



Classical China

Zhou, Qin, Han Dynasties





Timeline of Classical China

Zhou: 1029 - 258 BCE

Warring States: 402 BCE - 221 BCE

Qin: 221 - 202 BCE

Han: 202 BCE - 220 CE



Chinese Dynastic Cycle

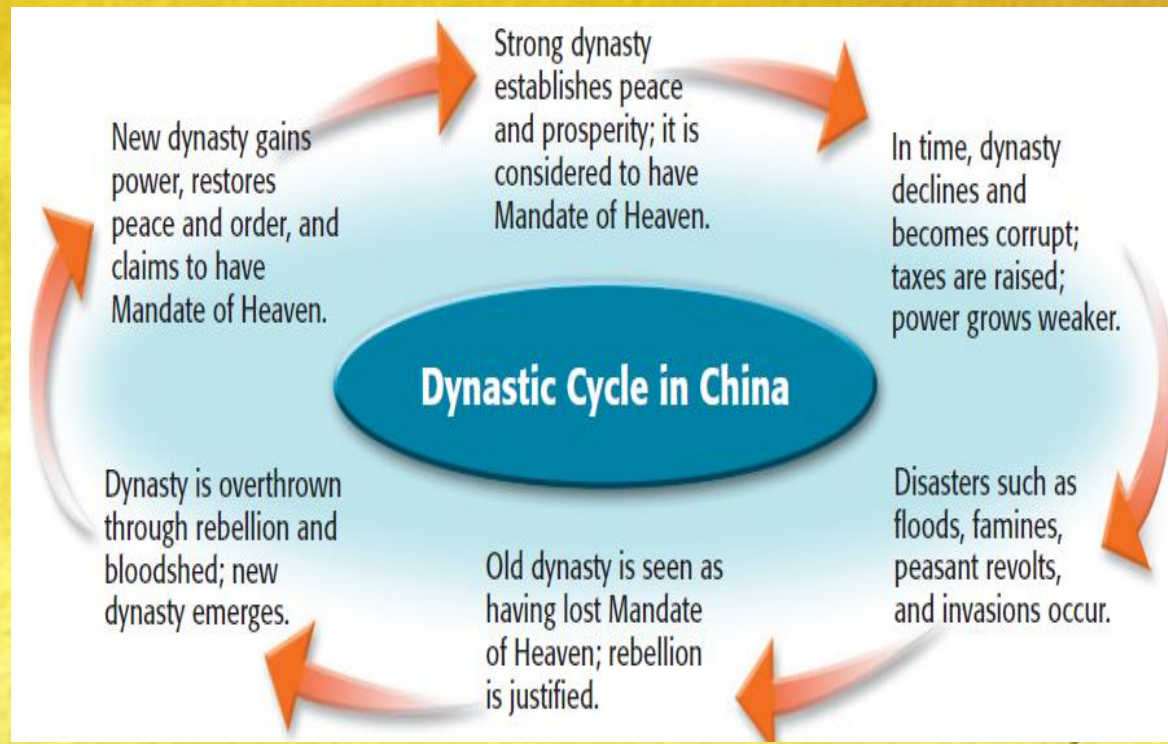
Gov't in China was based upon the dynastic cycle:

One ruling family (a “dynasty”) gains the “mandate of heaven” then rules until the dynasty grows weak & is over-thrown

- New family establishes dynasty (new institutions, economy)
- Dynasty grows weak → Social Divisions Increase
- Internal rebellions and/or external rebellions
- New dynasty emerges

Mandate of Heaven:

- Belief the gods transfer their power to a specific family in China that is meant to establish a dynasty and rule
- Emperors were Sons of Heaven



Zhou Beginnings

- Established by Wuwang, whose father, Wenwang, wanted to take over the Shang Dynasty because of its cruel leader
- Took over, convincing the people they had the **Mandate of Heaven**
- some rebelled against the Zhou and battles took place for 3 years before the Shang were overthrown
- Wuwang made Haojing the new capital
- longest dynasty in Chinese history - divided into 2 time periods:
 - * XI (Western Zhou): 11th century B.C. – 771 B.C.
 - * Dong (Eastern Zhou):
 - ** Spring and Autumn Periods (770 B.C. – 476 B.C.)
 - ** Warring States Period (476 B.C. – 221 B.C.)

