

ANCIENT CHINA



The River Valley Civilizations and the Xia to Qin Dynasties

Two River Valley Civilizations



The Huang He or Yellow River is 2900 miles long from Mongolia to the Pacific Ocean.

The Chang Jiang or Yangtze River is 3400 miles long from Central China to the Yellow Sea

Why is it called the Yellow River?

The color comes from the thin, windblown soil of the Gobi desert. This yellowish soil is called LOESS which lands in the river valley.

It is also called “China’s Sorrow” as the floods are often devastating to the towns and villages.



Levees were built to stop the floods



The Ancient Chinese used wood and mud to build embankments to stop the floods but they were washed away, leading to disaster and “sorrow”

Two Different Climates

The Hang He (Yellow) river is in the northern section of China where it is high land and dry.

The Chang Jiang (Yangtze) river is in the southern section of China where it is warm and moist.



**North: Millet, Wheat, Rice,
Fish, Pigs, Sheep and Cattle
South: Mostly Rice farming**

Paddies and Terrace Farming



Rice is hydroponic (grown in water). The Ancient Chinese grew rice in paddy fields that were often carved into hillsides which is called Terrace Farming.

Only 10% of China's land is used for farming as most of the land is desert and mountainous.

Geography means Isolationism!

The people on the frontier regions were of Mongolian, Indo-European and Turkish backgrounds. The northern frontier was constantly under attack to capture the precious farmlands.



The First Civilizations



Circa 2100 to 1600 B.C.E.

Chinese historians believe the first people settled over 4,000 years ago and were called the Xia which is pronounced SYAH. Little is known about this dynasty, a line of hereditary rulers of a country. Yu the Great ruled and they had bronze, jade and a calendar system.

Silk Farming (sericulture)

Legend says that around 2700 B.C.E. the Empress Hsi Ling Shi had a silkworm cocoon fall into her hot tea. She watched the strands of fiber unravel and had a vision of how to make silk.



The Shang Dynasty

Ruled from 1600 to 1046 B.C.E. from their capital city of Anyang which had huge city walls, royal palaces and large royal tombs.

Ruled by a king with a large aristocracy (rich upper class who owned land) who ruled a large farming society.



