

The Tang Dynasty, 618-906

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April 26, 2022



Tang China



Tang Chang'an: At the Eastern End of the Silk Road

Tang China in a Larger World

China's Population:

Tang Dynasty 60 million. Capital: Chang'an (modern Xi'an) with a population around 1 million. 60% of the population lives in the north, where they consume a millet and wheat diet.

What other societies rivaled China at this time?

Which other cities were as large?

The Tang-Song Transition

First proposed by Naito Torajiro (1866-1934), who equated China with a male human being.

Ancient times: a young child.

Tang and Song: the peak of male adulthood

Ming and Qing (1400-1900): doddering senescence.

Contribution: China is not frozen in an unchanging moment (which many other periodizations suggest).

Today's Lecture on the Tang Dynasty

Large, imperially planned cities, such as the capital at Chang'an

Government regulated markets

Life in the Cities and Tang Society

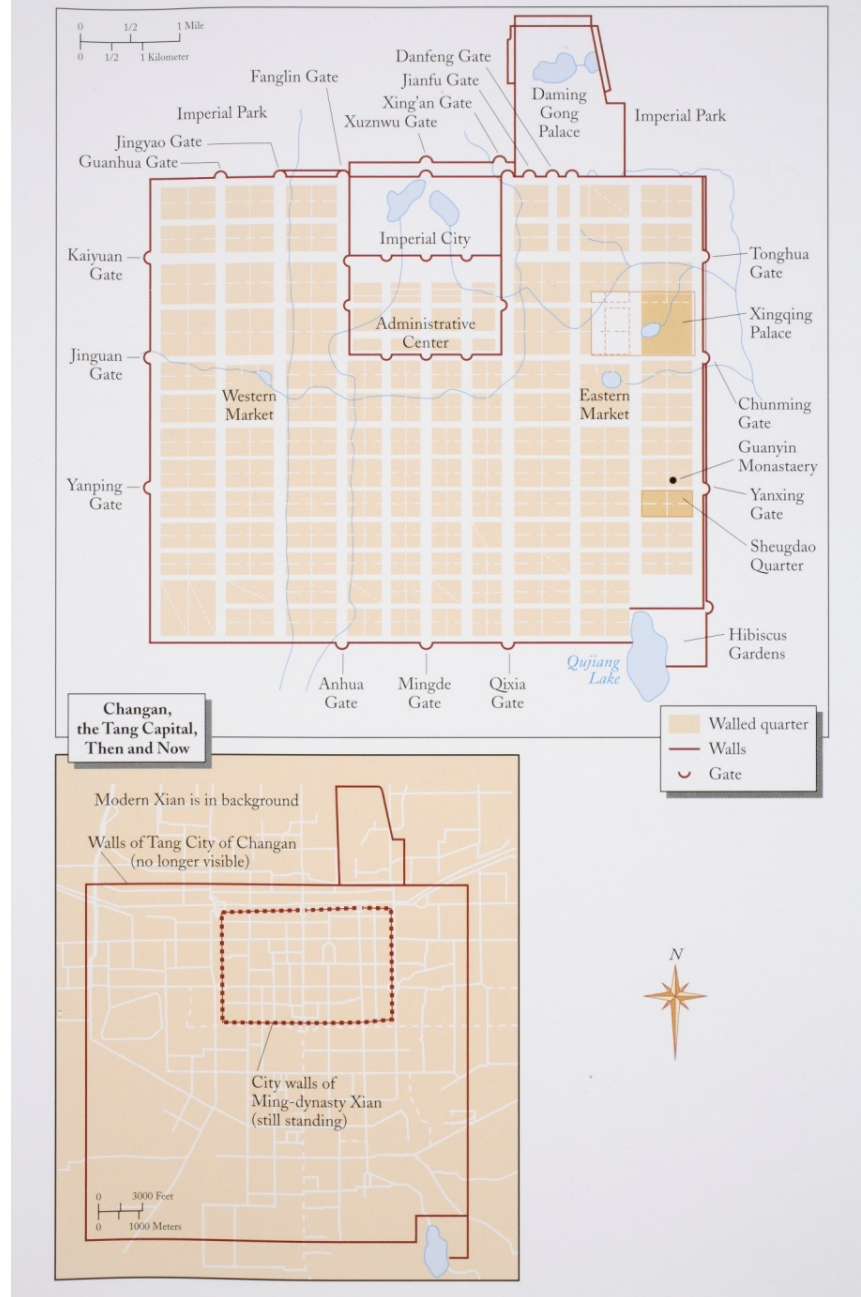
Religious Life in the Tang

The Origins of Woodblock Printing

Development of the Civil Service Examinations

The An Lushan Rebellion

Tang Cities



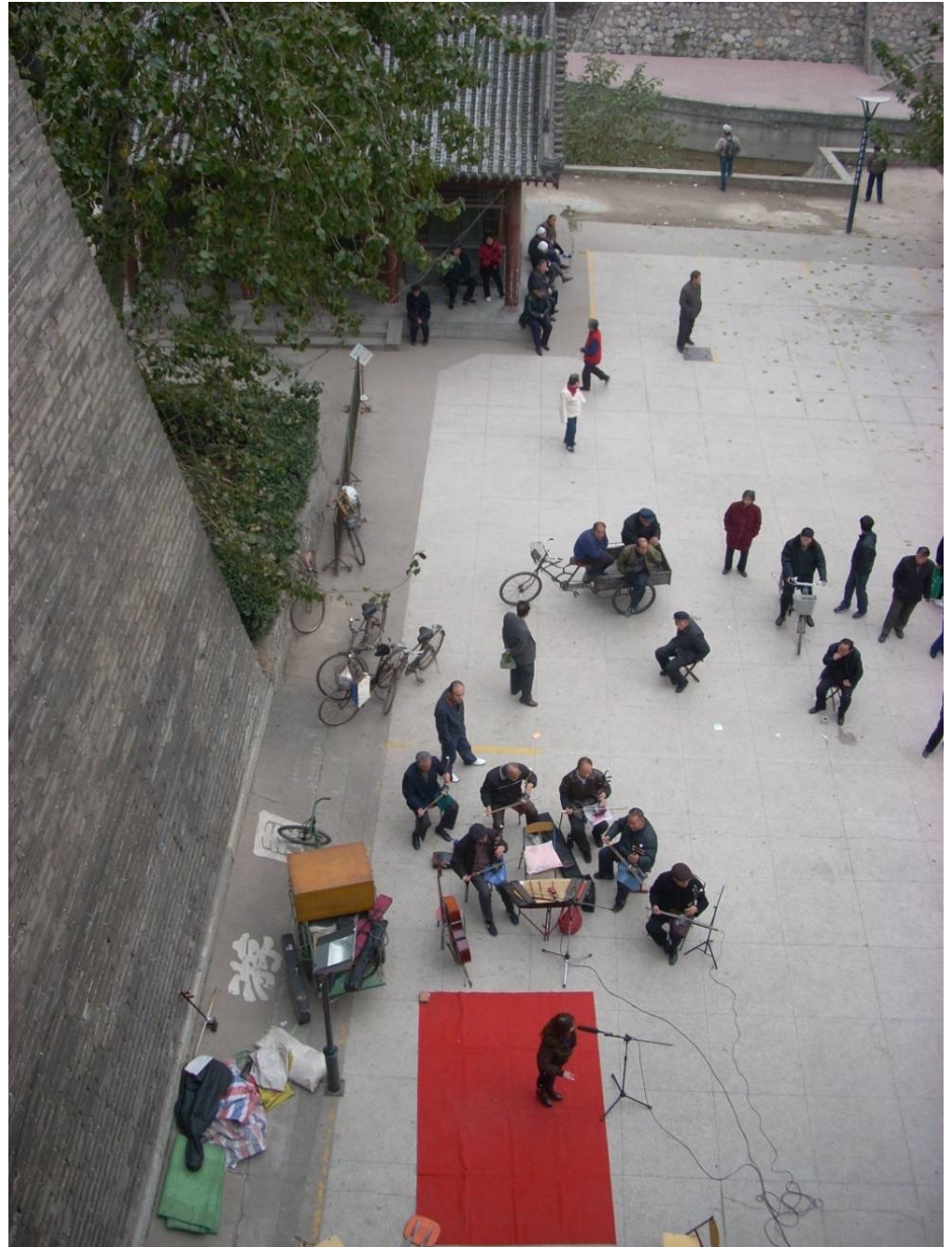
The Tang-dynasty capital at Chang'an (modern Xi'an)