Eastern Zhou

Spring and Autumn Periods: (Roughly 1st 1/2 of E. Zhou)

- the area was broken into **feudal states**, each ruled by nobles, who ran the lands how they wanted
- the nobles “owned” the farmers who worked their lands
- by the end of this period, many of the nobles had conquered each other and there were only seven main states left

Warring States Period (Roughly 2nd 1/2 of the E. Zhou)

- the last seven states fought each other until there was only one left
- Qin Shi Huang, Qin state leader, took over and united all the states
- he crowned himself emperor of a united China, which ended the Zhou and started the Qin Dynasty



Zhou Dynasty

SPICE

Social

- Rise of a strong, landowning class; inherit social status
- Patriarchal

Political

- Loose alliance of regional princes, depended on loyalty; relatively weak rulers
- Exchange land for promise of taxes and military - **Feudalism**
- Landowners become more powerful than rulers

Interactions

- Expanded the Middle Kingdom

Cultural


- Formalized religious practices; Ancestor worship; focus on harmony
- Promoted use of one language for everyone
- End of dynasty leads to development of new philosophies (Confucianism)
- Tea ceremonies; chopsticks

Economic

- Agriculture dominated (N-wheat; S-rice)
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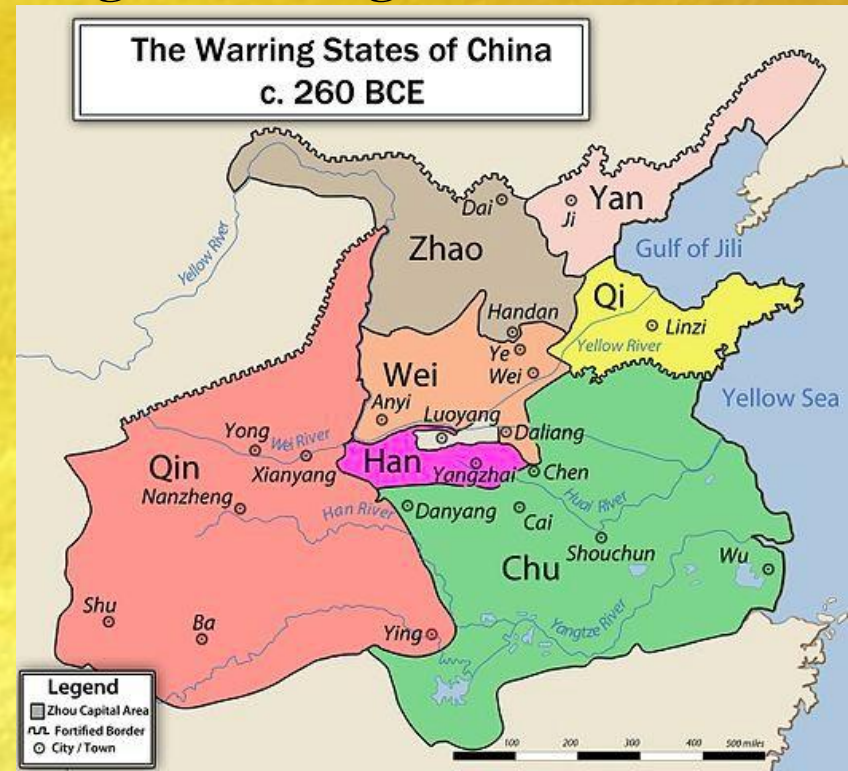
Zhou Accomplishments

- Invented cast iron, which was used for tools and weapons
 - Most famous for their work with bronze
 - Invented crop rotation - allowed for more efficient use of the land
 - Soybean was added as a major crop
 - Language known as “Old Chinese” was spoken by most people
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Period of Warring States

402 BCE - 221 BCE

- Competing interests of landowning class and ruling class cause political turmoil
- Landowners raise own military - origins of regional warlords
- No political unity
- China is exceptionally weak
- Cultural innovations survive
- Results in new philosophies
 - Confucianism
 - Taoism
 - Legalism





Summary of the Chinese Philosophies

*How is a man to live in a world dominated by
chaos, suffering, and absurdity?*

Taoism → Freedom for individuals and less govt. to
avoid uniformity and conformity.

