**Steps in a Dynastic Cycle**

1. A new ruler unites China, founds a new dynasty, and gains the [Mandate of Heaven](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mandate_of_Heaven).

2. China, under the new dynasty, achieves prosperity.

3. The population increases

4. [Corruption](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_corruption) becomes rampant in the imperial court, and the empire begins to enter decline and instability.

5. A natural disaster wipes out farm land. The disaster normally would not have been a problem; however, together with the [corruption](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_corruption) and [overpopulation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Overpopulation) it causes famine.

6. The famine causes the population to rebel and starts a [civil war](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_war).

7. The ruler loses the Mandate of Heaven

8. The population decreases because of the violence.

9. China goes through a warring states period.

10. One state emerges victorious

11. The state starts a new empire.

12. The empire gains the Mandate of Heaven

***(The cycle repeats itself.)***