Shang Superstition and Culture

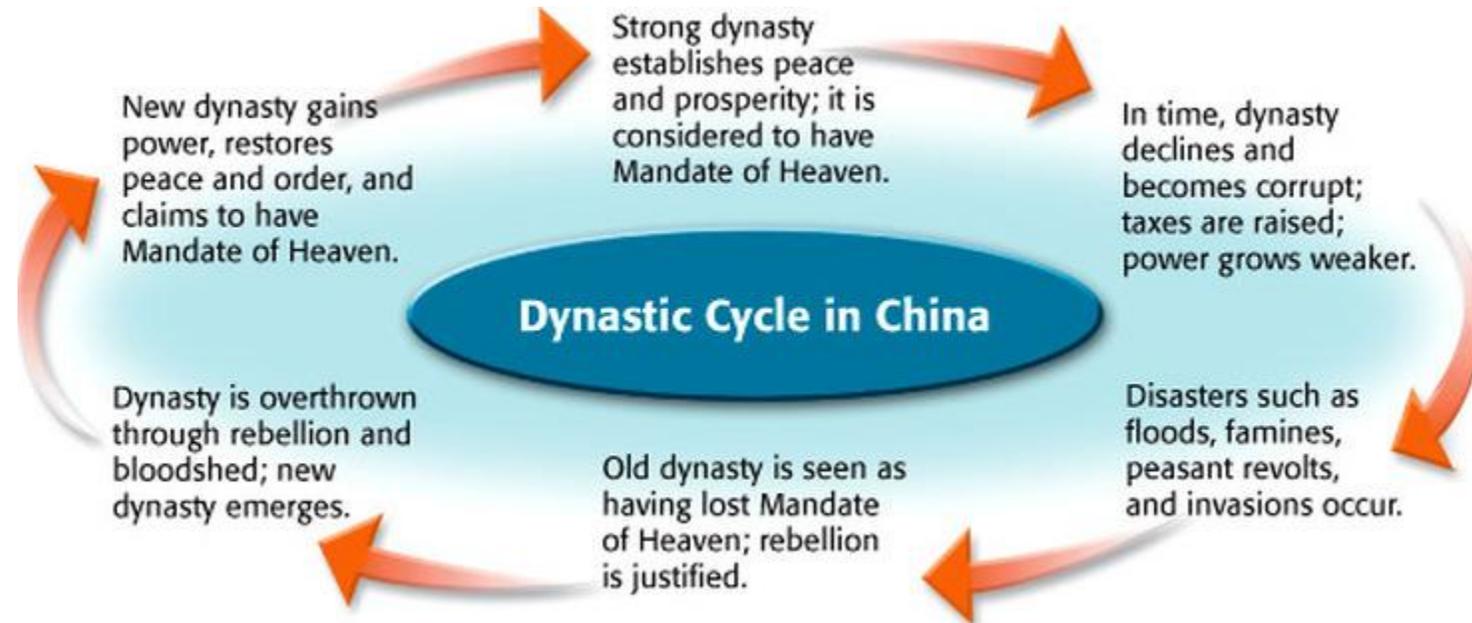


Oracle Bones were inscribed by priests with questions and answers then preserved in the king's records.



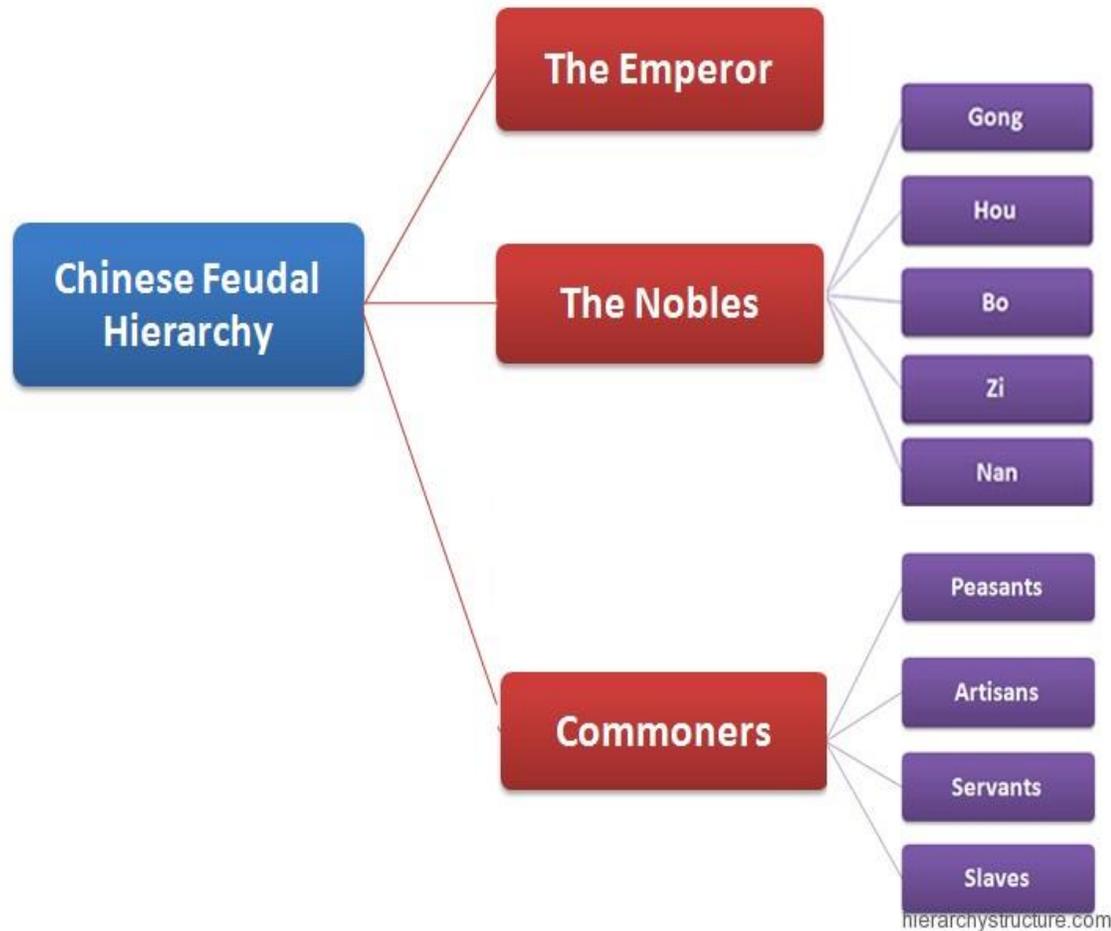
Shang bronze masks to scare away evil spirits, and vessels for liquids were cast in clay molds.