Confucianism → Moral order in society

Legalism → Rule by harsh law & order



Taoism/Daoism

Founded by Lao-Tzu (604-531 BCE)

- Main Writing: *Tao-te-Ching* (*The Way of Virtue*)
- Primary belief is in learning and practicing “The Way” (Tao) which is the ultimate truth to the universe
- Human actions are not important
- Most important part of society is natural order of things
 - The Tao (The Way) - guides all things



Taoism/Daoism



- Search for knowledge and understanding of nature
- symbolized by the **Yin-Yang**
- To understand nothing, it is best to do nothing, to observe nature
 - Nature is not jealous or power hungry
 - Does not argue about right or wrong, good or bad
 - Nature is balanced , there are no extremes (no total good or evil, no complete positives or negatives)
- Teaches that sickness is caused by sin
 - Focus on **Three Treasures**: be charitable, be thrifty, and do not push ahead of others
- Believe that worry causes stress on the body, so we need to achieve peace and tranquility
- Strive to be “average” and refuse wealth and power
- Today, there are 20 million followers of Taoism
- Basic concepts of tai-chi come from Tao teachings

The “Tao”

To escape the “social, political, & cultural traps” of life, one must escape by:

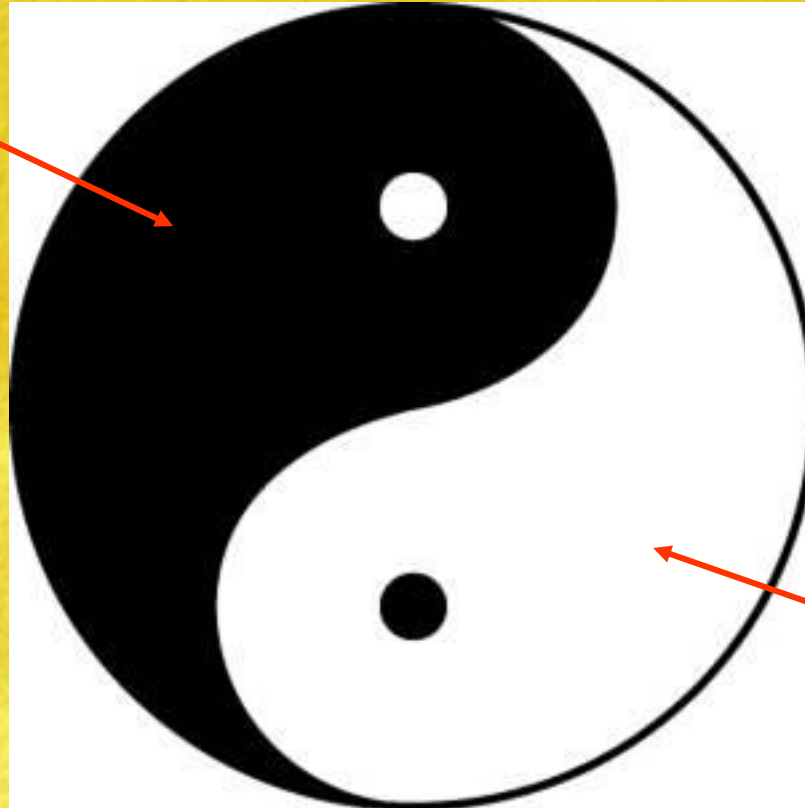
1. **Rejecting formal knowledge and learning.**
2. **Relying on the senses and instincts.**
3. **Discovering the nature and “rhythm” of the universe.**
4. **Ignoring political and social laws.**



The Universe of Opposites: Find the Balance

Yin

- Feminine
- Passive
- Darkness
- Cold
- Weak
- Earth; Moon



- Masculine
- Active
- Light
- Warmth
- Strong
- Heaven; Sun

Yang

Along with the First Principle, **Taoism** also teaches the **yin** and **yang**.
Taoism suggests the idea that opposites are needed in order for harmony to exist.



