

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

Shang Dynasty

(1650 B.C.–1027 B.C.)

Gained control of corner of northern China along Huang He.

Drove off nomads from northern steppes and deserts.

Held complex religious beliefs.

Developed written language used by all Chinese people.

Zhou Dynasty

(1027 B.C.–256 B.C.)

Overthrew the Shang.

Promoted idea of Mandate of Heaven.

Set up feudal state.

Economy and commerce grew.

Population increased.

Shang Dynasty

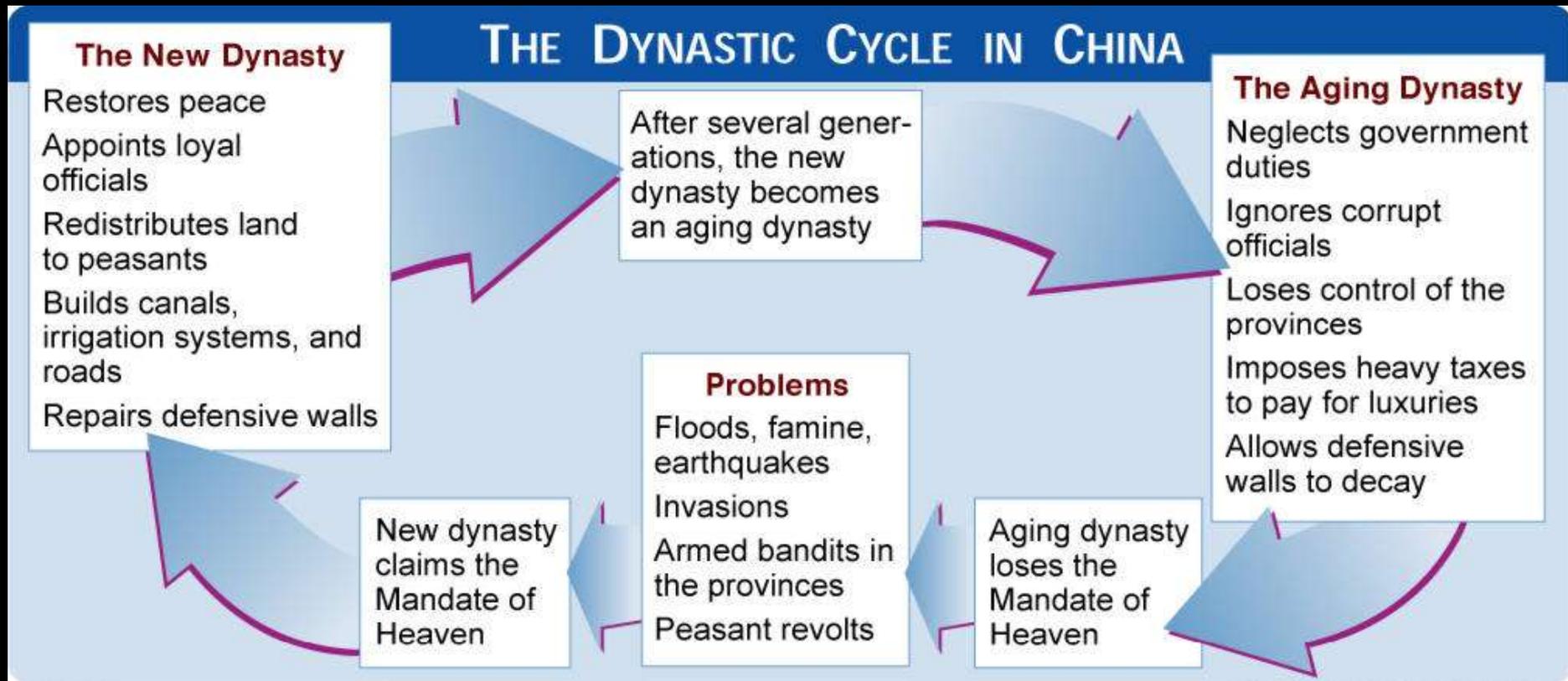


Zhou Dynasty



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.



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.



Zhou Bronze



Shang Pitcher

The Period of the Warring States

Iron swords from the Warring States Period



W. Zhou Helmet



- 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.



Han era servant in terra cotta

How did Shi Huangdi Unite China?



Emperor Qin Shi Huangdi

- 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



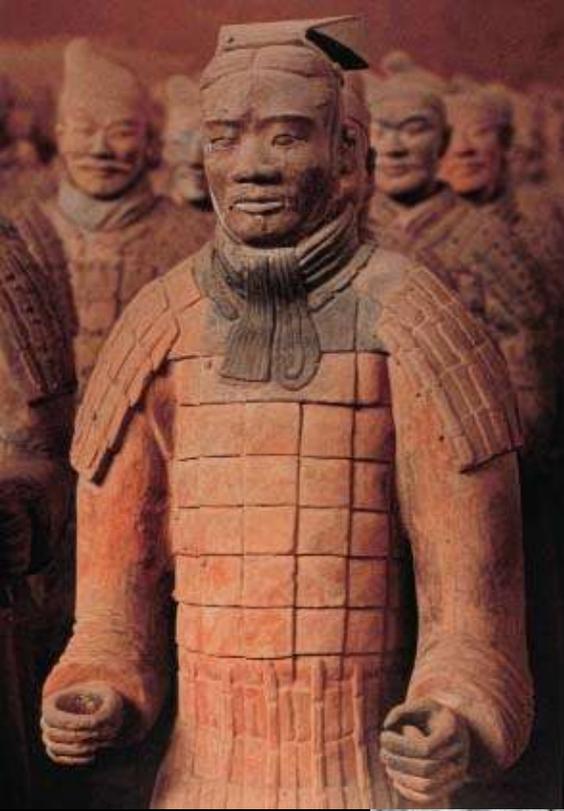
Made by Yu Ninjie.

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

ECONOMY	GOVERNMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ They improved canals and roads.▪ They set up granaries across the empire.▪ They reorganized finances.▪ They imposed a government monopoly on iron and salt.▪ They opened up the Silk Road, a trade route linking China and the West.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ They made Confucianism the official belief of the state.▪ They relied on well-educated scholars to run the government.▪ They used a civil service exam to find the most qualified officials.

The Han Golden Age

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

SCIENCE	MEDICINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wrote texts on chemistry, zoology, and botany.• Measured movements of stars and planets.• Invented seismograph to measure earthquakes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diagnosed diseases.• Used herbal remedies and other drugs for treatments.• Developed anesthetics.• Explored uses of acupuncture.
TECHNOLOGY	THE ARTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Made paper out of wood pulp.• Pioneered advanced methods of shipbuilding.• Invented the rudder, fishing reels, wheelbarrows, and suspension bridges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Built grand temples and palaces.• Produced jade and ivory carvings and ceramic figures.• Improved bronze-working and silk-making techniques.

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** led 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 (illustration from *Myths & Legends of China*, 1922, by E.T.C. Werner)

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.

Legalism vs. Daoism

Legalism and Daoism promoted very different views of government.

LEGALISM	DAOISM
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Taught that humans are naturally evil▪ The only way to achieve order is to pass strict laws and impose harsh punishments on lawbreakers.▪ The ruler alone possesses power.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Taught that people should turn to nature and give up their worldly concerns▪ Government is unnatural & is the cause of many problems.▪ The best government is the one that governs the least.

Buddhism in China

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.