The Silk Road: A New History, p. 142

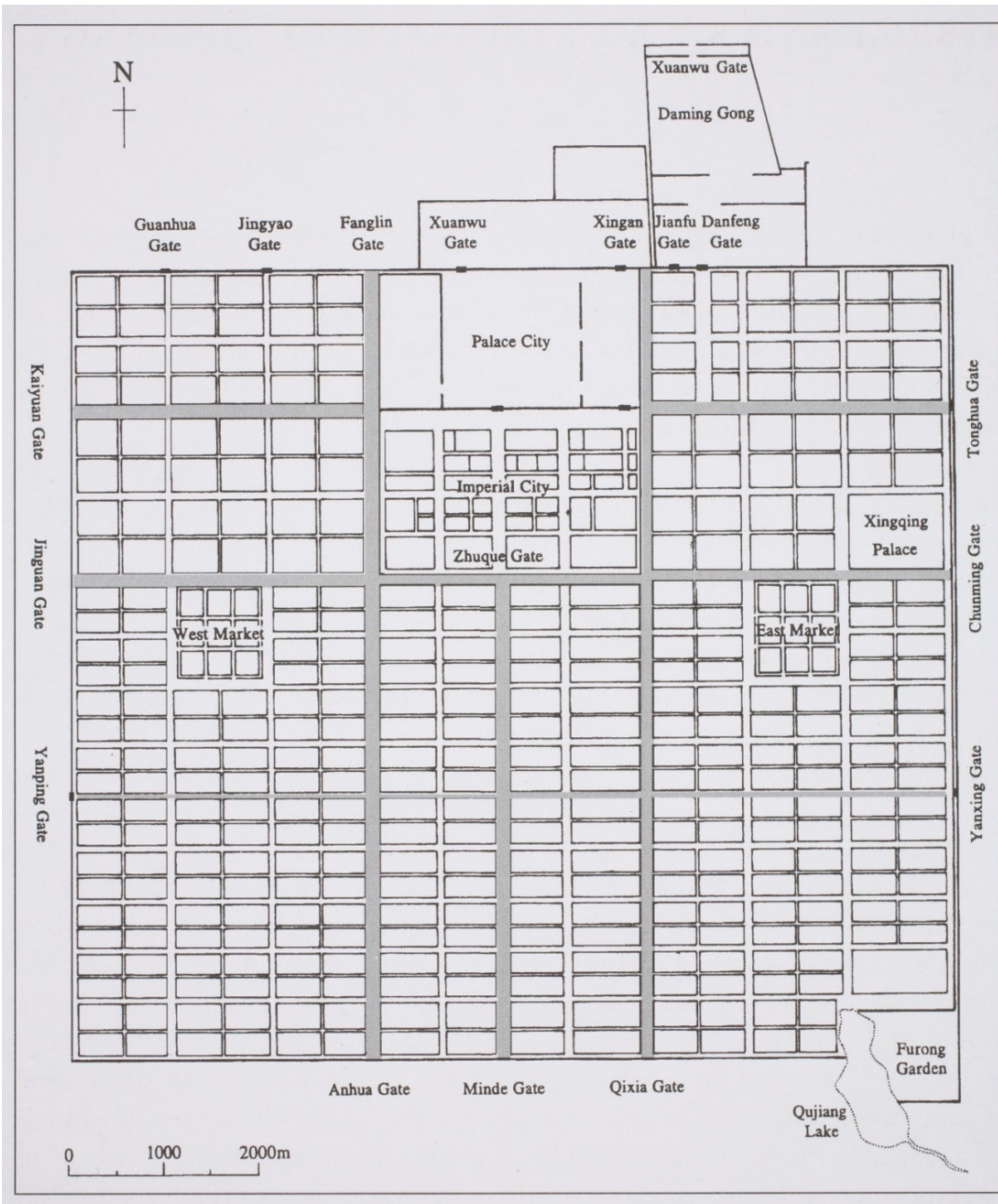


Ming Wall at Xi'an, Fall 2008

View from Ming-dynasty City Wall at Xi'an



V Hansen photograph



Tang-dynasty Chang'an

Heng Chye Kiang, *Cities of Aristocrats and Bureaucrats* (1999)



Fig. 9. Reconstruction of Mingde Gate.

Heng Chye Kiang, *Cities of Aristocrats and Bureaucrats* (1999)

