CHAPTER 2

Classical Civilization: China

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Patterns in Classical China. Three dynastic cycles—the Zhou, the Qin, and the Han—covered many centuries of classical China. The dynastic patterns begun in classical Chinese history lasted until the early part of the 20th century. A family of kings, called a “dynasty,” began ruling China with great vigor, developing solid political institutions and encouraging active economies. Each dynasty over time grew weaker, tax revenues declined, and social divisions occurred as the population outstripped available resources. In addition, internal rebellions and sometimes invasions from the outside contributed to each dynasty’s decline. As the ruling dynasty began to falter, usually another one arose from the family of a successful general, invader, or peasant, and the pattern started anew.

The Zhou dynasty (1029-258 B.C.E.) expanded the territorial boundaries of China by seizing the Yangzi River valley. The territory from the Yangzi to the Huanghe is often called the “Middle Kingdom,” blessed with rich cropland. They promoted Mandarin as the standard language. The Zhou did not establish a strong central government but ruled instead through alliances with regional princes and noble families. This led to vulnerabilities that plagued the Zhou: The regional princes solidified their power and disregarded the central government. When the Zhou began to fail, philosophers sought to explain the political confusion. One of these, Confucius, became one of the most important thinkers in Chinese history. His orderly social and political philosophy became an important doctrine of the Qin and Han dynasties. The next dynasty, the Qin (221-202 B.C.E.), was begun by the brutal but effective emperor Shi Huangdi. He consolidated his power, built the Great Wall, conducted a census, standardized weights and measures, and extended the borders of his realm to Hong Kong and northern Vietnam. Upon his death, massive revolts broke out and by 202 B.C.E., the Han dynasty (202 B.C.E.-220 C.E.) was established. The Han rulers lessened the brutality of the Qin but maintained its centralized rule. Early Han leaders, like Wu Ti, expanded Chinese territory and set up formal training, based on Confucian philosophy, for bureaucrats. During a long decline, the Han faced invasions and eventually fell to outside forces, especially the Huns. By the 6th century C.E., the Han too collapsed, but not before they had established distinctive political and cultural values that lasted into the 20th century.

Political Institutions. Throughout the Qin and Han periods, the Chinese state bureaucracy expanded its powers significantly. By the end of the Han dynasty, China had roughly 130,000 bureaucrats all trained by the government to carry out the emperor’s policies. Tax collections and annual mandatory labor services ensured the central government held some power over almost every person in the Middle Kingdom, something no other large government accomplished until the twentieth century.
**Religion and Culture.** Like many civilizations, China did not produce a unitary belief system. Confucianism and Daoism were two of the major systems that competed for the loyalties of various Chinese communities during the years of the classical period. Kung Fuzi (Confucius) lived from roughly 551 to 478 B.C.E. He was not a religious leader but rather saw himself as a defender of Chinese tradition and espoused a secular system of ethics. Personal virtue, he believed, would lead to solid political institutions. Both rulers and the ruled should act with respect, humility, and self-control. Classical China also produced a more religious philosophy called Daoism, which embraced harmony in nature. According to this movement, politics, learning, and the general conditions in this world were of little importance. Over time, individuals embraced aspects of both philosophies, and also Buddhism. Chinese art then was largely decorative, stressing detail and craftsmanship. Artistic styles often reflected the geometric qualities of the symbols of Chinese writing. The practical application of science superseded learning for learning’s sake. Chinese astronomers developed accurate calendars. Scholars studied the mathematics of music. This practical focus contrasted with the more abstract approach to science applied by the Greeks.

**Economy and Society.** As in many societies, there were large gaps between China’s upper class (about 2 percent of the population) and the peasant farmers. Officially there were three main social groups in classical China. The land-owning aristocracy and the bureaucrats formed the top group. Far below them were the laboring peasants and urban artisans. At the bottom of society were the “mean people,” those who performed unskilled labor. Trade became increasingly important, particularly in the Han period. Technology is where the classical Chinese clearly excelled. Many developments of this era were centuries ahead of the rest of the world. Tight-knit family structures were similar to those in other civilizations, except that parents wielded much higher levels of authority over their children. Women were subordinate to men but had clearly defined roles in the family and in larger society.

