

RE-ESTABLISHING THE EMPIRE: THE SUI AND TANG DYNASTIES

THE COSMOPOLITAN EMPIRES: SUI AND TANG CHINA

North and south China were politically reunited in 589 when the Sui Dynasty (581-618 AD) defeated the last of the Southern Dynasties. After only two generations, the Sui was itself replaced by the Tang Dynasty (618-907AD), but progress toward cultural, economic and political reunification continued, especially under three forceful rulers: Taizong, Empress Wu and Xuanzong. The capital cities of Chang'an and Luoyang attracted people not only from all parts of China but also from all parts of Asia. The arts, and above all poetry, thrived in this environment. After the massive rebellion of the general An Lushan wracked China in the mid-eighth century, many of the centralizing features of the government were abandoned, and power fell more and more to regional military governors. Yet late Tang should not be viewed simply in terms of dynastic decline, as art and culture continued to flourish.

THE SUI REUNIFICATION OF CHINA

THE SUI REUNIFICATION OF CHINA That reunification came about from the north is not surprising, since by the fifth century the south had largely abandoned hope of reconquering the north. Reunification was delayed, however, by the civil war in the north after 523. This changed in 577 when the Northern Zhou Dynasty defeated the Northern Qi, which freed up its armies to take on the south. The rulers of Northern Zhou were not Chinese, though in this period ethnicity was fluid and intermarriage among ethnic groups was common. Generally ethnicity was considered to be passed down with family names on the father's side, but family names could be changed. Yang Jian, the founder of the Sui Dynasty, claimed descent from Han Chinese, but Yang was one of the names given to Xianbei settlers in the fifth century, so his ancestors might well have been Xianbei. Yang Jian's daughter married into the non-Chinese Yuwen family, the Northern Zhou royal house, after which Yang Jian usurped the throne from his daughter's young son and proclaimed himself emperor of the new Sui dynasty. He was known as Wendi, the "cultured emperor" (r. 581-604). Wendi presided over the reunification of China, building thousands of boats to compete for control of the Yangzi River. Some of those ships were manned by aborigines from southeastern Sichuan, recently conquered by the Sui. By late 588, Sui had over half a million troops deployed along the north bank of the Yangzi, from Sichuan to the Pacific Ocean. Within three months, Sui had captured Nanjing, and the rest of the south soon submitted. After capturing Nanjing, the Sui commanders forced the nobles and officials resident there to move to the new Sui capital at Chang'an.



Both Wendi and his empress were pious Buddhists and drew on Buddhism to legitimise the Sui Dynasty. Wendi portrayed himself as a Cakravartin king, a Buddhist monarch who used military force to defend

the Buddhist faith. In 601, in imitation of the Buddhist Indian king Ashoka the Great, he had relics of the Buddha distributed to temples throughout the country. Both Wendi and his successor, Yangdi (r. 604-617), had grand ambitions to rebuild an empire comparable to the Han. The Sui helped tie north and south China together by a major feat of construction: the Grand Canal. Built by conscripted laborers, the canal linked the Yellow and Yangzi rivers. In later dynasties, this canal would be extended northeast as far as Beijing and to the south as far as Hangzhou. The canal was 130 feet wide and ran parallel to an imperial road with relay posts and supply granaries. Easy water transport made it much easier to ship tax grain from the south to the centers of political and military power in north China. However, both Sui emperors viewed their empire as incomplete because they had not recovered the parts of modern Korea and Vietnam that the Han Dynasty had held. The Hanoi area was easily recovered in 602, and the few years later the Sui army pushed farther south. Although the Sui troops were victorious in the Champa region of southern Vietnam, many succumbed to disease, as northern soldiers did not have immunity to tropical diseases such as malaria.