Quotes from Lao-Tzu

“Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage.”

“If you do not change direction, you may end up where you are heading.”

“The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.”

“He who knows, does not speak. He who speaks, does not know.”

“Respond intelligently even to unintelligent treatment.”

“Great acts are made up of small deeds.”

“He who talks more is sooner exhausted.”



Confucianism

Confucius (K'ung Fu Tzu)

- (551–479 BC) Chinese philosopher from Spring and Autumn period
 - Period of Warring States
 - Scholar - history, music, ethics
- Believed to be China's first professional teacher and charged students a fee to take classes
- Published many books and is considered to be one of the most influential teachers in Chinese history
 - Main Writing: *The Analects*





The Analects

- Considered the single most important Confucian work.
- Means “conversation.”
- Focus on practicalities of interpersonal relationships and the relationship of the role of rulers and ministers to the conduct of government.

Sayings from The Analects




- *Knowing what he knows and knowing what he doesn't know, is characteristics of the person who knows.*
- *Making a mistake and not correcting it, is making another mistake.*
- *The superior man blames himself; the inferior man blames others.*
- *To go too far is as wrong as to fall short.*



Confucius'

Main Ideas

- Restore social order, harmony and good government to China
 - Ethical systems based on relationships and personal virtue
 - Emphasized family
 - Filial piety - respect for parents and elders is necessary for order
 - Early (Western) Zhou Dynasty was seen as perfect society
 - Inferiors devoted to service
 - Superiors looked after dependents
 - Teachings were based on “ren”, or loving others
 - Believed in the **Golden Rule**: “What you do not wish for yourself, do not do to others”
 - Believed a leader should set a moral example for his people by treating them with compassion and showing good manners
 - About 5 million followers today
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Confucianism Basics

- **Five Basic Relationships in Society**
 - Ruler/Subject
 - Husband/Wife
 - Father/Son
 - Older Brother/Younger Brother
 - Friend/Friend
- Chinese gentleman – education & moral standards; birth status not important
- Bureaucracy - those who help run government
 - Courteous, precise, generous, just/fair

Major Confucian Principles

Li → Rite, rules, ritual decorum (Binding force of an enduring stable society)

Ren → Humaneness, benevolence, humanity

Shu → Reciprocity, empathy *Do not do unto others what you would not want others to do unto you.*

Yi → Righteousness

Xiao → Filial Piety (Respect your elders!)



Quotes from Confucius

“I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.”

“Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in getting up every time we do.”

“Respect yourself and others will respect you.”

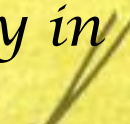
“When anger rises, think of the consequences.”

“Before you embark on a journey of revenge, dig two graves.”

“The superior man is modest in his speech but exceeds in his actions.”


“Life is really simple, but we insist on making it complicated.”

“Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.”





Legalism

- Practical, political reaction to Confucianism
 - Han Feizi - 3rd century BCE Lived during the late Warring States period.
 - Legalism became the political philosophy of the Qin [Ch'in] Dynasty.
 - Powerful and efficient government is key to restoring order
 - Laws will end civil war and restore harmony
 - Rewards to good subjects and punish disobedient
 - Rulers must control ideas and actions of people
 - Favored by Shi Huangdi during Qin dyansty
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Major Legalist Principles

1. Human nature is naturally selfish.
2. Intellectualism and literacy is discouraged.
3. Law is the supreme authority and replaces morality.
4. The ruler must rule with a strong, punishing hand.
5. War is the means of strengthening a ruler's power.

Authoritarian

Principle where individuals should obey a powerful authority rather than exercise individual freedom. The ruler, therefore, “cracks his whip” on the backs of his subjects!

