

# The Zhou Dynasty and New Ideas

## What You Will Learn...

### Main Ideas

1. The Zhou dynasty expanded China but then declined.
2. Confucius offered ideas to bring order to Chinese society.
3. Daoism and Legalism also gained followers.

### The Big Idea

The Zhou dynasty brought political stability and new ways to deal with political and social changes in ancient China.

### Key Terms and People

lords, *p. 167*

peasants, *p. 167*

Confucius, *p. 169*

ethics, *p. 169*

Confucianism, *p. 169*

Daoism, *p. 170*

Laozi, *p. 170*

Legalism, *p. 170*



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TAKING NOTES

Use the graphic organizer online to take notes on changes that occurred during the Zhou dynasty.

## If YOU were there...

You are a student of the famous teacher Confucius. Like many older Chinese, he thinks that society has changed—and not for the better. He believes in old values and a strict social order. He is trying to teach you and your fellow students how to behave properly. You must respect those who are your superiors in society. You must set a good example for others.

## How will these teachings affect your life?

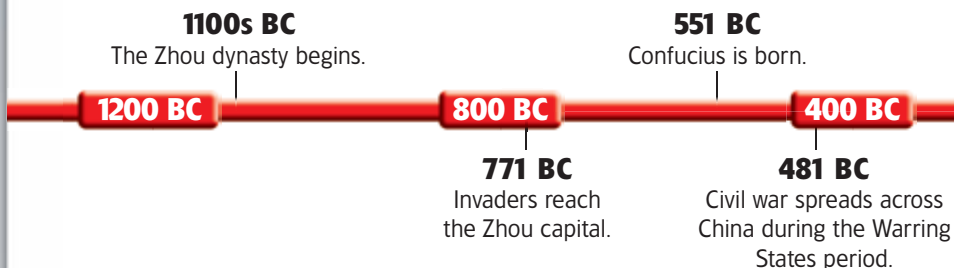
**BUILDING BACKGROUND** The people of the Shang dynasty made many advances, including beautiful metalwork, a writing system, and a calendar. The next dynasty, the Zhou, established other Chinese traditions. Some of these traditions included the importance of family and social order. Later thinkers looked back with admiration to the values of the Zhou period.

## The Zhou Dynasty

In the 1100s BC the leaders of a people who came to be known as the Zhou (JOH) ruled over a kingdom in China. They joined with other nearby tribes and attacked and overthrew the Shang dynasty. The Zhou dynasty lasted longer than any other dynasty in Chinese history.

### Time Line

## The Zhou Dynasty



# Zhou Dynasty, c. 1050–400 BC



ASIA

GOBI DESERT

Huang He (Yellow River)

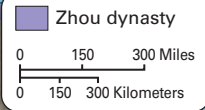
Chang Jiang (Yangzi River)

Xi River

Yellow Sea

PACIFIC OCEAN

East China Sea



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## ANIMATED HISTORY

Ancient China  
1523–221 BC

## GEOGRAPHY SKILLS

### INTERPRETING MAPS

**Location** How far south did the Zhou dynasty reach?

## Zhou Society

QUICK FACTS

### King

The king led the government and gave land to lords.



### Lords and Warriors

Lords paid taxes to the king and provided warriors to protect his lands.



### Peasants

Peasants farmed the nobles' land.



## The Zhou Political System

The Zhou kings claimed to possess the mandate of heaven. According to this idea, heaven gave power to the king or leader, and no one ruled without heaven's permission. If a king was found to be bad, heaven would support another leader.

The Zhou came from an area to the west of the Shang kingdom. Early Zhou rulers used the mandate of heaven to justify their rebellion against the Shang. Later Zhou rulers expanded their territory to the northwest and the east. Zhou soldiers then moved south, eventually expanding their rule to the Chang Jiang.

The Zhou established a new political order. They granted land to others in return for loyalty, military support, and other services. The Zhou king was at the highest level. He granted plots of land to **lords, or people of high rank**. Lords paid

taxes and provided soldiers to the king as needed. **Peasants, or farmers with small farms**, were at the bottom of the order. Each peasant family received a small plot of land and had to farm additional land for the noble. The system was described in the *Book of Songs*:

“Everywhere under vast Heaven  
There is no land that is not the king's  
Within the borders of those lands  
There are none who are not the king's servants.”

—from the Zhou *Book of Songs*

The Zhou system brought order to China. Ruling through lords helped the Zhou control distant areas and helped ensure loyalty to the king. Over time, however, the political order broke down. Lords passed their power to their sons, who were less loyal to the king. Local rulers gained power. They began to reject the authority of the Zhou kings.

## The Decline of Zhou Power

As the lords' loyalty to the Zhou king lessened, many refused to fight against invasions. In 771 BC invaders reached the capital. According to legend, the king had been lighting warning fires to entertain a friend. Each time the fires were lit, the king's armies would rush to the capital gates to protect him. When the real attack came, the men thought the fires were just another joke, and no one came. The Zhou lost the battle, but the dynasty survived.

After this defeat the lords began to fight each other. By 481 BC, China had entered an era called the Warring States period, a time of many civil wars. Armies grew. Fighting became brutal and cruel as soldiers fought for territory, not honor.

family had been the foundation of life in China. Large families of several generations formed powerful groups. When these families broke apart, they lost their power. Close relatives became rivals.