**In Depth: Women in Patriarchal Societies.** Agricultural societies were usually patriarchal, and as they developed the status of women generally deteriorated. Marriages were arranged for women by their parents, and husbands had authority over their wives and children. Later, law codes ensured basic protections but also featured limits to and inferiority of women. There were, of course, exceptions. The Egyptians had powerful queens, and Jewish law traced lineage through mothers. Patriarchy responded to economic and legal conditions in agricultural civilizations and often deepened over time. In many societies, women held power through religious functions and had authority over daughters-in-law and unmarried daughters.

**How Chinese Civilization Fits Together.** China’s politics and culture were, to them, two sides of the same coin, especially after the Confucian bureaucracy developed, emphasizing order and stability. Classical Chinese technology, religion, philosophy, and political structure evolved with little outside contact. Political stability aided economic growth, and the government took a direct role in agricultural and economic growth. Science focused on practical applications of technology that fostered economic development. Unsurprisingly, the Chinese saw their political and social lives as a whole. There was divergence, however, such as in the differing philosophies of Confucianism, Daoism, and eventually Buddhism. Despite these and other divisions, the synthesis of Chinese life accounts for the durability of Chinese values and for its general invulnerability to outside influence. Classical India was just as vital a civilization but didn’t weave its institutions into society as fully, and produced a more disparate outcome.
**Global Connections: Classical China and the World.** Chinese civilization was the longest lasting in world history and one of the most creative and influential. They created the best-run bureaucracy and a whole range of technologies, and they were the source of the world’s largest trade network, the Silk Road. Silk Road networks provided the framework for later global trading patterns.

**KEY TERMS**

**Zhou dynasty:** (1122 - 256 B.C.E.) First of Chinese classical civilizations. Ruled through alliances with regional princes. Extended territory to Yangzi River and promoted standard Mandarin Chinese language.

**Qin Shi Huangdi and the Qin dynasty:** (221-202 B.C.E.) The Qin dynasty was characterized by the centralization of state rule that resulted in the elimination of local and regional political competitors. It expanded the boundaries of China to include Hong Kong. The Great Wall of China was built in this era.

**Shi Huangdi:** China’s “First Emperor” who gave that country its name. Under his brutal rule, Hong Kong was annexed and the Great Wall of China was built.

**Han dynasty:** (202 B.C.E.-220 C.E.) Followed the Qin dynasty. Expanded China’s possessions to include Korea, Indochina, and central Asia. Era generally characterized by stability, prosperity, and peace. Contemporary of and often compared to the Roman Empire.

**Wu Ti:** Best-known Han ruler. Supported Confucianism in the state bureaucracy.

**Mandarin:** Mandarin became the official state language of the Zhou dynasty and as such was the most-used state language in the world. Helped bring greater cultural unity to classical China.

**Dynasty:** A time period during which a family rules through a succession of members.

**Mandate of Heaven:** Confucian idea in which a good ruler was thought to have a divine right to rule.

**Era of Warring States:** (402 – 201 B.C.E.) Time period between the Zhou and Qin dynasties in which regional rulers formed independent armies and reduced emperors to little more than figureheads.

**Great Wall:** Stone wall extending across northern China, built during the Qin dynasty as a defense against northern nomads

**Legalism:** Philosophy that gained ground during the Zhou and was dominant during the Qin dynasty which was rooted in the belief that laws should replace morality and a ruler must provide discipline to maintain order.
Mandarins: Educated bureaucrats who were one of the three main social groups of ancient China.

“Mean People”: General category of people identified as ancient China’s lowest social group who performed unskilled labor.

Patriarchalism: Ideas that social organization should be ordered with the male as the head of the family and institutions.

Confucius, a.k.a. Kung Fuzi: (c. 551-478 B.C.E.) Chinese philosopher who wrote an elaborate political philosophy that became the core of China’s cultural and political thinking for centuries. Those who adopted his teachings saw him not as a deity but as a master of ethics.

Daoism: A spiritual alternative to Confucianism that emphasized the harmony in nature and life. True understanding comes from withdrawing from the world and contemplating the life force.