Recovering northern Korea proved an elusive goal. The Korean state of Koguryo had its capital near modern Pyongyang and also held southern Manchuria as far as the Liao River. When in 598 AD, Koguryo troops joined a raid into Sui territory, Wendi ordered three hundred thousand troops to retaliate. However, the Sui army had to turn back when food supplies ran short. A supply fleet sent from Shandong lost many of its vessels in storms and accomplished nothing. Another attempt was made in 611. Three hundred ships were built in Shandong and Yangdi himself traveled to the region of modern Beijing to oversee preparations. Reportedly, six hundred thousand men were conscripted and sent overland for the invasion. Again, however, supplies sent by ship failed to resupply them, and the vast majority of the soldiers sent across the Yalu River did not make it back to China. The cost to the Sui Dynasty of this military debacle was enormous. When floods, droughts and epidemics reached areas that had been hard pressed by conscription, army deserters turned into bandits. Nevertheless, Yangdi was determined to try a third time to take Korea. The 613 expedition crossed the Liao River and set siege to Koguryo strongholds, but the campaign was cut short when word reached the emperor of a major rebellion in central China. Still, in 614 Yangdi ordered the Korea campaign continued. This time the naval force made enough progress that the Koguryo king sought for peace and Yangdi could claim victory. When the Korean king failed to appear at the Sui court as he had been commanded, Yangdi began mobilizing for a fourth campaign in 615. Unrest was growing so serious, however, that nothing came of it. Yangdi, by leading the Korean campaign himself, was personally humiliated by their failures. The imperial dreams of the Sui emperors had resulted in exhaustion and unrest among the Chinese people.

THE FOUNDING OF THE TANG DYNASTYWith the Sui government unraveling, power was seized at the local level by several kinds of actors: bandit leaders and local elites trying to organize defense of their own. The contender who eventually founded the Tang Dynasty was Li Yuan, the Sui governor of Taiyuan, and his general son, Li Shimin, known respectively by the imperial names Gaozu (r. 618-626) and Taizong (r. 626-649). The Sui emperor Yangdi and Taizong were in fact first cousins. Though probably of non-Chinese ethnicity, the Tang imperial family presented themselves as Chinese by descent, much as the Sui imperial family had. Taizong, was not Gaozu's original heir, but in 626 he ambushed and killed his two brothers, one of whom was the heir apparent. Despite these violent beginnings, Taizong proved a capable monarch, who issued a new legal code which would have great influence on the legal systems of China, Vietnam, Korea and Japan for many years to come. The Tang turned away from the military culture of the Northern Dynasties and sought officials steeped in Confucian learning. Government

schools were founded to prepare young men for service in the government and recruitment through the examination system grew in importance. In the Tang system, there were two principal examinations. One, known as the mingjing, tested knowledge of the Confucian classics, while the other tested not memorization but literary skill. It tested the ability to compose formal styles of poetry as well as essays on political questions. This examination, known as the jinshi, was more demanding, but brought more prestige.

During the sixth century, a new ethnic group emerged as the dominant group on the Inner Asian frontier: the Turks. To keep them in check, the Tang government used all the old diplomatic and military strategies. They repaired fortifications, received trade and tribute missions, sent princesses as brides, and instigated conflict between different tribes. Eventually, many ethnic Turks were recruited into the Tang armies. In 630, the Tang wrested control of Shaanxi and southern Mongolia from the Turks, and Taizong himself was crowned Great Khan of the Turks. For the next half century, Tang China dominated the steppe. Turks were settled in the Ordos region, as the Xiongnu had been in Han times, and several thousands of Turkist families came to live in Chang'an. Joint Chinese-Turkish campaigns into Central Asia in the 640s and 650s resulted in China regaining overlordship of the region much as it had during the Han Dynasty.

