

Chart of Chinese Dynasties

For most of its history, China was ruled by dynasties. A dynasty is a family (or group) that holds power. Some dynasties lasted a long time, others lasted a short time. Sometimes different dynasties ruled different areas of what we now call China, and sometimes dynasties overlapped a few years. Each dynasty, or ruling family, had its own strengths and weaknesses. Dynasties were not elected. They held power until they were overthrown by another family or group. Below is a list of China's major dynasties. As you can see, the last dynasty was overthrown in 1911.

16th century-11th century B.C.	Shang Dynasty
11th century-256 B.C.	Zhou Dynasty
221-206 B.C.	Quin Dynasty
206 B.C.-220 A.D	Han Dynasty
220-589	Six Dynasties
581-618	Sui Dynasty
618-907	Tang Dynasty
907-960	Five Dynasties
960-1279	Song Dynasty
1272-1368	Yuan Dynasty
1368-1644	Ming Dynasty
644-1911	Qing Dynasty