The Mandate of Heaven



The Zhou made political changes, the greatest being the Mandate of Heaven or the *Right to Rule*. The king claimed his power came from Heaven. In return, he was expected to rule the proper “Way” or Dao. Failure led to rebellion.

Feudalism System in China



The Zhou used large-scale water projects and iron technology for plows. Food production increased and a new political system was created called *Feudalism*.

The population grew to 50 million and extensive trade, as far as Athens, especially selling silk, created more wealth.

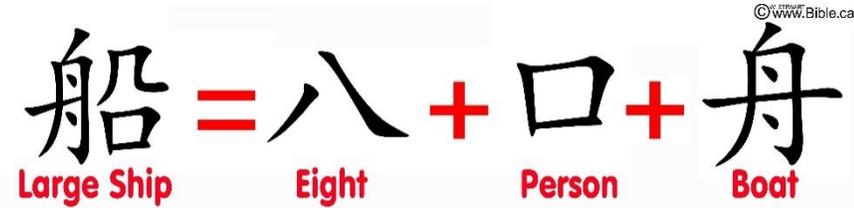
Filial Piety



It is the duty of family members to obey the male head of the household. Every family member has his or her place within the family, based on seniority. The male head of the family in turn pays his loyalty to his elders and his leaders.

Chinese Written Language

The Zhou developed pictographs, symbols that represented the actual object. Ideographs were also created, two or more pictographs to represent an idea. East was the sun appearing behind trees. They also created a numbering system based on units of 10 and using zero.



This is the Chinese ideograph for Noah's Ark

零	一	二	三	四	五	六	七	八	九
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
十	百	千	万						
10	100	1000	10000						

Example:

$$873 = \text{八百七十三}$$
$$8 \cdot 100 + 7 \cdot 10 + 3$$

Kongfuzi - Confucius



Kongfuzi means “Master Kung” and he is known to the Chinese as the First Teacher. Born in 551 B.C.E., he wanted to be a political adviser but lived in a time of violence, war and moral decay.

He recorded his sayings in the *Analects* which was to become a belief system called *Confucianism*.

Confucianism

The key to proper behavior is the *DAO*: Duty and Humanity

One must have excellent character: *REN* or goodness

Everyone must have ritual norms: *LI*

Loyalty to one's true nature is necessary: *ZHONG*

People must show generosity: *SHU*

Respect for elders is mandatory: *XIAO*

Heaven (*TIAN*) is a positive and personal force

The Five Constant Relationships

Parent and Child

Husband and Wife

Older Sibling and Younger Sibling

Older Friend and Younger Friend

Ruler and Subject

If each individual followed these rules and worked hard to fulfil his or her duties then all of society would be in harmony.

“The duty of children to their parents is the foundation from which all virtues spring.”

Daoism (Taoism)

A belief system from the teachings of Laozi, the Old Master, a contemporary of Confucius. His famous work, Tao Te Ching (*The Way of the Dao*) is different from Confucius. He believed to let nature take its course and not interfere with it.

“The universe is sacred. You cannot improve it. If you try to change it, you will ruin it. If you try to hold it, you will lose it.”



Yin and Yang



In Chinese philosophy opposite forces are complimentary and interconnected: light and dark, fire and water. The whole is greater than the parts.