The Tang retained the city of Chang'an, which the Sui had built, as its capital and made Luoyang its secondary capital. Both cities became great metropolises, with Chang'an and its suburbs growing to more than 2 million inhabitants. At these cosmopolitan cities, knowledge of the outside world was stimulated by the presence of envoys, merchants and pilgrims from Central Asia, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, and Tibet, among other places. Many religions were practiced, including Christianity, Manichaeism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Islam, although none of them influenced the Chinese population the way Buddhism had a few centuries earlier. In both the sacred and secular spheres, the introduction of new instruments and tunes from India, Iran and Central Asia brought about a major transformation in Chinese music. In Tang times, Buddhism fully penetrated Chinese daily life. Buddhist monasteries ran schools for children, provided lodging for travelers and offered scholars and officials a place to gather for social occasions. Merchants entrusted their money and wares to monasteries for safekeeping, in effect transforming the monasteries into banks and warehouses. The wealthy often donated money or land to monasteries, making them large landlords. In the Tang period, stories of Buddhist origin were spread by monks, who told stories to a mostly illiterate audience. One of the best known of these stories concerned a man named Mulian who journeyed to the underworld to save his mother from her suffering there. The popularity of this story gave rise to the Chinese ghost festival on the fifteenth day of the seventh month. On that day, Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike would put out food to feed hungry ghosts suffering in the afterlife. At the intellectual level, Buddhism was developing in distinctly Chinese directions. Among the educated elite, the Chan school (known as Zen in Japan) gained popularity, especially in the north. The "northern" tradition of Chan emphasized meditation and monastic discipline. The "southern" tradition was even more iconoclastic, holding that enlightenment could be achieved suddenly through a flash of insight, even without prolonged meditation. In the late Tang period, opposition to Buddhism arose because its tax-exempt status aggravated the state's financial problems. In 845, more than 4,600 monasteries and 40,000 temples were closed down. The monastic tradition never fully recovered. Buddhism retained a strong hold among laypeople, and basic Buddhist ideas like karma and reincarnation became ingrained, but Buddhism was never again as central to Chinese life as it was in Tang times.

EMPRESS WUThe mid-Tang Dynasty saw several women rise to positions of great political power. Empress Wu (ca. 625-705) went so far as to take the throne herself. Although Wu entered Emperor Gaozong's palace in 651 as a lesser consort, within a few years she convinced him to demote his empress and promote herself in her place. Four years later Gaozong suffered a stroke, and Empress Wu began to make decisions in his place. By the AD670s, Empress Wu's oldest son, the heir apparent, was beginning to take stands on issues, even sometimes opposing his mother's ideas. When he died in 675, many suspected that she had poisoned him. After more than twenty years as a puppet ruler, Emperor Gaozong finally died in 683. The seventeen year old heir apparent, posthumously known as Zhongzong, took the throne. After six weeks, Empress Wu had him deposed because he tried to appoint his wife's father as chancellor. Another one of her sons, known as Ruizong, was then placed on the throne, but he was kept in a separate palace and rarely consulted. Now nearly sixty years old, Empress Wu began to use the Chinese term for the royal 'we'. Until 690 Empress Wu had been content to be the power behind the throne. That year, however, when she was about sixty-five years old, she brought about her son's abdication and declared herself empress of a new Zhou Dynasty. She became China's first and only female empress. She did not designate an heir, apparently unsure whether she should let one of her own sons succeed her or have succession go to a member of her natal Wu family. In 697, when she was over seventy, she had her eldest surviving son, Zhongzong, brought back from exile and made heir apparent. Still, all through her seventies she retained power. It was not until 705 when she was about eighty and too ill to get out of bed, that the high officials successfully pressured her to abdicate.

