**ANCIENT CHINA**

# Ancient China Notes



**Geography**:

-        *Huang He River* aka *Yellow River*

-        2109 miles long

-        *Chang Jiang (Yangtze River)*

-        2432 miles long

-        roughly the width of the 48 continental US

-        (Nile 4000 mi, Indus 1800 mi)

-        origin in the *Plateau of Tibet*

-        major force in **China**’s history

-        flooding seasons contribute to fertile soils of plains

**North China Plain**:

-        world’s largest delta

-        created by river silt

-        farmer’s began using this land around 4000 BC

**Huang River Valley**:

-        river curves around *Ordos Desert*

-        mountains surrounding desert created by river silt

-        river silt called *LOESS*

-        *LOESS* – dusty, yellow soil that has been deposited in this region by wind

-        Huang He is world’s muddiest river

-        *loess* deposited in valley by seasonal flooding

-        Has created very fertile soil

-        **Ancient** farmers used *LEVEES* to control flooding of river

-        Crops grown in valley include: rice, millet, wheat, green onions, ginger

-        Also grapes, peaches, plums and chestnuts

**Erosion**:

-        *the wearing away of land by the elements (wind and water*)

-        caused by the clearing of land because of the population boom in **China**

-        wearing away of fertile soil contributed to famine

-        **famine**- *a time when very little food is available and people starve*

-        **steppes** – *a dry, treeless plain*

-        People who lived on these plains herded cattle and sheep

The First Dynasty

-        3000 BC **China** begins to divide into states

-        large cities begin to form within these states

-        they become state capitals

-        1700 BC one state became the largest, most powerful

-        Shang become the states name and capital city

-        a dynasty ruled the city/state of Shang

-        *Dynasty* – a line of rulers who belong to the same family

-        Shang Dynasty ruled for 600 years

### Towns/Cities

-        kingdom of **China** spread with the increase in population

-        cities and states began to form along the Huang River

-        Nobles ruled these cities

-        *Nobles* were relatives of the king and his family given the rule of the city by him

-        they ruled the cities in the mold of the king

-        towns were important parts of the kingdom

-        they provided centers of production for the state and the entire country

-        *towns* produced food, clothing, and other products for the king and nobles

-        in an event of the outbreak of war, the townspeople fought for the king and nobles of the states

### Anyang

-        during the end of the Shang Dynasty, the capital moved to *Anyang*

-        this city provides the greatest clues to **Ancient** **China**

-        “pithouses” existed here

-        *pithouses* served as homes and workshops for the inhabitants of *Anyang*

-        within these houses, metal workers and potters perfected their crafts

**Society**

-        ***Ancient*** *Chinese society* was set up like that of **Ancient** Egypt

-        Pyramid shape, best describes the society:

## KING

## NOBLES

WARRIORS

CRAFT-WORKERS

FARMERS AND HERDERS

SLAVES AND PRISONERS OF WAR

# Fu Hao “Lady Hao”

-        wife of Shang Dynasty king **Wu Ding**

-        led troops into battle

-        ruled her own town

-        one of first rulers to be documented in **China**’s history

### Early Writing System

-        signs looked like pictures of objects

-        characters became simpler throughout time

-        symbols stood for objects or ideas

-        many were written on bamboo and silk

-        these did not survive

-        Ancients also wrote on bronze pots and stones

-        these provide clues to life in **Ancient** **China**

*“Dragon bones”* were another substance used to write on

-        These bones were actually that of cattle and sheep

-        “Oracle Bones”- used by special priests to predict future

-        Bones were inscribed with a question then heated **over** a fire until they cracked.  The pattern of cracks was used to answer the question and predict the future.

Religion of the Shang

-        believed ancestors lived in another world

-        these ancestors controlled human life in real world

-        oracle predictions helped restore faith in king

-        if predictions came true, king was being helped by ancestors

-        also, true predictions meant that king was good selection

-        people of Shang dynasty worshiped many gods

-        believed these gods controlled nature

-         believed in after-life

ZHOU Dynasty

-        took **over** China around 1100 BC

-        lasted longer than any other dynasty (600 years)

-        Mandate of Heaven – heaven gave power to the king and no one ruled without heaven’s permission

-        Zhou was located west of the Shang territory

-        Eventually ruled all area between Yellow and Yangzi River

-        Established a new political order similar to Feudalism

o      Granted land in return for loyalty, military support, and other services

o      Land was granted to lords

o      Lords paid taxes and provided soldiers to the king

o      Peasants received small plots of land and had to farm additional land for the nobles

-        This new system brought order to **China**

-        Eventually this system broke down because of lack of loyalty to the king

Emperor’s Army:

-        Shang Dynasty ended around 1100 BC

-        Zhou Dynasty ended around 500 BC

-        Huang River Valley fell apart for many years

-        Entered a period called the Warring States period around 481 BC

-        Around 221 BC, a region called Qin (Ch’in) ruled the Valley

-        Qin gained control of the Valley

-        A great general led his armies in these battles

-        When fighting was complete, the general named himself emperor

# Shi-huang-di

-        Real name Prince Sheng “Tiger of Qin”

-        declared himself emperor after battles

-        emperor- a supreme ruler of an empire

-        name means: *“First Grand Emperor”*

-        boasted that Qin (Ch’in) Dynasty would last 10,000 generations

-        Dynasty actually only lasted 15 years!

