

Ancient Asian Empires

Ancient Chinese Dynasties

Shang Dynasty (1766-1050 B.C.E.)

- Important Because: First Chinese Dynasty historians have evidence of
- Called the Yellow River Civilization
- Bronze Civilization
- Development of writing
 - Pictograph to Ideograph

Zhou Dynasty (1027-256 B.C.E.)

- Important Because: Development of feudalistic system in China
- Longest lasting Dynasty
- Well-field system developed
- Development of Mandate of Heaven
 - Based on four principals:
 - Right to rule is granted by heaven
 - There is only one heaven, therefore there can only be one ruler
 - Right to rule is based on virtue of ruler
 - The right to rule is not limited to one dynasty



Three Schools of Chinese Philosophy

- Taoist
 - Comparable to “the force”
 - Stresses the equality of the universe
- Legalist
 - Machiavellian thought
 - Laws should dictate **everyone** to ensure the good of society
- Confucius
 - Belief that if all relationships were approached with decorum and humanity the world would be better off

The Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.)

- Zhou fighting to maintain control
 - Civil War with 8 different combatants
- Development of sophisticated Iron Tools and Cavalry units
- Qin able to take control because of Legalist philosophy and military might

Pre-Golden Age Dynasties

Qin Dynasty (226 – 221 B.C.E.)

- Important Because: Unification of China under one ruler in Xi’an
 - Known for enormous public works projects
 - Heavily legalistic – Anti Confucius
 - Set the precedent for Imperial China
 - Unified weights and measure
- Very good army but without strong leader it fell apart quickly
- Qin Shih Huang

- First “Emperor”
- Began the building of the Great Wall
 - Built as line of defense against the Hsiung Nu or “Huns”
 - Used system of signal fires to send alerts
- Did away with feudal system
- Established cultural uniformity
- Established 36 provinces under central rule
- Burning of Books Decree
 - Burned Confucius writings
- Known from relics from great tomb
 - Imperial city of Xi’an
 - 6000 life like terra-cotta soldiers



Han Dynasty (202 B.C.E.–220 C.E.)

- Important Because: Start of Imperial Period

- Liu Pang
 - Started as commoner
 - Civil War General for “Han” peoples
 - Strict control on throne, lessened burdened on rural folk
- Confucianism prominent
 - Mixed with Legalism and became official teachings
- Civil Service examination System initiated
 - Established to find suitable candidates for bureaucracy
 - Consisted of
 - Military Strategy
 - Civil law
 - Revenue/taxation
 - Agriculture
 - Geography
- Silk road
 - Consisted of many different routes
 - Served as a link between china and the Middle East, as well as Europe
 - Exchanged silk for western goods such as precious metals and stones, as well as iron
- Technological advances
 - Porcelain
 - More durable form of pottery
 - Took a long time to perfect
 - Paper
 - Very thick at first
 - Allowed for written histories and records to be developed