AN LUSHAN REBELLION AND ITS AFTERMATHAn Lushan was a half Sogdian, half Turk commander of the frontier army in Northern Hubei. He was a professional soldier from a family of soldiers, with experience fighting the Manchurian Khitans. When An Lushan rebelled in 755AD, he had an army of more than one hundred thousand veteran troops. They struck southward, headed towards Luoyang. The court, on getting news of the advance, began to raise an army, but the new recruits were no match for the veterans. With the fall of the capital imminent, the heir apparent left to raise troops in western Shaanxi and Emperor Xuanzong fled west towards Sichuan. The troops accompanying Xuanzong mutinied, and the heir apparent, in the meantime, was convinced by his followers to enthrone himself, which Xuanzong did not contest. How did the Tang Dynasty manage to recover from this disaster? They had to make many compromises. To recover the capital, the Tang called on the Uighurs, a Turkish people allied with the Tang. After the Uighurs took Chang'an from the rebels, they looted it and would not leave until they were paid off with huge quantities of silk. Thereafter, to keep the Uighurs from raiding, the Tang had to trade silk for horses at extortionate rates. Yet the Uighurs were only one of China's troublesome neighbors in this period. Antagonistic states were consolidating themselves all along Tang's borders, from Parhae on the northeast, to Tibet in the west, and Nanzhao on the southwestern Yunnan area. When Tang had to withdraw troops from the western frontier to fight An Lushan's forces, the Tibetans took advantage of the opportunity to claim overlordship of the Silk Road cities themselves. Although the Tibetan empire collapsed in 842 and the Uighur confederation broke up soon after that, the Tang court no longer had the ambition to dominate Central Asia. Tang did not respond when Nanzhao attacked the Tang prefectures in northern Vietnam, and though Tang sent an army to reassert control, the Vietnamese declared their independence in the tenth century.

After the rebellion of An Lushan, the Tang central government shared political and military power with the military governors. After 860, this system no longer worked to maintain order. Bandit gangs, some as large as small armies, roamed the countryside and set siege to walled cities. Such gangs smuggled illicit salt, ambushed merchants and tax convoys, and went on wild rampages throughout the

countryside. During the century from 860 to 960, political and military power devolved to the local level. Any local strongman able to organize defense against rebels and bandits could declare himself king or even emperor. Many of these local rulers rose from very humble origins; one had started out as a mere merchant's slave. In the south, no self-proclaimed king ever consolidated more than the equivalent of one or two modern provinces. Thus, the situation known as the 'Ten Kingdoms' arose in south China. However, political fragmentation did not impair the economy of the south. In fact, in their eagerness to expand their tax bases, rulers of the southern kingdoms did their best to promote trade and tax it. In the north, many of the regional warlords were not Chinese, but Turks. Both Chang'an and Luoyang had been devastated by the fighting of the late Tang period, and Kaifeng, located at the mouth of the Grand Canal, became the leading city in north China. Yet none of the Five Dynasties that in succession held Kaifeng was able to build a stable government before being ousted by rivals. After a hundred years of political chaos, Emperor Taizu of the new Song Dynasty (r. 960-979 AD) ended the upheaval of the Ten Kingdoms and Five Dynasties period.

京杭大运河



基本情况 京杭大运河，是世界上里程最长、工程最大、最古老的运河之一。北起北京（涿郡），南到杭州（余杭），经北京、天津两市及河北、山东、江苏、浙江四省，贯通海河、黄河、淮河、长江、钱塘江五大水系，全长约 1794 公里，开凿到现在已有 2500 多年的历史。京杭运河对中国南北地区之间的经济、文化发展与交流，特别是对沿线地区工农业经济的发展和城镇的兴起均起了巨大作用。京杭大运河也是最古老的运河之一。它和万里长城并称为我国古代的两项伟大工程，闻名于全世界。



京杭大运河是我国古代劳动人民创造的一项伟大工程，是祖先留给我们的珍贵物质和精神财富，是活着的、流动的重要人类遗产。大运河肇始于春秋时期，形成于隋代，发展于唐宋，最终在元代成为沟通海河、黄河、淮河、长江、钱塘江五大水系、纵贯南北的水上交通要道。在两千多年的历史进程中，大运河为我国经济发展、国家统一、社会进步和文化繁荣作出了重要贡献，至今仍在发挥着巨大作用。京杭大运河显示了我国古代水利航运工程技术领先于世界的卓越成就，留下了丰富的历史文化遗存，孕育了一座座璀璨明珠般的名城古镇，积淀了深厚悠久的历史底蕴，凝聚了我国政治、经济、文化、社会诸多领域的庞大信息。大运河与长城同是中华民族文化身份的象征。历史沿革 京杭大运河的开凿与演变大致分为 3 期：