Bonds of loyalty even weakened within small families, especially among the upper classes. Sons plotted against each other over inheritances. A wealthy father sometimes tried to maintain peace by dividing his land among his sons. But this created new problems. Each son could build up his wealth and then challenge his brothers. Some sons even killed their own fathers. During the Warring States period, China lacked a strong government to stop the power struggles within the ruling-class families. Chinese society fell into a period of disorder.

### ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

**structure** the way something is set up or organized

### Internal Problems

The decline of the Zhou took place along with important changes in the Chinese family **structure**. For many centuries the

### READING CHECK Identifying Cause and Effect

**Effect** How did the Zhou's decline affect Chinese society?

## The Warring States Period

During China's Warring States period, thousands of armies fought each other to gain territory. The armies used new weapons and battle techniques in the civil wars that lasted more than 200 years.



Iron weapons made warfare dangerous and bloody.

Horses were now ridden instead of just being used to pull chariots.

### ANALYSIS SKILL ANALYZING VISUALS

What advantage did warriors gain by riding horses?

## Confucius and Society

During the late Zhou period, thinkers came up with ideas about how to restore order to China. One such person, **Confucius**, became the most influential teacher in Chinese history. Confucius is a Western form of the Chinese title of “Master Kong” or “Kongfuzi.”

Confucius felt that China was overrun with rude and dishonest people. Upset by the disorder and people’s lack of decency, Confucius said that the Chinese needed to return to **ethics, or moral values**. The ideas of Confucius are known as **Confucianism**.

Confucius wanted China to return to ideas and practices from a time when people knew their proper roles in society. These are basic guidelines that Confucius thought would restore family order and social harmony:

- Fathers should display high moral values to inspire their families.
- Children should respect and obey their parents.
- All family members should be loyal to each other.

Confucius’s ideas about government were similar to his ideas about family:

- Moral leadership, not laws, brought order to China.
- A king should lead by example, inspiring good behavior in all of his subjects.
- The lower classes would learn by following the example of their superiors. Confucius expressed this idea when he told kings:

“Lead the people by means of government policies and regulate them through punishments, and they will be evasive and have no sense of shame. Lead them by means of virtue . . . and they will have a sense of shame and moreover have standards.”

—Confucius, from *The Analects*

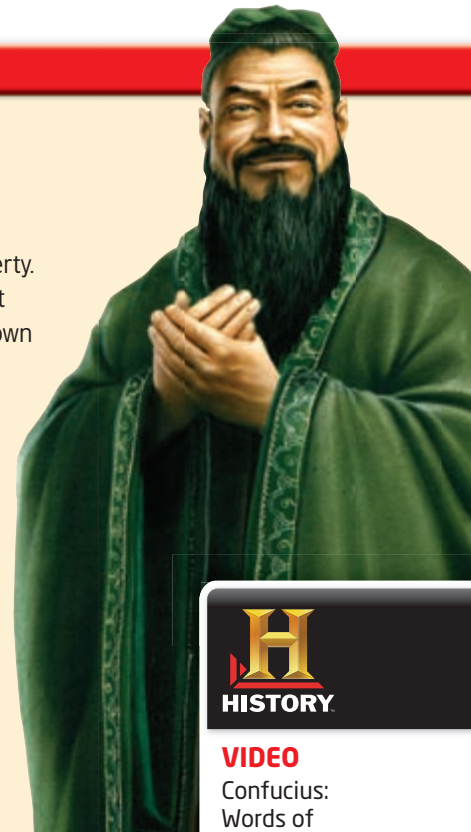
## BIOGRAPHY

### Confucius

551–479 BC

Confucius, whose Chinese title is Kongfuzi, grew up in extreme poverty. Confucius was a dedicated student into his teenage years. Little is known about how he received his formal education, but he mastered many subjects, including music, mathematics, poetry, and history. He served in minor government positions, then he became a teacher. He never knew his teachings would transform Chinese life and thought.

**Drawing Inferences** How do you think Confucius’s government jobs helped shape his teachings?



#### VIDEO

Confucius:  
Words of  
Wisdom

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As Confucius traveled to many different regions, he earned the reputation of a respected teacher. His ideas were passed down through his students and later compiled into a book called *The Analects*.

Because Confucianism focuses on morality, family, society, and government, people often think of it as a philosophy or way of thinking. But it is much more. Confucianism is a unique teaching that is both philosophical and religious. It has been a guiding force in human behavior and religious understanding in China.

Confucius believed that when people behaved well and acted morally, they were simply carrying out what heaven expected of them. Over the centuries Confucius’s ideas about virtue, kindness, and learning became the dominant beliefs in China.

### READING CHECK Identifying Points of View

What did Confucius believe about good behavior?

## Primary Source

### HISTORIC DOCUMENT

## The Analects

The followers of Confucius placed their teacher's sayings together in a work called in Chinese the Lun Yü and in English The Analects. The word analects means "writings that have been collected."

“Yu, shall I teach you what knowledge is? When you know a thing, say that you know it; when you do not know a thing, admit that you do not know it. That is knowledge.”