# Rise of Empire

-        geography led to their conquest of *Huang River Valley*

-        Qin region was protected by *Qinling Mountains* and *Huang River*

-        Soldiers were protected and fought many battles

# Government

-        Shi-huang-di divided empire into 36 provinces or districts

-        *province*- a political division of land

-        let farmers own land

-        weakened power of nobles

-        forced nobles to move to capital city, *Xianyang*

-        took bronze weapons from nobles

-        set up a single system of writing throughout **China** called Xiaozhuan

-        helped to record and collect taxes

-        set up a single system of money throughout **China** called Renminbi, today it is the Yuan

-        coins were made of bronze by craftsman

-        holes were put in coins to allow for easy storage

-        changes enforced by emperor’s soldiers

# Farmers build Empire

-        **China** grew bigger and stronger WHY?

-        empire became increasingly rich from taxes

-        as time passed, emperor became more demanding of people

-        farmers built roads to link cities

-        also, built walls along countries northern border

-        walls later made up part of *Great Wall of* ***China***

-        Great Wall grew to more than 1500 miles long, not the wall we think of today

-        after emperor’s death, farmers revolted against kingdom

-        revolutions created by *Shi-huang-di* lasted for centuries

#### Emperor’s Tomb

-        *Shi-huang-di* wanted to model “real world”

-        Clay army: about 7000 found in pit 1, may be 400,000 in 6 other pits

-        Took almost 40 years to build, and approximately 700,000 workers

-        Tomb not yet uncovered

-        **Ancient** writer described tomb:

-        Huge map of empire

-        Stars on ceiling

-        Mercury flowing as a river

-        Crossbows guarded the entrance to the tomb

Confucius Changes **China**

-        Shi-huangdi’s Qin Dynasty was overthrown in 206 BC

-        *Han Gaozu*, a farmer-turned-general, led these armies

-        began the Han Dynasty

-        ruled **China** for 400 years!

-        expanded into North and South Korea and Vietnam

-        Han believed a ruler should be able to do whatever he wanted

-        developed ideas about how to rule based on *Confucius*

# Confucius

-        suggested a more peaceful way of living

-        this won many followers

-        unlike Buddha, his ideas did not start a new religion

-        did reshape the entire civilization

-        both parents died when he was young

-        mastered subjects such as writing, mathematics, history, and archery

-        devoted his life to teaching

#

# Confucianism

-        taught that Chinese culture had lost all traditions

-        **ancient** traditions made society just and good

-        education could learn people to become good and just again

-        *good people = good civilization*

-        central idea: to have respect within the family

-        applied to government: subject must respect ruler

-        ruler has duty to be wise and good

-        *Mandate of Heaven*: each emperor received the right to rule from the gods

- *The Analects*: book written by Confucius’s students recording ideas

# Rise of Han Dynasty

-        Han Dynasty expanded **China**’s borders

-        Emperor Shihuangdi had non-believers executed

-        he did not want anyone to question his authority

-        *Confucianism* became accepted in Han Dynasty

-        used the Qin Dynasty’s system of government to keep nobles powerless

-        gave governmental jobs to educated, rather than nobles

-        Emperor Wudi, first strong emperor of Han Dynasty

-        Ruled from 140 BC to 87 BC

-        created schools to prepare students for governmental services

-        schools were run by Confucian teachers

# The Grand School

-        schools were set up in each province

-        taught Chinese literature

-        students who performed well were sent to the *Grand School*

-        only 50 students studied at this school during Wudi’s rule

-        by 200 AD, more than 30,000 were enrolled there

-        1 year: **ancient** **China**’s pottery, history, proper behavior, and folk songs

-        took test at end of year

-        if passed, worked for government or as a teacher in province school

-        Chinese scientists and mathematicians learned to predict eclipses of the sun

-        Doctors discovered new medicines

-        Poets wrote about the land

-        Language grew from 3000 to 9000 characters during Han Dynasty

-        100 AD 1st Chinese dictionary was printed

# Invention of Paper

-        Confucianism brought increased knowledge and discover

-        Han craftsman invented paper

-        Produced by pounding bark of mulberry trees

-        Paper provided a means for keeping a written record of events

-        Mulberry trees also used for Chinese silk

# Instruments

-        Han inventors created the *seismograph*

-        *Seismograph- a machine used to detect earthquakes*

-        **Ancient** seismograph included a vase with a pendulum in it

-        The pendulum would swing striking a rod, thus knocking a ball out of the dragon’s mouth indicating the direction of the earthquake

-        Food and supplies could be sent to the region affected by the quake

# Everyday Life

-        empire stretched thousands of miles

-        farming was central to society

-        most lived on farms and in small villages

-        farmer’s produced for entire empire

-        still belief in today’s society

# End of Dynasty

-        Han Dynasty ended around 220 AD

-        Ended because of failed expansion trials and fighting among countries leaders

-        Confucius’s ideas exist to this day in **China**