第 1 期运河 - 运河的萌芽时期。春秋吴王夫差十年(公元前 486)在扬州开凿邗沟，以通江淮。至战国时代又先后开凿了大沟(从今河南省原阳县北引黄河南下,注入今郑州市以东的圃田泽)和鸿沟,从而把江、淮、河、济四水沟通起来。

第 2 期运河 - 主要指隋代的运河系统。以东部洛阳为中心，于大业元年(605)开凿通济渠,直接沟通黄河与淮河的交通。并改造邗沟和江南运河。三年又开凿永济渠，北通涿郡。连同公元 584 年开凿的广通渠,形成多枝形运河系统。到隋炀帝(杨广)时，据说炀帝为了到扬州看扬州市市花——琼花，也为了南粮北运，开凿京淮段至长江以南的运河，全长 2000 多公里。到元朝时，元定都大都(今北京)，必须开凿运河把粮食从南方运到北方。

为此先后开凿了三段河道，把原来以洛阳为中心的隋代横向运河，修筑成以大都为中心，南下直达杭州的纵向大运河。京杭大运河按地理位置分为七段：北京到通州区称通惠河，自昌平县白浮村神山泉经瓮山泊(今昆明湖)至积水潭、中南海，自文明门(今崇文门)外向东，在今天的朝阳区杨闸村向东南折，至通州高丽庄(今张家湾村)入潞河(今北运河故道)，长 82 公里；通州区到天津称北运河，长 186 公里；天津到临清称南运河，长 400 公里；临清到台儿庄称鲁运河，长约 500 公里；台儿庄到淮阴称中运河，长 186 公里；淮阴到瓜洲称里运河，长约 180 公里；镇江到杭州称江南运河，长约 330 公里。扬州是里运河的名邑，隋炀帝时在城内开凿运河，从此扬州便成为南北交通枢纽，藉漕运之利，富甲江南，为中国最繁荣的地区之一。隋朝时分为四段：

(1) 永济渠 (2) 通济渠 (3) 邗沟 (4) 江南河



第3期运河- 主要指元、明、清阶段。元代开凿的重点段一是山东境内泗水至卫河段，一是大都至通州段。至元（元世祖忽必烈年号）十八年(公元1281年)开济州河,从任城(济宁市)至须城（东平县）安山,长75公里；至元二十六年(1289)开会通河,从安山西南开渠,由寿张西北至临清,长125公里；至元二十九年(1292)开通惠河,引京西昌平诸水入大都城,东出至通州入白河,长25公里；至元三十年(1293)元代大运河全线通航,漕船可由杭州直达大都,成为今京杭运河的前身。



元朝时全程可分为七段：（1）通惠河；（2）北运河；（3）南运河；（4）鲁运河；（5）中运河；（6）里运河；（7）江南运河。明、清两代维持元运河的基础，明时重新疏浚元末已淤废的山东境内河段，从明中叶到清前期，在山东微山湖的夏镇（今微山县）至清江浦（今淮阴）间，进行了黄运分离的开泇口运河、通济新河、中河等运河工程，并在江淮之间开挖月河，进行了湖漕分离的工程。

京杭大运河作为南北的交通大动脉，历史上曾起过巨大作用。运河的通航，促进了沿岸城市的迅速发展。

目前,京杭运河的通航里程为1442千米,其中全年通航里程为877千米,主要分布在黄河以南的山东、江苏和浙江三省。

杭州大运河同上京杭大运河北起北京,南到杭州,流经北京、河北、天津、山东、江苏和浙江六省市,全长一千七百六十四公里,比苏伊士运河长十倍,比巴拿马运河长二十倍,是世界上最长的一条人工开凿的运河。终点,入钱塘江。