“Is there any one word that can serve as a principle for . . . life? Perhaps the word is reciprocity [fairness]: Do not do to others what you would not want others to do to you.”

“I do not enlighten anyone who is not eager to learn, nor encourage anyone who is not anxious to put his ideas into words.”

—Confucius, from *The Analects*

### ANALYSIS SKILL

### ANALYZING PRIMARY SOURCES

What are some of the qualities that Confucius valued?

## Daoism and Legalism

Other beliefs besides Confucianism influenced China during the Zhou period. Two in particular attracted many followers.

### Daoism

Daoism (DOW-ih-zum) takes its name from *Dao*, meaning “the way.” **Daoism stressed living in harmony with the Dao, the guiding force of all reality.** In Daoist teachings, the Dao gave birth to the universe and all things in it. Daoism developed in part as a reaction to Confucianism. Daoists didn’t agree with the idea that active, involved leaders brought social harmony. Instead, they wanted the government to stay out of people’s lives.

Daoists believed that people should avoid interfering with nature or each other. They should be like water and simply let things flow in a natural way. For Daoists,

## Main Ideas of Confucianism

### QUICK FACTS

- People should be respectful and loyal to their family members.
- Leaders should be kind and lead by example.
- Learning is a process that never ends.
- Heaven expects people to behave well and act morally.

the ideal ruler was a wise man who was in harmony with the Dao. He would govern so effortlessly that his people would not even know they were being governed.

Daoists taught that the universe is a balance of opposites: female and male, light and dark, low and high. In each case, opposing forces should be in harmony.

While Confucianism focused its followers’ attention on the human world, Daoists paid more attention to the natural world. Daoists regarded humans as just a part of nature, not better than any other thing. In time the Dao, as represented by nature, became so important to the Daoists that they worshipped it.

**Laozi** (LOWD-zuh) was the most famous Daoist teacher. He taught that people should not try to gain wealth, nor should they seek power. Laozi is credited with writing the basic text of Daoism, *The Way and Its Power*. Later writers created many legends about Laozi’s achievements.

### Legalism

**Legalism, the belief that people were bad by nature and needed to be controlled,** contrasted with both Confucianism and Daoism. Unlike the other two beliefs, Legalism was a political philosophy without religious concerns. Instead, it dealt only with government and social

control. Followers of Legalism disagreed with the moral preaching of Confucius. Legalists also rejected Daoism because it didn't stress respect for authority.

Legalists felt that society needed strict laws to keep people in line and that punishments should fit crimes. For example, they believed that citizens should be held responsible for each other's conduct. A guilty person's relatives and neighbors should also be punished. This way, everyone would obey the laws.

Unity and efficiency were also important to Legalists. They wanted appointed officials, not nobles, to run China. Legalists wanted the empire to continue to expand. Therefore, they urged the state to always be prepared for war.

Confucianism, Daoism, and Legalism competed for followers. All three beliefs became popular, but the Legalists were the first to put their ideas into practice throughout China.

**READING CHECK** **Contrasting** How did Daoism and Legalism differ in their theories about government?

## BIOGRAPHY

### Laozi

c. 500s or 400s BC

Scholars have found little reliable information about Laozi's life. Some believe that his book on Daoism was actually the work of several different authors. Most ancient sources of information about Laozi are myths. For example, one legend states that when Laozi was born, he was already an old man. In Chinese *Laozi* can mean "Old Baby." Over the years, many Daoists have worshipped Laozi as a supernatural being.

**Drawing Inferences** What do you think it meant to say Laozi was born "old"?



**SUMMARY AND PREVIEW** When the Zhou dynasty crumbled, political and social chaos erupted. In response, the new teachings of Confucianism, Daoism, and Legalism emerged. In the next section you will learn how the Qin dynasty applied the teachings of Legalism.

## Section 2 Assessment

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**ONLINE QUIZ**

### Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and People

- a. Identify** What is the mandate of heaven?

**b. Explain** Describe the political order used by the Zhou kings to rule distant lands.

**c. Elaborate** What happened when nobles began to reject the Zhou king's authority?
- a. Identify** Who was **Confucius**?

**b. Analyze** Why did many of the teachings of Confucius focus on the family?
- a. Identify** Who was the most famous Daoist teacher?

**b. Summarize** What were the main ideas of **Daoism**?

**c. Elaborate** What might be some disadvantages of **Legalism**?

### Critical Thinking

- Finding Main Ideas**

Draw a chart like the one here. Use it and your notes on the Zhou dynasty to list two main ideas about each set of beliefs.

Confucianism	
Daoism	
Legalism	

### FOCUS ON SPEAKING

- Exploring the Importance of Historical Figures**

Many important people in history are rulers or conquerors. People who think and teach, however, have also played major roles in history. How did thinkers and teachers shape China's history? Write some ideas in your notebook.

# The Qin Dynasty

## If YOU were there...

You are a scholar living in China in about 210 BC. You have a large library of Chinese literature, poetry, and philosophy. The new emperor is a harsh ruler with no love for learning. He says you must burn all the books that disagree with his ideas. The idea horrifies you. But if you do not obey, the punishment may be severe.

**Will you obey the order to burn your books?  
Why or why not?**

## What You Will Learn...

### Main Ideas

1. The first Qin emperor created a strong but strict government.
2. A unified China was created through Qin policies and achievements.