Silk Road: The most famous of the trading routes established by pastoral nomads connecting the Chinese, Indian, Persian, and Mediterranean civilizations; transmitted goods and ideas among civilizations.

LESSON SUGGESTIONS

Leader Analysis
Shi Huangdi

Change Analysis
Factors in the fall of classical China

Document Analysis
Teachings of the Rival Chinese Schools

Inner/Outer Circle
In Depth: Women in Patriarchal Societies

LECTURE SUGGESTIONS

Trace the nature of the continuity of Chinese culture over time. Many factors wove a strong sense of culture into Chinese society, so much so that it was largely intact even as dynasties rose and fell over the centuries. The classical governments promoted strong family ties, devotion to the emperor, an emphasis on economic growth, and technological innovation, supported by the ideas of Confucius. All these uniquely meshed into a coherent sense of what it meant to be Chinese.

Trace the development and use of technology in classical China. The emperors and the bureaucracy of the classical period promoted technology as a way to grow the economy, which in turn created incentives to develop more technology. Innovation for altruistic purposes was frowned upon. The Great Wall, canals, advanced irrigation techniques, and many other developments incorporated technologies far ahead of those in the rest of the world.
CLASS DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of classical Chinese society.

The Chinese developed strong bureaucracies and were adept as assimilating outside invaders while preserving their own sense of identity, but social stratification produced a class of peasants who suffered under Zhou vassals.

Trace the rise of Confucianism.

In the 3rd century B.C.E., Shi Huangdi was resented by the majority of the shi (followers of Confucius) because he favored the Legalists. When the Qin began to fall, Liu Bang and followers banned works of Legalists and increasingly promoted Confucianism.

Identify the ways that Confucian philosophy supported the political structure in China.

Confucius said that superior men should serve society (not glorify themselves); welfare of common people is most important; common people should respect overlords; loyalty and obedience are what hold society together.

Summarize why bureaucracy developed in classical China.

Liu Bang named himself ruler (Han) after the fall of the Qin. When he passed, his successors took over and helped move toward a bureaucratic society. Governors and magistrates expanded authority and vassals controlled their domains.

How was China able to accept two major belief systems, Confucianism and Daoism?

When these two religions rose, China had just come from a crisis. These religions were two different “cures for China’s ills” (p. 104), and the Chinese were trying to figure out what to do, so it was typical for two religions to rise.
MULTIPLE CHOICE. Choose the one alternative that best completes the statement or answers the question.

1. One characteristic that differentiated classical civilizations from the earlier river valley societies was that
   A) they were agricultural.
   B) there was a higher rate of literacy.
   C) they were more durable.
   D) there was less warfare.
   E) they created larger political structures capable of controlling more territory.

2. A major factor in China’s development of the first elaborate classical society was
   A) a reduction in China’s population.
   B) a stable political leadership.
   C) its ability to remain isolated and avoid outside invasion.
   D) a sharp increase in food production.
   E) an absence of religious activity.

3. The Chinese view of nature stressed
   A) harmony and balance.
   B) a mystical belief that humans and nature were one.
   C) the scientific control and domination of nature.
   D) nature must be ignored.
   E) nature was determined by God.

4. Classical Chinese civilization was ruled by all of these EXCEPT
   A) the Shang dynasty.
   B) the Zhou dynasty.
   C) the Qin dynasty.
   D) the Han dynasty.
   E) the Tang dynasty

5. A distinguishing feature of the classical Chinese economy was
   A) very little social stratification.
   B) a series of international trading networks.
   C) high social status for active merchants.
   D) state support for merchant and artisan classes.
   E) a high level of technology.
6. The Qin and Han dynasties were both characterized by
   A) the formation of popular political parties.
   B) increasing trade with the rest of the world.
   C) a disdain for science and art.
   D) powerful centralized governance.
   E) building of massive public works.

7. The Qin dynasty was marked by all of the following EXCEPT
   A) the decrease in power held by regional rulers and independent armies.
   B) the building of the Great Wall of China.
   C) an increase in the economic status of the peasant communities.
   D) the incorporation of Hong Kong into the Chinese Empire.
   E) a national census.

