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