### The Big Idea

The Qin dynasty unified China with a strong government and a system of standardization.

## Key Terms and People

Shi Huangdi, *p. 172*

Great Wall, *p. 175*



Use the graphic organizer online to take notes on the achievements and policies of Shi Huangdi. Note how he affected life in China.

**BUILDING BACKGROUND** Different dynasties held very different ideas about how to rule. As the Zhou period declined, putting new ideas into effect brought great changes.

## The Qin Emperor's Strong Government

The Warring States period marked a time in China when several states battled each other for power. One state, the Qin (CHIN), built a strong army that defeated the armies of the rivaling states. Eventually, the Qin dynasty united the country under one government.

## Shi Huangdi Takes the Throne

In 221 BC, the Qin king Ying Zheng succeeded in unifying China. He gave himself the title **Shi Huangdi** (SHEE hwahng-dee), which means "first emperor." Shi Huangdi followed Legalist political beliefs. He created a strong government with strict laws and harsh punishments.

## Time Line

### The Qin Dynasty



## Qin Dynasty, c. 221–206 BC



ASIA

GOBI DESERT

Huang He (Yellow River)

QIN

SHU

CHENGDU

HAN

WU

CHU

WEI

ZHAO

QI

YAN

LUOYANG

XIANYANG

WU

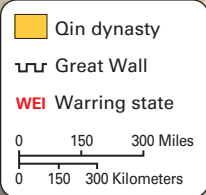
XI RIVER

Yellow Sea

PACIFIC OCEAN

East China Sea

South China Sea



### Emperor Shi Huangdi

QUICK FACTS

#### Policies

- Strong government with strict laws
- Standard laws, writing system, money, and weights throughout China

#### Achievements

- Unified China
- Built network of roads and canals
- Built irrigation system to improve farming
- Built the Great Wall across northern China

#### GEOGRAPHY SKILLS

#### INTERPRETING MAPS

**Location** Where was the Great Wall located during the Qin dynasty?

Shi Huangdi demanded that everyone follow his policies. He ordered the burning of all writings that did not agree with Legalism. The only other books that were saved dealt with farming, medicine, and predicting the future. Many scholars opposed the book burnings. The emperor responded to the opposition by burying 460 scholars alive.

Shi Huangdi also used his armies to expand the empire. First, they occupied the lands around both of China's major rivers. Then his soldiers turned north and advanced almost to the Gobi Desert. To the south, they invaded more lands and advanced as far as the Xi River.

Shi Huangdi ensured that there would not be any future revolts in his new territories. When his soldiers conquered a city, he had them destroy its walls and take all the weapons.

### China under the Qin

Shi Huangdi changed China's old political system. He claimed all the power and did not share it with the lords. He even took land away from them and forced thousands of nobles to move with their families to the capital so he could keep an eye on them. He also forced thousands of commoners to work on government building projects. Workers faced years of hardship, danger, and often, death.

To control China, Shi Huangdi divided it into districts, each with its own governor. Districts were subdivided into counties that were governed by appointed officials. This organization helped the emperor enforce his tax system. It also helped the Qin enforce a strict chain of command.

**READING CHECK Summarizing** How did Shi Huangdi strengthen the government?



## A Unified China

Qin rule brought other major changes to China. Under Shi Huangdi, new policies and achievements united the Chinese people.

### Qin Policies

As you read earlier, mountains and rivers divided China into distinct regions. Customs varied, and people in each area had their own money, writing styles, and laws. Shi Huangdi wanted all Chinese people to do things the same way.

Early in his reign, the emperor set up a uniform system of law. Rules and punishments were to be the same in all parts of the empire. Shi Huangdi also standardized

the written language. People everywhere were required to write using the same set of symbols. People from different regions could now communicate with each other in writing. This gave them a sense of shared culture and a common identity.

Next, the emperor set up a new money system. Standardized gold and copper coins became the currency used in all of China. Weights and measures were also standardized. Even the axle width of carts had to be the same. With all these changes and the unified writing system, trade between different regions became much easier. The Qin government strictly enforced these new standards. Any citizen who disobeyed the laws would face severe punishment.

#### FOCUS ON READING

How might you summarize the new Qin policies?

### Guardians of Shi Huangdi's Tomb

In 1974 archaeologists found the tomb of Emperor Shi Huangdi near Xi'an and made an amazing discovery. Buried close to the emperor was an army of more than 6,000 life-size terra-cotta, or clay, soldiers. They were designed to be with Shi Huangdi in the afterlife. In other nearby chambers of the tomb there were another 1,400 clay figures of cavalry and chariots.



## Qin Achievements

New, massive building projects also helped to unify the country. Under Shi Huangdi's rule, the Chinese built a network of roads that connected the capital to every part of the empire. These roads made travel easier for everyone. Each of these new roads was the same width, 50 paces wide. This design helped the army move quickly and easily to put down revolts in distant areas.

China's water system was also improved. Workers built canals to connect the country's rivers. Like the new roads, the canals improved transportation throughout the country. Using the new canals and rivers together made it easier and faster to ship goods from north to south. In addition, the

Qin built an irrigation system to make more land good for farming. Parts of that system are still in use today.