8. China’s classical period gave rise to all of the following intellectual traditions EXCEPT
   A) Buddhism.
   B) Daoism.
   C) Legalism.
   D) Five Classics.
   E) Confucianism.

9. Besides the “mean people,” which of the following groups was considered to have the least status in classical China?
   A) Students
   B) Merchants
   C) Peasants
   D) Philosophers
   E) Artisans

10. All of the following constituted a function of the state in Han China EXCEPT
    A) attack on local warrior landlords.
    B) civil service examinations.
    C) promoting Confucian philosophy.
    D) detachment from the lives of the Chinese masses.
    E) encouraging equitable treatment of peasants.
SHORT ANSWER. Write the word or phrase that best completes each statement or answers the question.

1. Families of kings, called _________________, ruled over China during the classical period.

2. The Great Wall of China was built during the rule of the first emperor, _________________.

3. The most famous ruler of the Han dynasty was _________________.

4. Wu Ti set up a(n) _________________ for all those who took exams to join the state bureaucracy.

5. The period when the Zhou dynasty disintegrated is called the _________________.

6. During the Zhou dynasty, _________________ traveled to many parts of China, preaching political virtue.

7. Confucian doctrine was recorded in a book called _________________.

8. During the Qin and Han periods, an alternate system of political thought called __________ developed in China.

9. Daoism was spread in 5th-century China by the author _________________.

10. Chinese art during the classical period stressed careful detail and _________________.

TRUE/FALSE. Write “T” if the statement is true and “F” if the statement is false.

1. Of all societies today, China has held the clearest links to its classical past.

2. During the Zhou dynasty China extended its territory to include the “Middle Kingdom.”

3. The Zhou was the most centralized and bureaucratic of the classical Chinese dynasties.

4. Wu Ti and other Han rulers generated peace throughout Asia by halting Chinese expansion.

5. The decline of the Han dynasty was due solely to internal domestic unrest.

6. Despite China’s centralization of government in the classical era, strong local units never totally disappeared.

7. Classical Chinese government did not interfere in intellectual matters.
8. Classical China produced only one major belief system.

9. The Chinese social structure was composed of two classes: the land-owning aristocracy and the laboring masses.

10. Both trade and technology progressed during the classical Chinese period.
ANSWER KEY

Multiple Choice

1. E  6. D
2. C  7. C
3. A  8. A
5. E  10. D

Short Answer

1. Answer: dynasties
2. Answer: Shi Huangdi
3. Answer: Wu Ti
4. Answer: training school
5. Answer: Era of the Warring States
6. Answer: Confucius
7. Answer: Analects
8. Answer: Legalism
9. Answer: Laozi
10. Answer: craftsmanship

True/False

1. T  6. T
2. T  7. F
3. F  8. F
4. F  9. F
5. F  10. T
CHAPTER 2

TIMELINE

Insert the following events into the timeline. This should help you to compare important historical events chronologically.

development of accurate calendar
rise of Han dynasty
beginning of Warring States period

_____ 551 B.C.E.

_____ c. 500 B.C.E.

_____ 450 B.C.E.

_____ 402 B.C.E.

_____ 221 B.C.E.

_____ 202 B.C.E.

TERMS, PEOPLE, EVENTS

The following terms, people, and events are important to your understanding of the chapter. Define each one on a separate sheet of paper.

Qin
Confucius
Laozi
Zhou
Shi Huangdi
Great Wall
Han
“mean people”
Daoism

Silk Road
dynasty
Annalects
Five Classics
Legalism
Era of Warring States
Mandarins
Partriarchalism
MAP EXERCISE

The following exercise is intended to clarify the geophysical environment and the spatial relationships among the important objects and places mentioned in the chapter. Locate the following places on the map.

Great Wall  boundaries of the Han Empire  Xian
boundaries of Qin Empire
Mongolia

What does the construction of the Great Wall tell you about the nature of expansion in classical China? What other geographical limitations were there on the extension of Chinese civilization?
I. Introduction – longest-lived civilization in history
A. Isolated
  1. Couldn’t learn from other cultures
  2. Rare invasions
  3. Distinctive identity
  4. Relatively little internal chaos w/ decline of Shang dynasty
     a. Greatest links to classical society
B. Intellectual theory
  1. Harmony of nature – yin and yang – balance
  2. Seek Dao – the way
     a. Avoid excess
     b. Appreciate balance of opposites
     c. Humans part of world, not on outside – like Mediterranean
Thesis: China emerged with an unusually well-integrated system in which government, philosophy, economic incentives, the family, and the individual were intended to blend into a harmonious whole.