京杭大运河流经北京市通州区,天津市武清区,河北省沧州市、衡水市、邢台市,山东省德州市、泰安市、聊城市、济宁市、枣庄市,江苏省徐州市、宿迁市、淮安市、扬州市、镇江市、常州市、无锡市、苏州市,浙江省嘉兴市、杭州市18个市区。

通州古诗云：一支塔影认通州。燃灯塔矗立在大运河的北端,是京门通州的标志性建筑。天津北运河和南运河在天津会师,又在这里被海河一齐送入渤海。据记载,漕运发达时期,从天津到通州的北运河上每年要承载2万艘运粮的漕船,官兵12万人次,连同商船共3万艘。水道的开通使小小的直沽寨很快发展成了远近闻名的“天津卫”。

镇江、扬州长江和京杭大运河的交汇处。聊城湖、河水面积占城区的1/3,被称为“中国北方威尼斯”,在北方城市里非常少见,这其中就有京杭大运河的功劳。苏州“苏湖熟,天下足”。运河的开通,使苏州水多粮丰。目前京杭大运河苏杭段有客运航线往返。淮安大运河的入淮口,运河东岸古镇码头下便是《西游记》的作者吴承恩的故居。

沿线地理

京杭运河自北而南流经京、津 2 市和冀、鲁、苏、浙 4 省,贯通中国五大水系——海河、黄河、淮河、长江、钱塘江和一系列湖泊;从华北平原直达长江三角洲,地形平坦,河湖交织,沃野千里,自古是中国主要粮、棉、油、蚕桑、麻产区。人口稠密,农业集约化程度高,生产潜力大。迨至近代,京津、津浦、沪宁和沪杭铁路及公路网相继修建,与运河息息相通;沿线各地工业先后兴起,城镇密集,是中国精华荟萃之地。



现状特征

京杭运河的流向、水源和排蓄条件在各段均不相同,非常复杂,流向总体概括为四个节点、五种流向:节点 1 天津(海河)以北的通惠河、北运河向南流;节点 1 与节点 2 东平湖之间的南运河、鲁北运河向北流;节点 2 与节点 3 长江(清江)之间的鲁南运河、中运河、里运河向南流;节点 3 与节点 4 长江以南的丹阳之间河段向北流;丹阳以南河段(江南运河)向南流。通惠运河。历史性通航河道。由于清末实行“停漕改折”政策和 20 世纪以来铁路、公路交通发展,货物转为陆运,加之水源不足,航道失修,至 50 年代初期,仅有少量船只作间歇性通航。目前该河主要用作北京市排水河道,已不能通航。北运河。长约 180 公里,集水面积 5.11 万平方公里,由天津注入海河。除屈家店至天津段 15 公里可供小船作季节性通航外,其余河道均不能通航。南运河。又名御河,长 414 公里。四女寺至临清段称卫运河,长 94 公里。天津至四女寺段航道窄狭弯曲,底宽 15~30 米,水深约 1 米,建有杨柳青、独流、北陈屯、安陵 4 座船闸,可通航 100 吨级船舶。由于上游水库拦蓄,两岸农田灌溉,加之年久失修,现已处于断航状态。卫运河底宽 30 米,水深约 10 米,建有四女寺、祝宫屯船闸,可通航 100 吨级船舶。由于上游岳城水库蓄水,截走水源,尤当卫运河扩大治理后,航道情况骤然恶化。鲁北运河。也称位山、临清运河,原河段已淤塞。1958 年另选新线,长 104 公里,但未开挖。1960~1968 年,根据引黄输水要求,开挖了周店至尚店 76 公里渠道,两头河段尚未开挖。