Shi Huangdi also wanted to protect the country from invasion. Nomads from the north were fierce warriors, and they were a real threat to China. Hoping to stop them from invading, the emperor built the **Great Wall**, a barrier that linked earlier walls across China's northern frontier. The first section of the wall had been built in the 600s BC to keep invading groups out of China. The Qin connected earlier pieces of the wall to form a long, unbroken structure. Building the wall required years of labor from hundreds of thousands of workers. Many of them died building the wall.

### THE IMPACT TODAY

The Great Wall is a major tourist attraction today.



Each terra-cotta soldier was different, with its own facial features, hairstyle, and unique expression. Here, a computer model shows what a soldier might have looked like when it was created.



### VIDEO

The First Emperor of China

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The Great Wall has been added to and rebuilt many times since Shi Huangdi ruled China.

### The Fall of the Qin

Shi Huangdi's policies unified China. However, his policies also stirred resentment. Many peasants, scholars, and nobles hated his harsh ways.

Still, Shi Huangdi was powerful enough to hold the country together. When he died in 210 BC China was unified, but that didn't last. Within a few years, the government began to fall apart.

Rebel forces formed across the country. Each claimed to have received the mandate of heaven to replace the emperor. One of these groups attacked the Qin capital, and the new emperor surrendered. The palace was burned to the ground. Qin authority had disappeared. With no central government, the country fell into civil war.

**READING CHECK** Recall What massive building projects did Shi Huangdi order to unify China?

**SUMMARY AND PREVIEW** Qin emperor Shi Huangdi's policies and achievements unified China, but his harsh rule led to resentment. After his death, the dynasty fell apart. In the next section you will learn about the Han dynasty that came to power after the end of the Qin.

## Section 3 Assessment



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ONLINE QUIZ

### Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and People

- a. Identify** What does the title **Shi Huangdi** mean?

**b. Explain** After unifying China, why did Shi Huangdi divide the country into military districts?

**c. Rate** Which of the following acts do you think best showed how powerful Shi Huangdi was—burning books, forcing nobles to move, or forcing commoners to work on government projects? Explain your answer.
- a. Recall** Why was the **Great Wall** built?

**b. Summarize** What actions did Shi Huangdi take to unify China and standardize things within the empire?

**c. Evaluate** In your opinion, was Shi Huangdi a good ruler? Explain your answer.

### Critical Thinking

- Evaluating** Using your notes and a diagram like this one, rank the effectiveness of the emperor's achievements and policies in unifying China.

Most important

Least important

1.

2.

3.

### FOCUS ON SPEAKING

- Evaluating Contributions to History** When evaluating a person's contribution to history, it is important to consider both the person's good impact and bad impact. In what ways was Shi Huangdi great? What negative impact did he have on China? Write down your ideas.



## Emperor Shi Huangdi

**If you were a powerful ruler, how would you protect yourself?**

**When did he live?** c. 259–210 BC

**Where did he live?** Shi Huangdi built a new capital city at Xianyang, now called Xi'an (SHEE-AHN), in eastern China.

**What did he do?** Shi Huangdi didn't trust people. Several attempts were made on his life, and the emperor lived in fear of more attacks. He was constantly seeking new ways to protect himself and extend his life. By the time Shi Huangdi died, he didn't even trust his own advisors. Even in death, he surrounded himself with protectors: the famous terra-cotta army.

**Why is he important?** Shi Huangdi was one of the most powerful rulers in Chinese history. The first ruler to unify all of China, he is also remembered for his building programs. He built roads and canals throughout China and expanded what would become the Great Wall.

**Drawing Conclusions** Why do you think Shi Huangdi feared for his life?

### KEY EVENTS

- **246 BC** Shi Huangdi becomes emperor. Because he is still young, a high official rules in his name.
- **238 BC** He exiles the official, whom he suspects of plotting against him, and rules alone.
- **227 BC** An assassination attempt adds fuel to the emperor's paranoia.
- **221 BC** Shi Huangdi unites all of China under his rule.

**H** VIDEO  
**HISTORY** Omens in Ancient China  
[hmhsocialstudies.com](http://hmhsocialstudies.com)

This painting shows Shi Huangdi's servants burning books and attacking scholars.



# The Han Dynasty

## What You Will Learn...

### Main Ideas

1. Han dynasty government was based on the ideas of Confucius.
2. Family life was supported and strengthened in Han China.
3. The Han made many achievements in art, literature, and learning.

### The Big Idea

The Han dynasty created a new form of government that valued family, art, and learning.

### Key Terms

sundial, p. 182  
seismograph, p. 182  
acupuncture, p. 183



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TAKING NOTES

Use the graphic organizer online to take notes on Han government, family life, and achievements.

## If YOU were there...

You are a young Chinese student from a poor family. Your family has worked hard to give you a good education so that you can get a government job and have a great future. Your friends laugh at you. They say that only boys from wealthy families win the good jobs. They think it is better to join the army.

## Will you take the exam or join the army? Why?

**BUILDING BACKGROUND** Though it was harsh, the rule of the first Qin emperor helped to unify northern China. With the building of the Great Wall, he strengthened defenses on the northern frontier. But his successor could not hold on to power. The Qin gave way to a remarkable new dynasty that would last for 400 years.