Reconstruction of Mingde Gate

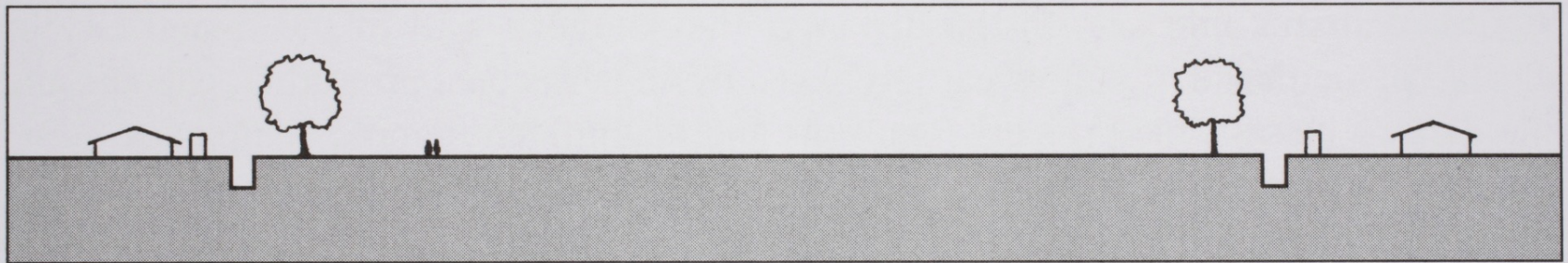
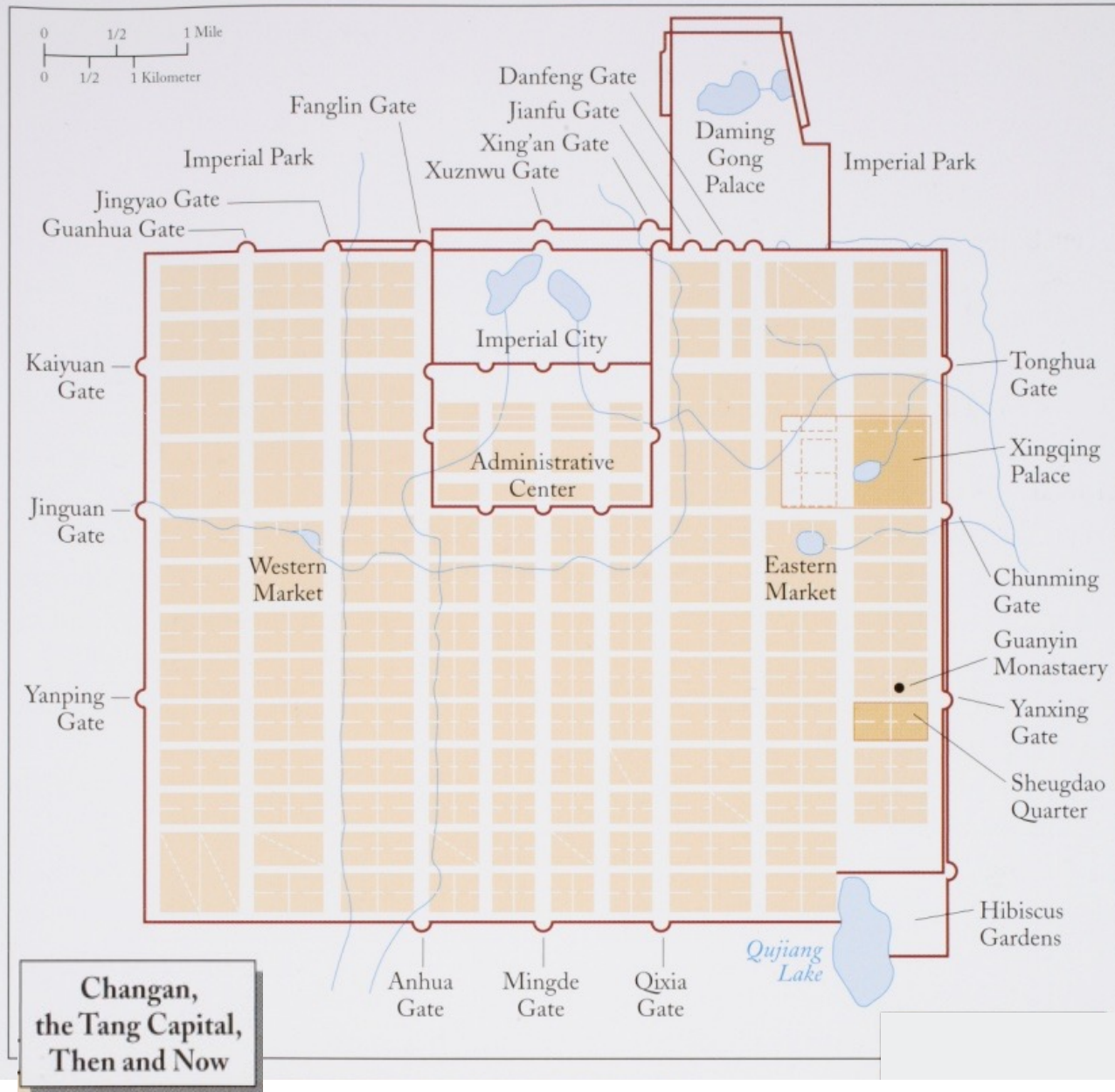


Fig. 10. Schematic cross section of a typical 120-meter-wide avenue.