Shi(h): Power and position

Shu: Administrative techniques and methods

Fa: A Comprehensive system of laws.



Qin Dynasty

- Emerges out of end of Zhou Dynasty/Period of Warring States
- Founder: Shi Huangdi (“First Emperor”)
- Goals:
 - Unify and expand China
 - Restore order



Qin Dynasty

- Some royal administrators believed humans were evil
 - given the opportunity → acts of selfishness including disloyalty to their rulers
- Asserted that humans could be discouraged from their selfish impulses only if they faced a set of rigidly enforced punishments for evil behavior.
- Basis for a just, prosperous, and contented society is a set of well-publicized laws and the punishments set for each violation.
- Believed the only productive occupations were farming & weaving.
 - Reading was a waste of the labor resources
 - All books other than those on farming, weaving and divination were burned
 - Scholars who refused to heed the edicts against pursuing useless activities were punished (some were buried alive)

Qin Dynasty

- **Social**

- Primogeniture eliminated (practice of having eldest son inherit all property and land)
- Nobles must leave land and live in Emperor's court

- **Political**

- Emperor had complete control over all aspects of society
- Use of brutality and force to accomplish goals
- Bureaucracy (not of the nobility) expanded to help control all regions
- National census
- Single law code

- **Interactions**

- Army expanded to crush rivals and regional rebellions
- Expanded territory of China, including Hong Kong
- Influenced parts of Vietnam through conquest
- Expanded infrastructure to increase interactions

Qin Dynasty

- **Cultural**

- Confucianism looked down upon and followers persecuted
- Legalism promoted
- Architectural: Initiates construction of Great Wall; Terracotta Soldiers/Tomb of Shi Huangdi
- Uniform written language
- Banned books


- **Economic**

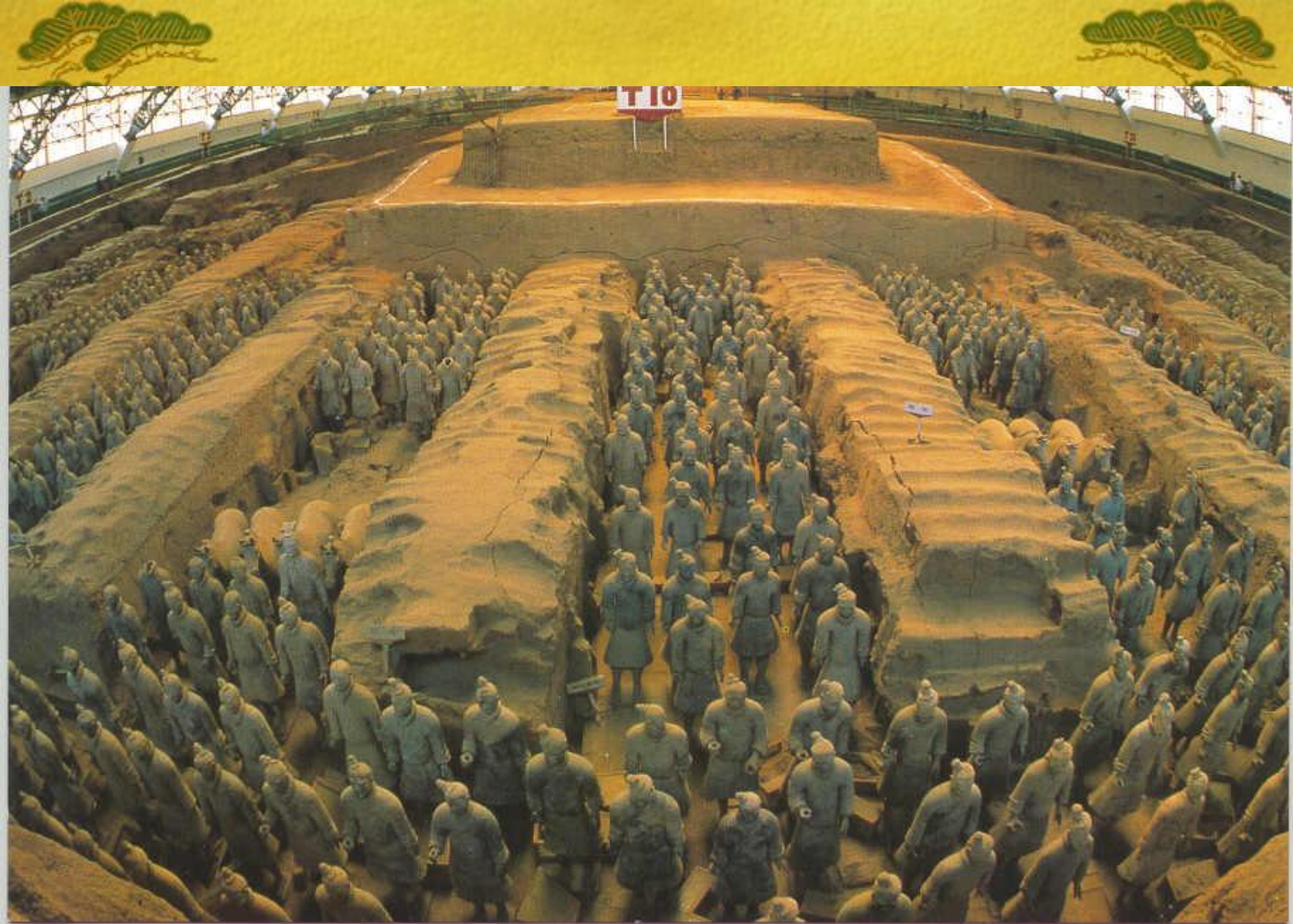
- Introduced standard weights and measures
- Eliminated the very rare practice of slavery
- Forced labor necessary for construction projects
- Extremely high taxes
- Sponsored agricultural projects (irrigation) and manufacturing of silk