## Han Dynasty Government

When the Qin dynasty collapsed in 207 BC, several different groups battled for power. After several years of fighting, an army led by Liu Bang (lee-oo bang) won control. Liu Bang became the first emperor of the Han dynasty. This Chinese dynasty lasted for more than 400 years.

## The Rise of a New Dynasty

Liu Bang, a peasant, was able to become emperor in large part because of the Chinese belief in the mandate of heaven. He was the first common person to become emperor. He earned people's

## Time Line

### The Han Dynasty

**206 BC**

The Han dynasty begins.

**AD 220**

The Han dynasty falls.

**200 BC**

**BC 1 AD**

**AD 200**

**140 BC**

Wudi becomes emperor and tries to strengthen China's government.

**AD 25**

The Han move their capital east to Luoyang.

## Han Dynasty, c. 206 BC–AD 220



### GEOGRAPHY SKILLS INTERPRETING MAPS

**Region** What features marked the northern boundary of the Han dynasty?

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**ANIMATED HISTORY**

loyalty and trust. In addition, he was well liked by both soldiers and peasants, which helped him to maintain control.

Liu Bang's rule was different from the strict Legalism of the Qin. He wanted to free people from harsh government policies. He lowered taxes for farmers and made punishments less severe. He gave large blocks of land to his supporters.

In addition to setting new policies, Liu Bang changed the way government worked. He set up a government structure that built on the foundation begun by the Qin. He also relied on educated officials to help him rule.

### Wudi Creates a New Government

In 140 BC Emperor Wudi (woo-dee) took the throne. He wanted to create a stronger central government. To do that, he

took land from the lords, raised taxes, and placed the supply of grain under the control of the government.

Under Wudi, Confucianism became China's official government philosophy. Government officials were expected to practice Confucianism. Wudi even began a university to teach Confucian ideas.

If a person passed an exam on Confucian teachings, he could get a good position in the government. However, not just anyone could take the test. The exams were only open to people who had been recommended for government service already. As a result, wealthy or influential families continued to control the government.

**READING CHECK Analyzing** How was the Han government based on the ideas of Confucius?

## Family Life

The Han period was a time of great social change in China. Class structure became more rigid. The family once again became important within Chinese society.

## Social Classes

Based on the Confucian system, people were divided into four classes. The upper class was made up of the emperor, his court, and scholars who held government positions. The second class, the largest, was made up of the peasants. Next were artisans who produced items for daily life and some luxury goods. Merchants occupied the lowest class because they did not produce anything. They only bought and sold what others made. The military was not an official class in the Confucian system. Still, joining the army offered men a chance to rise in social status because the military was considered part of the government.



This Han artifact is an oil lamp held by a servant.

## Lives of Rich and Poor

The classes only divided people into social rank. They did not indicate wealth or power. For instance, even though peasants made up the second highest class, they were poor. On the other hand, some merchants were wealthy and powerful despite being in the lowest class.

People's lifestyles varied according to wealth. The emperor and his court lived in a large palace. Less important officials lived in multilevel houses built around courtyards. Many of these wealthy families owned large estates and employed laborers to work the land. Some families even hired private armies to defend their estates.

The wealthy filled their homes with expensive decorations. These included paintings, pottery, bronze lamps, and jade figures. Rich families hired musicians for entertainment. Even the tombs of dead family members were filled with beautiful, expensive objects.

Most people in the Han dynasty, however, didn't live like the wealthy. Nearly 60 million people lived in China during the Han dynasty, and about 90 percent of them were peasants who lived in the countryside. Peasants put in long, tiring days working the land. Whether it was in the millet fields of the north or in the rice paddies of the south, the work was hard. In the winter, peasants were also forced to work on building projects for the government. Heavy taxes and bad weather forced many farmers to sell their land and work for rich landowners. By the last years of the Han dynasty, only a few farmers were independent.

Chinese peasants lived simple lives. They wore plain clothing made of fiber from a native plant. The main foods they ate were cooked grains like barley. Most peasants lived in small villages. Their small, wood-framed houses had walls made of mud or stamped earth.



### The Importance of Family

Honoring one's family was an important duty in Han China. In this painting, people give thanks before their family shrine. Only the men participate. The women watch from inside the house.

*How are these people giving thanks?*

### The Revival of the Family

Since Confucianism was the official government philosophy during Wudi's reign, Confucian teachings about the family were also honored. Children were taught from birth to respect their elders. Disobeying one's parents was a crime. Even emperors had a duty to respect their parents.

Confucius had taught that the father was the head of the family. Within the family, the father had absolute power. The Han taught that it was a woman's duty to obey her husband, and children had to obey their father.

Han officials believed that if the family was strong and people obeyed the father, then people would obey the emperor, too. Since the Han stressed strong family ties and respect for elders, some men even gained government jobs based on the respect they showed their parents.

Children were encouraged to serve their parents. They were also expected to honor dead parents with ceremonies and offerings. All family members were expected to care for family burial sites.

Chinese parents valued boys more highly than girls. This was because sons carried on the family line and took care of their parents when they were old. On the other hand, daughters became part of their husband's family. According to a Chinese proverb, "Raising daughters is like raising children for another family." Some women, however, still gained power. They could actually influence their sons' families. An older widow could even become the head of the family.