Heng Chye Kiang, *Cities of Aristocrats and Bureaucrats* (1999)

The widest avenues were 155 meters across, the equivalent of a 45-lane highway. See p. 148.

Markets in Chang'an



Legend:

- Walled quarter
- Walls
- Gate

Liu Yuxi description of a small-town market in a border area of Langzhou, Hunan, 807

On the day in which the order to move the market was first issued, those responsible for the market register (shiji 市籍) all came and marked off the different sections on either side of the road. They set out the spaces [for stalls] in exactly the same order from left to right, and sequence from front to rear as was used in the walled market place within the city. Notices proclaimed the names of the various rows (lie 列) and sections (qu 区), and made known the prices and named the commodities on sale. Mingled among them were commodities produced among the outer barbarians. There were tethering places for horses and cattle. There were pens for slaves.

Heng Chye Kiang, *Cities of Aristocrats and Bureaucrats* (1999): 35-36

Liu Yuxi description of market (con't)

The cloth-covered boxes for silk contained both patterned and plain woven materials. Among the tables and sets of shelves there were both carved and lacquered ones and others were unadorned and substantial. Among the round and square basketwork there were both black and white, both delicate and sturdy pieces. Those whose profession was providing food set out their hot dishes and laid out cakes and dumplings surrounded by fragrant smells. The wine sellers set up their banners advertising their wines, and washed up their wine-cups and bowls with shining faces.

Liu Yuxi description of market (con't)

The butchers set up their platters for fat, and carved up the carcasses of pigs and sheep in a thick red atmosphere of blood. The product of flower and fruit, game taken in the hunt, birds and beast were mixed together, the products of land and water were intermingled.

Every sort of person came in their flocks, innumerable people enter the narrow alleyways between the stalls and then split up again. There were some who had hoarded up goods, waiting to get the right prices. Others carried the deeds of sale for goods and sought to sell them.

Liu Yuxi description of market (con't)

Some were out to take any chance to make a gain, some had made their profit and were out to enjoy themselves. There were seated hawkers sitting humbly and respectfully, walking peddlers hastening along.

Hearts intent on profit are excited. Covetous eyes do not shut for an instant. Fellow merchants in charge of contracts, groups devoted to restricting trade within their own circle, conclude agreements between this on and that, and push the prices up. Feigning to do good they cause trouble by their crafty words. Fair weight is ruined by their crafty hands. They trade on the difference of the minutest amounts in weight.

Liu Yuxi description of market (con't)

Evil gossip grates on the ear. Defamation and swindling thrive. Treacherous behavior is everywhere to be seen. They raise a frightful hubbub, stir up the dust and dirt, emanate a rank stink like goats, pile together their head-cloth and sandals. Snapping and gnawing at one another they congregate, and what came to market different goes home the same. They set off, already wrangling, at cockcrow. At midday they throng together, ten-thousand feed led by the single thought that they all fear somebody else will forestall them. By the time their business is finished and they return home, the sun's glow has reached the west...

Liu Yuxi description of market (con't)

Among them there is not a single one who seeks some waste land [which he might cultivate]. All are intent only to act like scavenger dogs or carrion crows, delighted to get hold of some putrid leftovers.

On this day, leaning on the parapet, I watched them carefully, pondering how their profits and loss were so intimately interdependent and speedily set it all down in this essay.

Source: Chye Kiang Heng, *Cities of Aristocrats and Bureaucrats : The Development of Medieval Chinese Cityscapes*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999: 35-36.