鲁南运河。国那里至梁山段称东平湖湖西航道,长 20 公里,1968 年虽经疏浚整治,但河道严重淤积,水深不足,尚不能通航。梁山至南旺段长 33.8 公里,枯水期航道水深 0.5 米,每年可通航 6 个月,为季节性航道。南旺至济宁段长 27.1 公里,底宽 15 米,枯水期水深 0.5 米,每年仅通航 6 个月,为季节性航道。济宁至二级坝段长 78.1 公里,航道顺直,枯水期水深 1 米以上,底宽 50 米,可通航 100 吨级船舶。中运河。二级坝至大王庙段原来是走韩庄、台儿庄一线。1958 年在江苏省境内开辟南四湖湖西航道及不牢河河段,使河道经徐州市北郊通过,至大王庙与中运河汇合。大王庙至

淮阴段仍循原来河道南下,长 163 公里。徐州以下河段,经近年分段拓宽,航道一般底宽 45~60 米,水深 3 米以上,已可通航 500~700 吨级以上拖带船队。是为徐州煤炭南运主要线路。里运河。全长 169 公里,其入江口原在瓜洲,1958 年改至六圩入江。近年屡经整治,航道底宽一般达 70 米,水深 3 米以上,可通航 1000 吨级拖带船队。年运货量 1500 万吨左右。江南运河。自长江南岸谏壁口经丹阳、常州、无锡、苏州、平望至杭州。其中,平望至杭州有 3 条航线,即东、中、西线,如以东线计算,全长 323.8 公里,大部分底宽 20 米,水深 2 米,一般可通航 40~100 吨级船舶,年货运量达 1600 余万吨。中华人民共和国成立后,对运河进行了大规模整修,使其重新发挥航运、灌溉、防洪和排涝的多种作用。1988 年底建成的京杭运河和钱塘江沟通工程已将江、河、海衔接起来,构成了以杭州为中心的、以京杭运河与长江、黄河、淮河、海河、钱塘江五大水系相连通的水运。



开通意义

京杭大运河是我国古代劳动人民创造的一项伟大工程,是祖先留给我们的珍贵物质和精神财富,是活着的、流动的重要人类遗产。大运河肇始于春秋时期,形成于隋代,发展于唐宋,京杭大运河建于两千多年前的春秋时期,距今已有 2500 年的历史,而秦始皇(嬴政)在嘉兴境内开凿的一条重要河道,也奠定了以后的江南运河走向。据《越绝书》记载,秦始皇从嘉兴“治陵水道,到钱塘越地,通浙江”。大约 2500 年前,吴王夫差挖邗沟,开通了连接长江和淮河的运河,并修筑了邗城,运河及运河文化由此衍生。



我们今天所说的大运河开掘于春秋时期,完成于隋朝,繁荣于唐宋,取直于元代,疏通于明清(从公元前 486 年始凿,至公元 1293 年全线通航),前后共持续了 1779 年。在漫长的岁月里,主要经历三次较大的兴修过程。到了隋朝,隋炀帝动用几百万人,开凿贯通了大运河,这为以后国家的经济文化空前繁荣作出了巨大贡献),隋代开始全线贯通,经唐宋发展,最终在元代成为沟通海河、黄河、淮河、长江、钱塘江五大水系、贯通南北的交通大动脉。代人工天河。京杭大运河是我国仅次于长江的第二条“黄金水道”。价值堪比长城是世界上开凿最早、最长的一条人工河道,是苏伊士运河的 16 倍,巴拿马运河的 33 倍。

京杭运河一向为历代漕运要道,对南北经济和文化交流曾起到重大作用。十九世纪海运兴起,以后随着津浦铁路通车,京杭运河的作用逐渐减小。黄河迁徙后,山东境内河段水源不足,河道淤

浅，南北断航，淤成平地。水量较大、通航条件较好的江苏省境内一段，也只能通行小木帆船。京杭运河的荒废、萧条，是中国半殖民地半封建制度的写照。解放后部分河段已进行拓宽加深，裁弯取直，新建了许多现代化码头和船闸，航运条件有所改善。季节性的通航里程已达 1100 多千米。江苏邳县以南的 660 多千米航道，500 吨的船队可以畅通无阻。古老的京杭运河将来还要成为南水北调的输水通道。

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