#### READING CHECK Identifying Cause and Effect

Why did the family take on such importance during the Han dynasty?



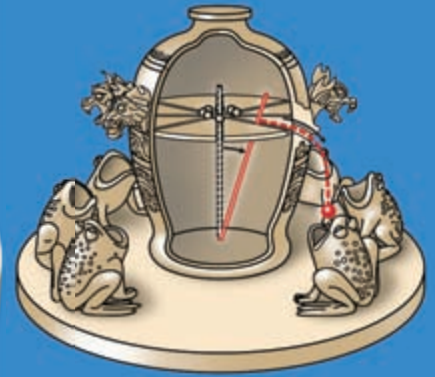
## Han Achievements

During the Han dynasty, the Chinese made many advances in art and learning. Some of these advances are shown here.



### Science

This is a model of an ancient Chinese seismograph. When an earthquake struck, a lever inside caused a ball to drop from a dragon's mouth into a toad's mouth, indicating the direction from which the earthquake had come.



## Han Achievements

Han rule was a time of great accomplishments. Art and literature thrived, and inventors developed many useful devices.

### Art and Literature

The Chinese of the Han period produced many works of art. They became experts at figure painting—a style of painting that includes portraits of people. Portraits often showed religious figures and Confucian scholars. Han artists also painted realistic scenes from everyday life. Their creations covered the walls of palaces and tombs.

In literature, Han China is known for its poetry. Poets developed new styles of verse, including the *fu* style which was the most popular. *Fu* poets combined prose and poetry to create long works of literature. Another style, called *shi*, featured short lines of verse that could be sung. Han rulers hired poets known for the beauty of their verse.

Han writers also produced important works of history. One historian by the name of Sima Qian wrote a complete history of all the dynasties through the early Han. His format and style became the model for later historical writings.

### Inventions and Advances

The Han Chinese invented one item that we use every day—paper. They made it by grinding plant fibers, such as mulberry bark and hemp, into a paste. Then they let it dry in sheets. Chinese scholars produced “books” by pasting several pieces of paper together into a long sheet. Then they rolled the sheet into a scroll.

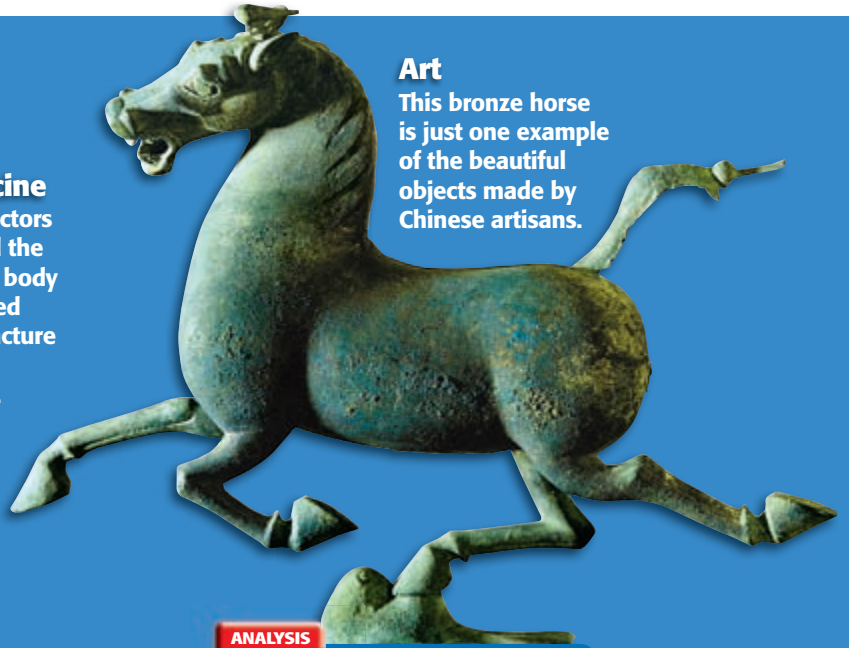
The Han also made other **innovations** in science. These included the sundial and the seismograph. **A sundial uses the position of shadows cast by the sun to tell the time of day.** The sundial was an early type of clock. **A seismograph is a device that measures the strength of an earthquake.** Han emperors were very interested

### ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

**innovation** a new idea, method, or device



**Medicine**  
Han doctors studied the human body and used acupuncture to heal people.



**Art**  
This bronze horse is just one example of the beautiful objects made by Chinese artisans.

**ANALYSIS SKILL** ANALYZING VISUALS

How do these objects show the range of accomplishments in Han China?

in knowing about the movements of the earth. They believed that earthquakes were signs of future evil events.

Another Han innovation, acupuncture (AK-yoo-punk-cher), improved medicine. **Acupuncture** is the practice of inserting fine needles through the skin at specific points to cure disease or relieve pain. Many Han inventions in science and medicine are still used today.

**READING CHECK** **Categorizing** What advances did the Chinese make during the Han period?

**SUMMARY AND PREVIEW** Han rulers moved away from Legalism and based their government on Confucianism. This strengthened family bonds in Han China. In addition, art and learning thrived under Han rule. In the next section you will learn about China's contact beyond its borders.