II. Patterns in Classical China
A. Pattern of rule
  1. Dynasty, family of kings – create strong politics, economy
  2. Dynasty grew weak, taxes declined
  3. Social divisions increased
  4. Invasion or internal rebellion
  5. Another dynasty emerged – general, invader, peasant rebel
B. Zhou Dynasty – 1029-258 BCE
  1. Started decline in 700 BCE
  2. Ruled w/ local princes – alliance system
     a. Successful in agricultural communities – ie manor system Europe
     b. Princes received land for troops/tax
  3. Eventually local leaders ignored central gov’t
  4. Contributions
     a. Extended territory to “Middle Kingdom” – wheat north, rice south
        1. Transportation/communication difficult – hard to govern
     b. Mandate of Heaven – Sons of Heaven – emperors live affluent life
     c. Greater cultural unity
        1. Banned human sacrifice
        2. Standardized language – Mandarin – most people speaking same
     d. Confucius – wrote on political ethics
  5. 402-201 BCE Era of the Warring States
C. Qin Dynasty – China’s namesake
  1. Xin Shi Huangdi – first emperor – brutal leader
     a. Undid power of regional leaders
     b. Nobles brought to emperor’s home
     c. Officials selected from nonaristocratic groups – allegiance
     d. Extended territory south
     e. Built Great Wall – 3000 miles
     f. Burned books, attacked culture – hurts his autocratic rule
  2. Innovations
     a. National census – tax and labor service
b. Standardized coins, weights, measures
c. Uniform written language
d. Irrigation projects
e. Promoted manufacturing – silk
3. Downfall – unpopular
   a. high taxes, attacks on intellectuals
   b. killed men, punished brutally
   c. Died in 210 BCE – revolts broke out

D. Han Dynasty – 202 BCE-220 CE
   1. Kept centralized power of Qin, but reduced repression
   2. Extended borders – opened trade to India, Mediterranean
   3. Wu Ti – period of peace – like Pax Romana
   4. Advancements
      a. Formal training
      b. Supported Confucianism
         1. Shrines built to worship Confucius as god
   5. Invasions – Huns – led to decline
   6. 220 – 589 CE China in chaos

III. Political Institutions
   A. Strong central government
      1. Qin stressed unquestioned central authority
      2. Han – expanded bureaucracy
   B. Political framework
      1. Strong local units remained, but power diminished
         a. Relied on patriarchal families
         b. Ancestor worship linked families
         c. Village leaders helped coordinate farming/harvesting
      2. Single law code
      3. Universal tax system
      4. Central authority appointments – not based on local government nominations
      5. Delegation done to emperor’s ministers
   C. Huge bureaucracy – 130,000 bureaucrats
      1. Civil Service tests
      2. Scholar bureaucrat
      3. Not exclusively upper class rule – occasionally lower class recruited
      4. Rulers often could be controlled by bureaucrats – didn’t do crazy stuff of Rome
   D. Most tightly governed people
      1. Rules administered by trained scholars
      2. Father unquestioned power – passed down from ancestors
      3. Harsh punishments to put down rebellion
   E. Government traditions
      1. Not heavily militaristic – not huge need
      2. Promoted intellectual life – not Qin
      3. Active in economy
         a. Organized production of iron/salt
         b. Han tried storing grain for bad harvests
         c. Sponsored public works – canals/irrigation
   F. Technology made it difficult to control, but…
      1. Torture and execution used to keep obedience
2. Taxed
3. Annual labor
G. Invaders – Huns – couldn’t create better system for governing – kept bureaucrats