Yin: negative/passive/female/moon/slow/soft/cold/wet

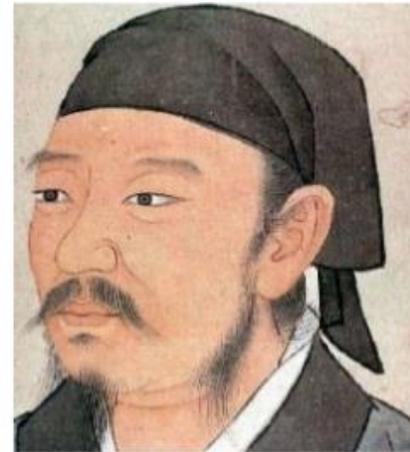
Yang: positive/active/male/sun/fast/hard/hot/dry

**Yin is the black side with the white dot in it
Yang is the white side with the black dot in it**

Legalism

Human beings are evil by nature. They can follow the correct path by harsh laws and stiff punishments. They were seen as the *School of Law*, they rejected Confucius. A government of “superior men” could solve society’s problems. A strong ruler was needed for a lawful society. The ruler did not have to respect his people.

Founding Figure



Hsün Tzu



Han Fei Zi

Decline and Collapse of the Zhou

For centuries the Zhou were ruled by wise and efficient rulers but the rulers began to decline, both intellectually and morally.

Some of the territories evolved into states and in 403 B.C.E. a civil war broke out, the “*Period of the Warring States.*”

The new, more powerful iron weapons caused deadly disaster. There were now foot soldiers (infantry), soldiers on horseback (cavalry), who had crossbows.

By the end of the war, the Zhou would fall and a new dynasty family would take over.

The Qin Dynasty



In 221 B.C.E. Qin Shihuangdi (*The First Qin Emperor*) came to the throne at the age of 13. His army finally defeated the Zhou and his other Qin rivals.

Political changes were drastic: *Legalism* as the adopted ideology.

The goal was to unify the Chinese world.