Life in Urban Wards

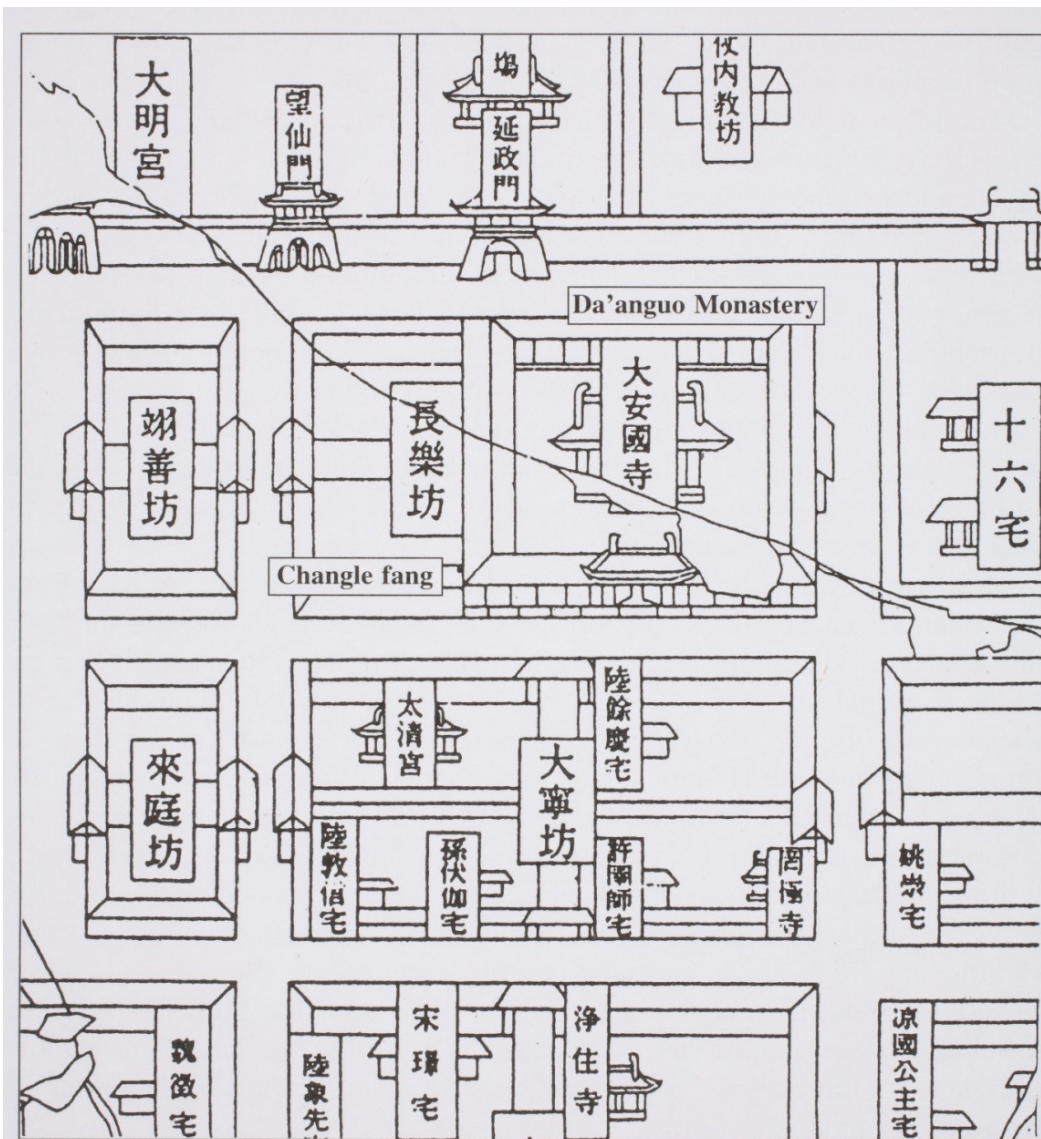


Fig. 17. Detail from the map of Chang'an engraved on a stone stele in 1080 showing Da'anguo Monastery which took up more than half the area of Changle fang.

Heng Chye Kiang, *Cities of Aristocrats and Bureaucrats* (1999): 35-36

Metropolitan
Museum
Exhibition
Catalog,
2004-2005





The Silk Road: A New History, plate 8; page 141.

三歲以是極自
未才自余
九月老病

思忠有自
百五

伯天曰
街道自自
其有
萬大卷年
其有
南收

0 1 2 3 4 5 cm

一三 唐貨庫帳歷(?)

(一)

絹一丈四尺

~~衛通~~正月十八日取壹佰貳拾

文衛通

其月廿四日贖付了

西門大巷年五十

故黃布衫一

~~尹娘~~正月十八日取伍拾文

同日更取伍拾文

其月廿三日贖付了

南坊侯神寶阿婦

羅袂

~~何思忠~~正月十八日取

二月十五日贖

北曲

三歲孩兒破白絹




~~支才~~正月十八日

二月十五日更取

九月廿七日贖付了

18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



	Walled quarter
	Walls
	Gate

**Changan,
the Tang Capital,
Then and Now**

Story of Li Wa

As an Snapshot of Life During the Tang

Basic Plot

Was the curfew enforced? (The story is set before 755; written by Bai Xingjian in 795)

What does the story suggest about social mobility?

