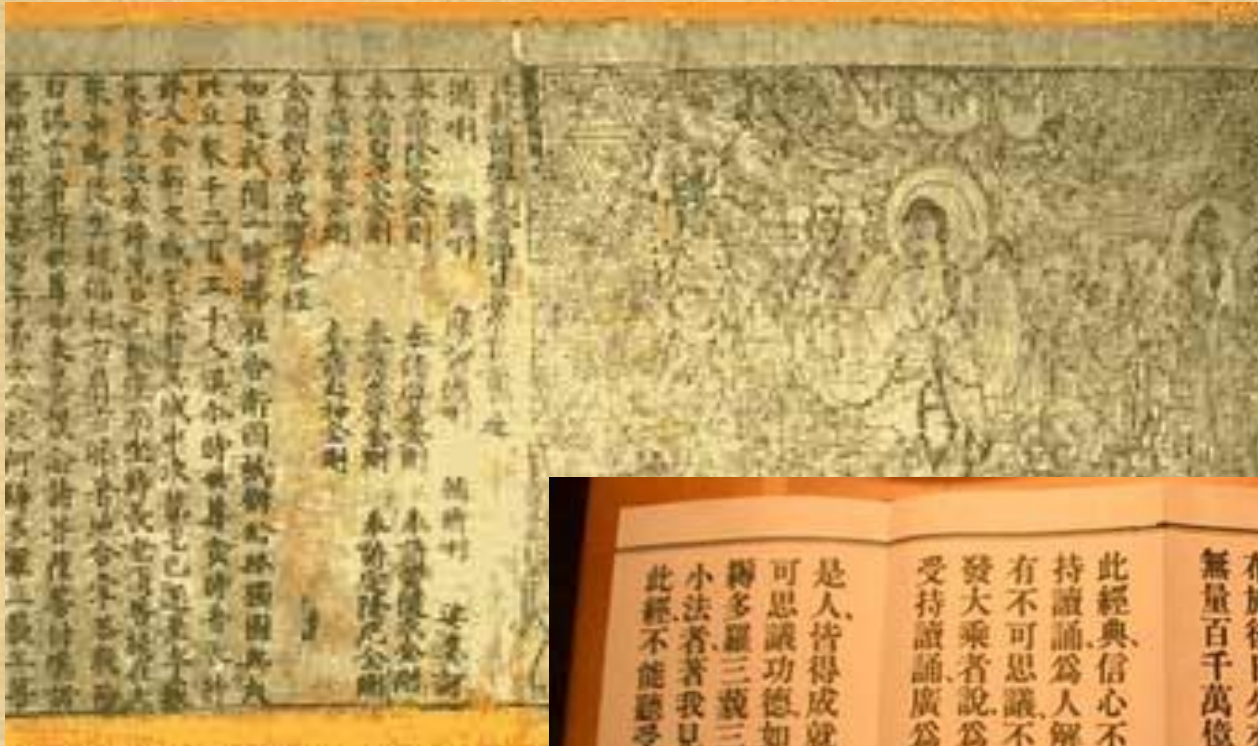
Lotus Sutra

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Dunhuang was a repository of many Buddhist texts and educational materials, etc.

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Diamond Sutra



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A salt tax levy

- An Lushan rebellion lasted from 755-63. The peace treaty allowed for some “self-determination” in various sections of the empire
- Semi-annual taxing replaced the equal-field system.
- Free market on land ownership.
- The central government taxed salt and related salt activities. This generated more than 1/2 of the total “federal” revenue.
- Deregulation created a prosperous economy.
- Tibetans gained autonomy.

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- **By the Tang dynasty, the Chinese were rethinking the concept that they were the only civilized and cultured people in the world.**
- **Confucianism was reemphasized redacted by Du You and Han Yu.**
- **Buddhism and Daoism were deemphasized in the wake of the reemergence of Confucius.**