IV. Religion and Culture – people not united by religion – no political threat
A. Religion – relation to politics
1. earthly life/obedience more important than speculating about God
2. harmonious earthly life – prevent excess
3. traditions
   a. Ancestor ceremonies
   b. Special meals
   c. Politeness at meals – tea ceremonies/chopsticks
B. Confucius - Analects
1. Political virtue and good government
   a. secular views, not religious
2. Respect for superiors- even if bad
3. Respect for tradition
4. Leaders should behave modestly without excess
   a. Work hard as a leader and lesser people will serve superiors
   b. “When the ruler does right, all men will imitate his self-control”
   c. Rulers not just punish – be humble and sincere
5. Satisfied upper class distaste for mystery, and interest in learning/manners
6. Gov’t used to maintain order
7. Careful socialization of children
8. Lacks spiritual side
C. Legalism – pragmatism
1. Better gov’t is one that rules by force
2. Human nature evil – needs restraint
3. Confucian façade + legalist strong arm tactics
D. Polytheistic beliefs – appealed to peasants
1. Spirits of nature
2. Ancestors
3. Dragons – fear plus playful respect
E. Daoism – first to upper class who wanted spirituality
1. Nature has divine impulse that directs life
2. Understanding comes from withdrawing and thinking of “way of nature”
3. Espoused humility and frugal living
F. Intellectual
1. Five Classics – speeches, songs, poems, etiquette, political materials
   a. Poetry mark of an educated person
2. Art form
   a. Calligraphy
   b. Chinese artists, pottery, carved jade
   c. No monumental buildings – except palaces/Great Wall
      1. No singular religion
      2. Confucianism against temples soaring to heaven
3. Science – practical work – not imaginative theorizing
   a. Calculated motion of planets 1500 years before Copernicus
   b. Medicine – anatomical research – proper hygiene for longer life

V. Economy and Society
A. Class – social status passed from one generation to the next
   1. Upper class literate, wealth, culture denied peasants
      a. Mandarins – educated bureaucrats + landowning aristocracy
   2. Land owners 2%, peasantry the rest
      a. “mean” people – lowest status – like India’s untouchables
   3. Property owned communally
B. Trade
   1. Luxury items – silk, jewelry, leather goods, furniture – Silk Road
      a. Carried by merchants
   2. Merchants not highly important – Confucius prioritized learning/political service
C. Technological Advance – practical usage – remained agricultural
   1. Ox-drawn plow/collar for animals
   2. Iron mining – pulleys and winding gear
   3. Production methods advanced – water powered mills
   4. Paper invented – needed for bureaucracy
D. Family life – father unquestioned leader
   1. “There are no wrongdoing parents”
      a. law courts don’t punish parents
   2. Strict control of emotions
      a. Home training ground for personality
   3. Women gained power through sons/mother-in-laws to women brought in
   4. Power to oldest son, boys over girls

VI. How Chinese Civilization Fits Together – Chinese wholeness – not a divided society
A. “China’s politics and culture meshed readily, especially around the emergence of a Confucian bureaucracy.”
B. Theme of isolation – surrounded by barbarians – can’t learn anything from outsiders
   a. Buddhism – rare foreign concept embraced by population
C. Common culture provided unity
   a. Elaborate bureaucracy
   b. Confucianism – trained group w/ common ideals
   c. Appreciation of distinctive art, poetry and literature
   d. Relative political stability
   e. Stable family – clear hierarchy
   f. Private and public not separated – extensions
   g. Views on etiquette
   h. Language
D. Daoists and Confucianists tolerated
   a. But…Confucianists saw Daoists as superstitious
   b. Sometimes divine attacks on gov’t
E. Justice – tight control - Arrested – presumed guilty – tortured
   a. Mixed torture w/ benevolence – good cop/bad coop
F. Precarious balance – sometimes violent

VII. Global connections – Heavy influence on the world
A. 1/5 of population supported by peasants
B. Created technologies shared w/ world
   a. Power – water mill, porcelain (China), paper, compass
C. Views affected region “Middle Kingdom” basis for most of Asia
   a. 2000 year reign
Chapter 2

Classical Civilization: China
(1000 B.C.E. – 500 C.E.)
The Geography of Ancient China