Funeral competition: what does it show about the level of market regulation?

Why does Zhang succeed by the end of the story?

See *Open Empire*, 2e, pp.192-194, for more about the story.

Tang Society

As Depicted in “The Story of Li Wa”

- Scholar Officials
- Examination candidates
- Commoners
- Polluted groups such as funeral workers and prostitutes

Outside the story

- The imperial family
- The aristocracy
- SPAM (Scholars, Peasants, Artisans, Merchants)

Empress of China (2014 PRC TV show)

Wu Zetian (ruled 690-705)
viewed herself as Emperor of
China, not empress.
Chinese ideas about gender.
Her legacy: almost no
women rule as emperors
after her. Instead they serve
as regents.



Religious Life in the Tang

Local deities (like the Spirit of the Bamboo Grove that Li Wa goes to visit with her madam)

Daoism (Taoism):

China's indigenous religion

Buddhism:

Introduced from India, becomes widespread before the Tang, very popular in the Tang. 600: 30,000 monasteries, 2 million monks and nuns.

Confucianism:

Is it a religion? A philosophy?

State religion and an ideology.

Key point: none of these religions demands exclusive loyalty from lay people (yes from clergy).

New Religions in the Tang

Manichaeism (Mani d. 260)
from Iran

Zoroastrianism (Zoroaster/Zarathustra 1000 BC?)
Iran's most traditional religion

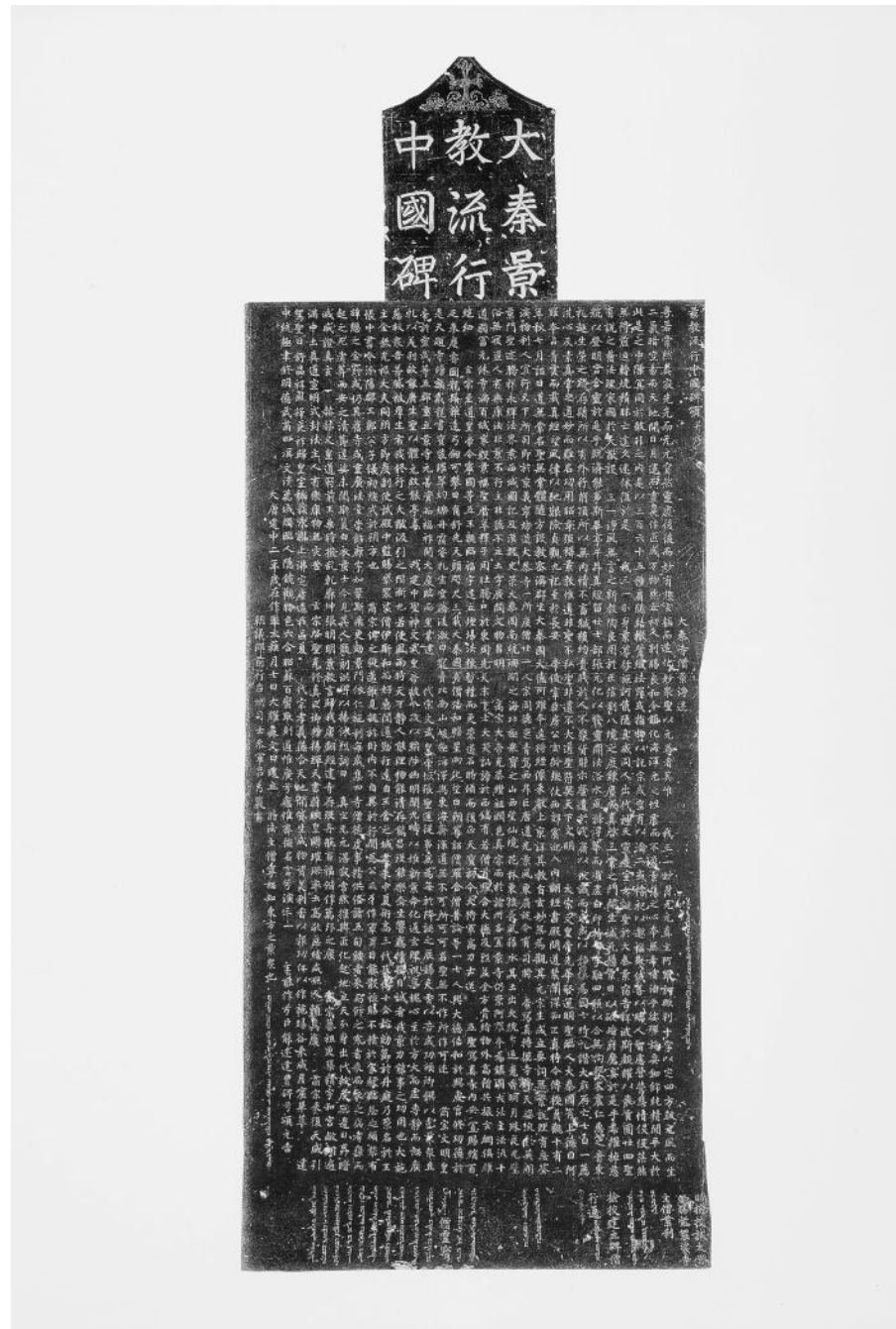
Christianity
from Syria



Manichean
Illustration
from Turfan,
ca. 700-900,
showing the
festival of
Bema

Source: *The Silk
Road: A New
History with
Documents,*
Plate 10A

Nestorian
Monument 781,
found in Shaanxi
province (not in
Xi'an) in 1625



The Earliest Woodblock Printed Text? Dharani Spell ca. 700

南謨薄伽梵
帝納婆納伐
底喃一三乖
二佛施俱旺
那庚多設多
索訶薩囉列
南二南謨薩
娑你伐羅拏
上毗瑟劍曩
聲田瑟劍曩
泥引菩提薩
埵也三唵引
觀嚕觀嚕五
薩婆何伐囉

Single sheet with
prayer to Manjushri,
the deity of Mt.
Wutai, From cave
17, Dunhuang:

Above:
picture of Manjushri
on her lion

Below:
a caption about her
powers and then
three lines of
dharani prayers.

Ca 900-950.