**Section 4 Assessment**

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**ONLINE QUIZ**

**Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and People**

- a. Identify** Whose teachings were the foundation for government during the Han dynasty?

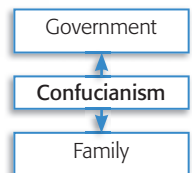
**b. Summarize** How did Emperor Wudi create a strong central government?

**c. Evaluate** Do you think that an exam system is the best way to make sure that people are fairly chosen for government jobs? Why or why not?
- a. Describe** What was the son's role in the family?

**b. Contrast** How did living conditions for the wealthy differ from those of the peasants during the Han dynasty?
- Identify** What device did the Chinese invent to measure the strength of earthquakes?

**Critical Thinking**

- Analyzing** Use your notes to complete this diagram about how Confucianism influenced Han government and family.



**FOCUS ON SPEAKING**

- Analyzing Impact on History** Sometimes a ruler has the biggest impact on history. Other times, ideas that develop within a society have a greater impact. Which had a greater impact on Han China? Why?

## from **The Shiji**

by **Sima Qian**

*Translated by Burton Watson*

### GUIDED READING

#### WORD HELP

**intervals** periods of time

**dispatched** sent

**envoy** representative

1 Henan (HUH-NAHN) is a region of eastern China. It is a productive agricultural region.

2 The Xiongnu were a tribe of nomads. They lived in the north and often raided towns near China's border.

3 *Why do you think the emperor invites Bu Shi to work for the government?*

**About the Reading** *The Shiji, also called the Records of the Grand Historian, is a history that describes more than two thousand years of Chinese culture. The author, Sima Qian (soo-MAH chee-EN), held the title Grand Historian under the Han emperor Wudi. He spent 18 years of his life writing the Shiji. His hard work paid off, and his history was well received. In fact, the Shiji was so respected that it served as the model for every later official history of China. This passage describes a man named Bu Shi, who attracted the emperor's attention through his generosity and good deeds. Eventually, the emperor invited him to live in the imperial palace.*

**AS YOU READ** Ask yourself why Sima Qian included Bu Shi in his history.

Bu Shi was a native of Henan, where his family made a living by farming and animal raising. 1 When his parents died, Bu Shi left home, handing over the house, the lands, and all the family wealth to his younger brother, who by this time was full grown. For his own share, he took only a hundred or so of the sheep they had been raising, which he led off into the mountains to pasture. In the course of ten years or so, Bu Shi's sheep had increased to over a thousand and he had bought his own house and fields. His younger brother in the meantime had failed completely in the management of the farm, but Bu Shi promptly handed over to him a share of his own wealth. This happened several times. Just at that time the Han was sending its generals at frequent intervals to attack the Xiongnu. 2 Bu Shi journeyed to the capital and submitted a letter to the throne, offering to turn over half of his wealth to the district officials to help in the defense of the border. The emperor dispatched an envoy to ask if Bu Shi wanted a post in the government. 3

"From the time I was a child," Bu Shi replied, "I have been an animal raiser. I have had no experience in government and would certainly not want such a position" . . .

## GUIDED READING

### WORD HELP

<b>objective</b>	goal
<b>chancellor</b>	high official
<b>accord</b>	agreement
<b>eccentric</b>	someone who acts strangely
<b>populace</b>	people
<b>tutor</b>	private teacher

“If that is the case,” said the envoy, “then what is your objective in making this offer?”

Bu Shi replied, “The Son of Heaven has sent out to punish the Xiongnu. **4** In my humble opinion, every worthy man should be willing to fight to the death to defend the borders, and every person with wealth ought to contribute to the expense . . .”

The emperor discussed the matter with the chancellor, but the latter said, “The proposal is simply not in accord with human nature! **5** Such eccentric people are of no use in guiding the populace, but only throw the laws into confusion. I beg Your Majesty not to accept his offer!”

For this reason the emperor put off answering Bu Shi for a long time, and finally after several years had passed, turned down the offer, whereupon Bu Shi went back to his fields and pastures . . .

The following year a number of poor people were transferred to other regions . . . At this point Bu Shi took two hundred thousand cash of his own and turned the sum over to the governor of Henan to assist the people who were emigrating to other regions . . . At this time the rich families were all scrambling to hide their wealth; only Bu Shi, unlike the others, had offered to contribute to the expenses of the government. **6** The emperor decided that Bu Shi was really a man of exceptional worth after all . . . Because of his simple, unspoiled ways and his deep loyalty, the emperor finally appointed him grand tutor to his son Liu Hong, the king of Qi.

**4** The Chinese people believed that their emperor was the “Son of Heaven.” They thought he received his power from heavenly ancestors.

**5** The “latter” means the one mentioned last. In this case, the latter is the chancellor.

**6** *What is Bu Shi’s attitude toward his wealth? How is it different from the attitude of the rich families?*



In this painting from the 1600s, government officials deliver a letter.

## CONNECTING LITERATURE TO HISTORY

- 1. Drawing Conclusions** Like many Chinese historians, Sima Qian wanted to use history to teach lessons. What lessons could the story of Bu Shi be used to teach?
- 2. Analyzing** The Emperor Wudi based his government on the teachings of Confucius. What elements of Confucianism can you see in this story?