- China was the most isolated of the civilizations studied thus far.
- Long distances and physical barriers separated China from Egypt, the Middle East, and India.
- Isolation contributed to the Chinese belief that China was the center of the earth and the only civilization.
- As in Egypt and Mesopotamia, Chinese civilization began in a river valley, the Huang He.
## Chinese Civilization Develops

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shang Dynasty</th>
<th>Zhou Dynasty</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gained control of corner of northern China along Huang He.</td>
<td>Overthrew the Shang.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drove off nomads from northern steppes and deserts.</td>
<td>Promoted idea of Mandate of Heaven.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Held complex religious beliefs.</td>
<td>Set up feudal state.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developed written language used by all Chinese people.</td>
<td>Economy and commerce grew.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Population increased.</td>
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The Zhou Dynastic Cycle in China

- The **Mandate of Heaven**, also called the dynastic cycle, explained the rise and fall of the many dynasties that came to rule China.

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<th>The New Dynasty</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Restores peace</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appoints loyal officials</td>
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<tr>
<td>Redistributes land to peasants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Builds canals, irrigation systems, and roads</td>
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<td>Repairs defensive walls</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Problems</th>
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<tr>
<td>Floods, famine, earthquakes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Invasions</td>
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<td>Armed bandits in the provinces</td>
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<td>Peasant revolts</td>
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<tr>
<th>The Aging Dynasty</th>
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<tr>
<td>Neglects government duties</td>
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<td>Ignores corrupt officials</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loses control of the provinces</td>
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<tr>
<td>Imposes heavy taxes to pay for luxuries</td>
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<td>Allows defensive walls to decay</td>
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<tr>
<th>The Dynastic Cycle in China</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New dynasty claims the Mandate of Heaven</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aging dynasty loses the Mandate of Heaven</td>
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</table>
Shang Religious Beliefs

- In Shang times, Chinese developed a complex religious system in which they prayed to many gods.
- Shang Di was the mother goddess who brought plants and animals to Earth.
- The emperor was the intermediary to the gods.
- Later, Chinese religion centered around the veneration of ancestors and maintaining the balance of two forces, yin and yang.
- Yin was linked to Earth, darkness, and female forces.
- Yang stood for Heaven, light, and male forces.
Shang Achievements

- During the Shang and Zhou periods, the Chinese made great strides in astronomy.
- They developed a complex system of writing.
- The **oracle bones** were a way of communicating with the ancestors.
- Chinese writing was based on pictographs and ideographs.
- Scholars turned **calligraphy** into an elegant art form.
Cultural Achievements

The Chinese made progress in many areas during the Shang and Zhou periods.

- Discovered how to make silk thread. Silk became China’s most valuable export.
- Trade route to the Middle East became known as Silk Road.
- Made the first books from wood or bamboo.
- Studied the movement of planets and recorded eclipses of the sun.
- Developed accurate calendar with 365 1/4 days.
- Made remarkable achievements in the art of bronze-making.
The Period of the Warring States

- The Zhou alliances began to fall apart as larger states began to invade and conquer less powerful states.
- Seven major families rose to the forefront.
- The discovery of iron increased agricultural production leading to a rise in population.
- Small armies led by aristocracy gave way to huge, conscript armies led by professional soldiers.
Chinese Government and Advances

- **Shi Huangdi** united China and built a strong authoritarian government, which laid the groundwork for China’s classical age.

- Under Han rulers, the Chinese made huge advances in trade, government, technology, and the arts.

- **The Silk Road** was a trade route that linked China with the West.
How did Shi Huangdi Unite China?

- He replaced feudal states with military districts governed by loyal officials.
- He sent spies to report on local officials.
- He forced noble families to live in his capital so he could monitor them.
- He jailed, tortured, and killed those who opposed his rule.
- He had all books of philosophy and literature burned.
- He standardized weights and measures.
- He created uniformity in Chinese writing.
- He strengthened the transportation system.
- He ordered the building of the Great Wall.
Map of the Qin Dynasty

Qin Imperial Palace
Emperor Shi Huangdi

- Though his methods were brutal, Shi Huangdi ushered in China’s classical age.