Why did the Qin Dynasty Fall?

Qin Shi Huangdi

- Extremely paranoid; killed off suspected enemies (nobles, intellectuals, warlords)
 - Desire to control EVERYTHING
 - High taxes, forced labor
 - Shi Huangdi dies in 210 BCE; followed by 8 years of peasant revolts to determine successor - winner establishes Han Dynasty
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Great Wall

Land under the rule of the Han Dynasty

Current boundaries of China and Mongolia

0 1000km

Establishment of Han Dynasty

202 BCE - 220 CE

- Liu Bang - leads peasant revolts after death of Shi Huangdi
- 202 BCE - Liu Bang has eliminated almost all of his competition through military might and diplomacy



Han

Society

- Some lower classes allowed into bureaucracy
- Strict emphasis on family relationships
- Patriarchal
 - Women- Some could gain influence through male relatives
- Three main groups:
 - Landowners & educated bureaucrats
 - Peasants and Artisans
 - “Mean People” - merchants, actors, musicians

Politics

- Centralized administration, with less brutality than Qin dynasty
- Improved bureaucracy
- Attacked warlords/regional princes
- Focused less on military buildup
- Emphasized Confucianism - education for bureaucrats
- Wu Ti (Wudi)- most famous Han emperor (140-87 BCE)
 - Brought peace to much of Asia, Expanded territory, Civil Service Examination

Han

Interactions

- Expansion into Korea, Vietnam and Central Asia
- Expanded contact/trade with India and Persian empires
- Later traded with the Gupta and Roman Empires (Silk Road)

Culture

- Treated Confucianism as religion-shrines constructed
- Gov't promoted philosophy
- Continued construction of Great Wall
- Innovations - Seismograph, anatomical research, hygiene
 - Animal collars
 - Pulleys and gears
 - Increased production of textiles
 - Water-power mills
 - Paper

Han

Economy

- Taxes lower than Qin, but get higher as dynasty progresses
- Copper coins
- Required people to work on gov't projects
- Gov't influenced and controlled parts of economy
 - Iron and Salt production
 - Weights and Measures
 - Trade - silk, jewelry, leather goods, agricultural goods
 - Public works programs - canal systems
 - Store surplus of rice and grain