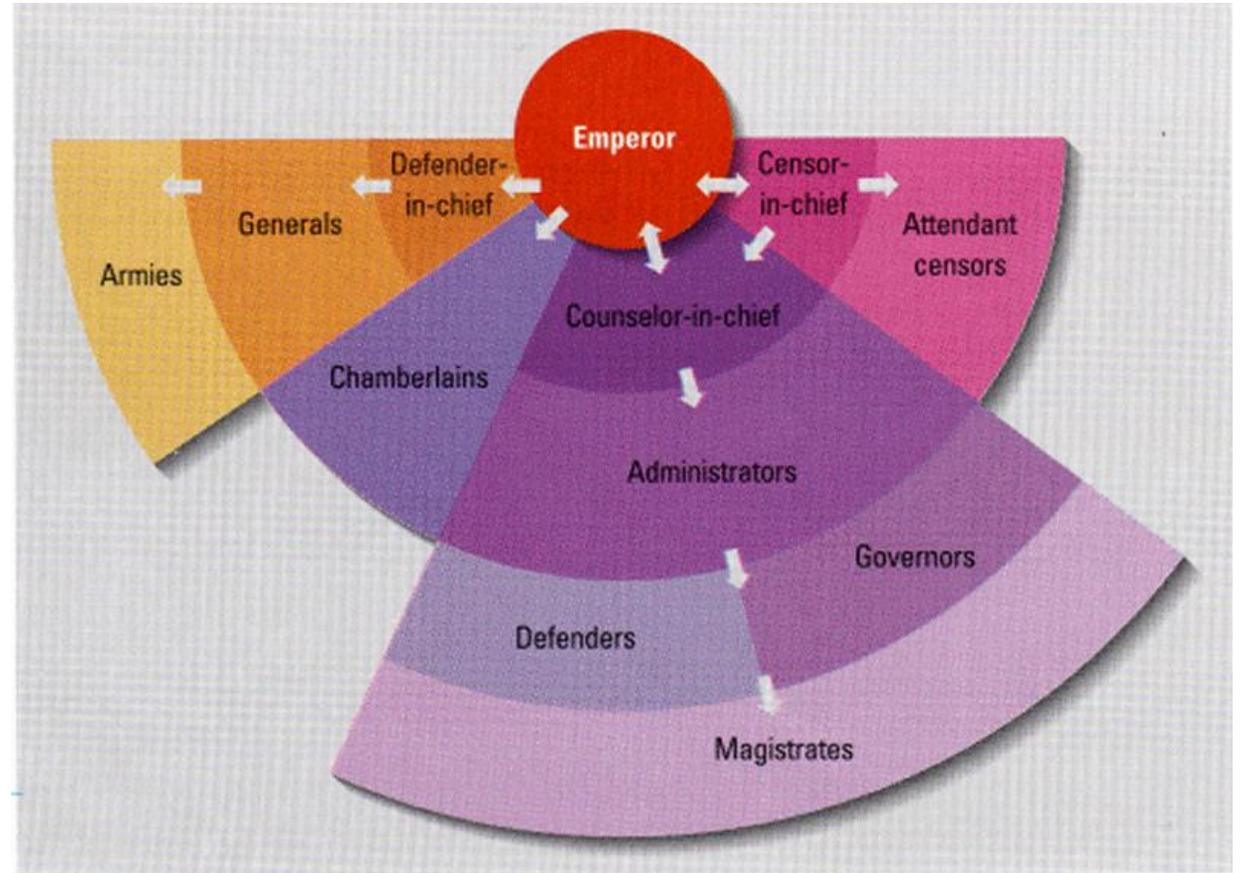
Qin Government

A highly centralized state:
Central Bureaucracy was
divided into three sections:

Civil Division

Military Division

Censorate – inspectors who
checked on the government
officials so they did not
become corrupt



Qin Improvements



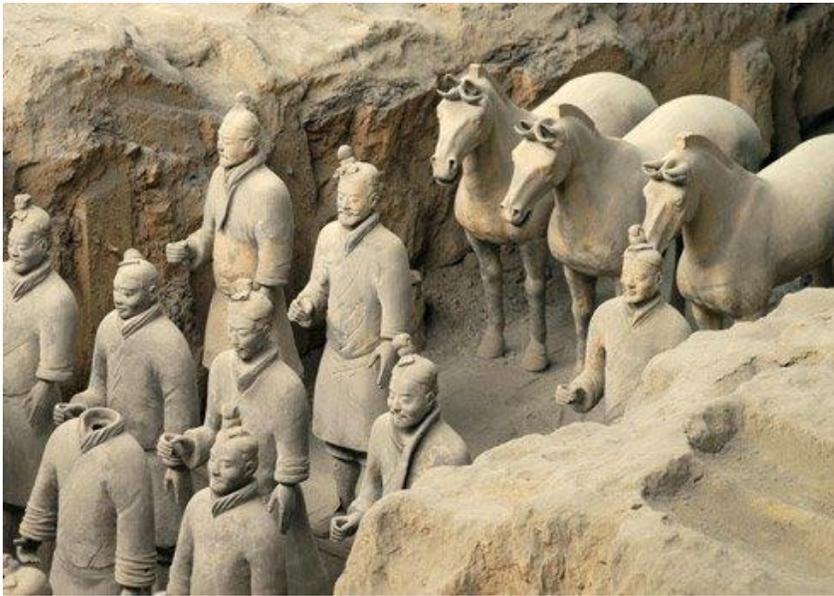
A single monetary system
A road system across the empire centering on the capital city of Xianyang
They conquered southward into present day Vietnam
They built a canal from the Chang Jiang river to transport food across the empire

The Great Wall of China

Built to stop attacks by the Xiongnu nomadic people of the Gobi desert region. The wall sections are linked by signal posts. It was known as the "*Wall of a Thousand Li*" (Li = 1/3 of a mile)



Qin Shihuangdi's Tomb



In 1974 a local farmer discovered the tomb. It is a vast *terra-cotta army*, a recreation of his imperial guard. There are four pits in total, with over 6,000 figures in the first pit alone. They were all molded and painted in different colors.

Fall of the Qin Dynasty

Qin Shihuangdi wanted to create an empire that would be ruled by his sons and their family for 10,000 years but he had angered many Chinese people. When he died in 210 B.C.E. a brief civil war broke out and a new dynasty took over, the Han.