Source: Wikipedia: Woodblock Printing



凡欲讀經先念淨口業真言遍

循唎 循唎 摩訶循唎 循唎 娑婆訶

奉請除災金剛 奉請辟毒金剛 奉請黃隨求金剛

奉請自淨水金剛 奉請亦聲金剛 奉請空除厄金剛

奉請紫賢金剛 奉請大神金剛

金剛般若波羅蜜經

如是我聞一時佛在舍衛國祇樹給孤獨園與大
比丘衆千二百五十人俱尔時世尊食時着衣持
鉢入舍衛大城乞食於其城中次第乞已還至本處
飯食訖收衣鉢洗足已敷座而坐時長老須菩提在大
衆中即從坐起偏袒右肩右膝著地合掌恭敬而
白佛言希有世尊如來善護念諸菩薩善付囑諸
菩薩世尊善男子善女人發心淨多羅三寶三菩

The Diamond Sutra, 868, the world's first printed book? From Cave 17, Dunhuang.

Dedication
Page of the
Diamond
Sutra

以故

一切有為法 如夢幻泡影 如露亦如電 應作如是觀
佛說是經已長老須菩提及諸比丘比丘尼優
婆塞優婆夷一切世間天人阿羅漢等聞佛所說
皆大歡喜信受奉行

金剛般若波羅蜜經

真言

那謨薄伽 跋帝 鉢羅若 鉢羅蜜多曳
唵 伊哩帝 伊失哩 忒嚧馱 毗舍耶 毗舍耶
娑婆訶

咸通九年四月十五日王玠為

二親敬造普施

Growth of the Civil Service Exams in the Tang Dynasty

Different types of examinations:

recognizing passages from the classics

poetry

policy questions

5% of the bureaucracy recruited by exam, but the top positions go to exam degree holders.

The Naitō question: rule by aristocracy or bureaucracy?

Tang China



The An Lushan Rebellion in Art



Emperor Ming-huang's Journey to Shu, Taipei Palace Museum



Emperor Xuanzong's Flight to Shu
Met Museum 41.138

The An Lushan Rebellion, 755-763: Before and After

Before

Possibly the peak of centralized Chinese government power

The equal field system: the government conducts a census and land survey every three years, reallocates land, and collects taxes in grain, labor, and cloth.

After

The emperor relinquishes the power to tax to regional governors.

The equal field system collapses. The provinces pay regional quotas instead, severing the direct link between imperial subject and ruler.

The Tang Dynasty

Population of 60 million, with 60% of the population in the north

Imperial state closely monitors the economy

Strict regulation of markets and cities

Emperor rules with the assistance of the aristocracy

Beginning of the Civil Service Examinations

Three foreign religions join the three traditional Chinese religions of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism.

Woodblock printing begins around 700 AD

The An Lushan Rebellion, 755-763, as a major turning point