

Chinese Civil Service System DBQ's

Document 1

Government jobs should be organized by departments to make the best use of officials' abilities...A barbeque large enough for an ox should not be used to cook a chicken, nor should a raccoon good at catching rats be ordered to fight against huge beasts...Those with low skills or capabilities should not be given difficult tasks or responsibilities. If the right person is given the right task or responsibility, the empire can be governed with ease. Whether the emperor gets hold of the right person for the right task determines whether his empire will be well governed.

Emperor Taizong, *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, page 112

1a. According to Emperor Taizong, how should a government be organized?

1b. According to the document, what would Emperor Taizong think about civil service exams?

Document 2

To enrich your family, no need to buy good land:
 Books hold a thousand measures of grain.
 For an easy life, no need to build a mansion:
 In books are found houses of gold...
 In books there are girls and faces of jade.
 A boy who wants to become a somebody:
 Devotes himself to the classics, faces the window, and reads.

Emperor Chen-Tsung, *Worlds of History*, – page 266

2. According to the poem, what does Emperor Chen-Tsung think boys should spend their time doing? Why?

Document 3

Lu Zhao was from the town of Yiqun, in the province of Yuanzhou. Lu Zhao and Huang Po, who was also from the same town, were equally famous. When they were young, Huang Po was wealthy, but Lu Zhao was very poor. When they were ready for the imperial examination, the two of them decided to set out on the trip together. The town gave a farewell dinner at the Pavilion of Departure, but only Huang Po was invited. When the party was at its peak, with lots of wine and music, Lu Zhao passed by the pavilion, riding on an old, weak horse. He traveled past the city limits, then stopped to wait for Huang Po to join him.

The next year, Lu Zhao came back to his hometown, having been awarded the title of "number one." All the officials from the state came out to welcome him, and the mayor of Yuanzhou was greatly embarrassed.

Once when the mayor invited him to watch the dragon boat race, Lu Zhao composed a poem during the banquet, which read:

"It is a dragon," I told you.
But you had refused to believe.
Now it returns with the trophy,
Much in the way I predicted.

Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook, page 129

3a. What does this story tell us about the background of the imperial examination candidates?

3b. According to the document, why is the mayor "embarrassed" at the end of the story?

Document 4

The Master (Confucius) said, "Highest are those who are born wise. Next are those who become wise by learning. After them come those who have to work hard in order to become learned. Finally, in the lowest class of ordinary people are those who have to work hard without ever learning."

The Analects of Confucius – page 206

4. What is Confucius saying about learning in this passage?