- This period is called a classical civilization because it set patterns in government, philosophy, religion, science, and the arts that served as the framework for later cultures.
Tomb of Shi Huangdi

The First Emperor’s Terra Cotta Soldiers
Han Rulers Strengthen the Economy and Government in China

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECONOMY</th>
<th>GOVERNMENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ They improved canals and roads.</td>
<td>▪ They made Confucianism the official belief of the state.</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ They set up granaries across the empire.</td>
<td>▪ They relied on well-educated scholars to run the government.</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ They reorganized finances.</td>
<td>▪ They used a civil service exam to find the most qualified officials.</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ They imposed a government monopoly on iron and salt.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ They opened up the Silk Road, a trade route linking China and the West.</td>
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The Han Golden Age

Han China made such tremendous advances in so many fields, that the Chinese later called themselves “the people of Han.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCIENCE</th>
<th>MEDICINE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Wrote texts on chemistry, zoology, and botany.</td>
<td>• Diagnosed diseases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Measured movements of stars and planets.</td>
<td>• Used herbal remedies and other drugs for treatments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Invented seismograph to measure earthquakes.</td>
<td>• Developed anesthetics.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Explored uses of <strong>acupuncture</strong>.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TECHNOLOGY</th>
<th>THE ARTS</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Made paper out of wood pulp.</td>
<td>• Built grand temples and palaces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pioneered advanced methods of shipbuilding.</td>
<td>• Produced jade and ivory carvings and ceramic figures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Invented the rudder, fishing reels, wheelbarrows, and suspension bridges.</td>
<td>• Improved bronze-working and silk-making techniques.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Later Han Dynasty and Decline

- The Han depended on taxation to maintain control over their territories.
- The wealthy began to find ways to avoid paying taxes, so the burden fell to the merchants and peasants.
- By 22 B.C. revolts broke out all over the country.
- Wang Mang, serving as regent for the infant emperor, tried to reform the country by confiscating land from the wealthy and distributing it to the peasants.
- Floods destroyed irrigation systems.
- Widespread famine lead to further revolts in the south.
- In reaction the “Later Han” government strengthened their control on the population and economy.
- Like the earlier Han dynasties, though, the wealthy stopped paying taxes, the economy declined, the peasants revolted, and the Han dynasty fell in 220 A.D.
- Empire fractures into “Three Kingdoms” and “Six Dynasties.”
Chinese Philosophies

Three philosophies dominated Classical Chinese Society:

- **The teachings of Confucius**, called *Confucianism*, tried to restore order after the Period of Warring States.

  “Lead the people by laws and regulate them by punishments, and the people will simply try to keep out of jail, but will have no sense of shame. Lead the people by virtue . . . And they will have a sense of shame and moreover will become good.”

- **Legalism** grew out of the teachings of Hanfeizi.

  “. . . the nature of man is evil. His goodness is acquired.”

- **Daoism** was founded by Laozi, or “Old Master,” who wrote *The Way of Virtue*. Dao means “the way.”

  “Those who know the Dao do not speak of it. Those who speak of it do not know it.”
Teachings of Confucius

Confucius developed a **philosophy**, or system of ideas, that was concerned with world goals, especially how to ensure social order and good government. His ideas included:

- Harmony results when people accept their place in society.

- Everyone has duties and responsibilities. **Filial piety**, or respect for parents, is the most important duty.

- A ruler has the responsibility to provide good government. In return, the people would be respectful and loyal subjects.

- Government leaders and officials should be well educated.

Confucius (illustration from *Myths & Legends of China*, 1922, by E.T.C. Werner)
Legalism vs. Daoism

Legalism and Daoism promoted very different views of government.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEGALISM</th>
<th>DAOISM</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taught that humans are naturally evil</td>
<td>Taught that people should turn to nature and give up their worldly concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The only way to achieve order is to pass strict laws and impose harsh punishments on lawbreakers.</td>
<td>Government is unnatural &amp; is the cause of many problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ruler alone possesses power.</td>
<td>The best government is the one that governs the least.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Buddhism became popular among the Chinese, especially in times of crisis. It was appealing because it

- promised an escape from suffering.
- offered hope of eternal happiness.
- presented Buddha as a compassionate, merciful god.
- taught that anyone could gain salvation through prayer, good works, and devotion.