Ancient China

The Qin and Han Dynasties

Military Stamp/Seal
Qin Shi Huangdi

- 246 BCE - Warring States Period
- Zhou Dynasty has almost no power in China
- Qin Shi Huangdi comes to power in 246 BCE as king of state of Qin
  - Conquers other Warring States in 25 years
    - Had been fighting for over 200 years!
Qin Dynasty

- Qin Shi Huangdi unites all states into 1 empire in 221 BCE
  - First time China is united as an Empire
- Sets up a very strong government
  - Huangdi is a firm believer in Legalism
  - Very strict laws and harsh punishments
- Many achievements during this time
  - This is when the first Great Wall of China is started
  - Network of roads and canals
  - Unified language, laws, and currency
Qin Dynasty, c. 221–206 BC

Emperor Shi Huangdi

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

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

Qin dynasty

Great Wall

Warring state

0 150 300 Miles

0 150 300 Kilometers

Huang He (Yellow River)

Gobi Desert

Qin

Shu

Chengdu

Wei

Xianyang

Zhao

Chang Jiang (Yangzi River)

Qin dynasty

Great Wall

Warring state

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0 150 300 Kilometers

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Fall of Qin Dynasty

- Qin Shi Huangdi dies in 210 BCE
  - Drinks a potion meant to make him immortal
    - Ends up killing him
- Second son takes over empire
- Revolt against the Dynasty takes place
  - Qin Dynasty overthrown in 206 BCE
- The country falls into Civil War (again)
Tomb of Qin Shi Huangdi

• Qin Shi Huangdi is buried in elaborate tomb
  – Protected by the Terracotta Army
  – Large map of China
  – Money and gemstones everywhere
  – Buried with those who worked on the tomb
    • They were buried alive
    • With all of Huangdi’s childless wives
The Rise of a New Dynasty

• Liu Bang became emperor in 206 BCE following the fall of the Qin Dynasty
  – Was a peasant in the Rebel Army
  – Became Emperor because of Mandate of Heaven

• Liu Bang was the first emperor of the Han dynasty
  – First emperor to start as a common person
The Rise of a New Dynasty

• One of Liu Bang’s first acts was to eliminate Legalism
  – People greatly respected him for this
• Liu Bang lowered taxes, gave large plots of land to supporters, and set up a government that expanded on the ideas of the Qin.
Wudi’s New Government

- **140 BCE** - Emperor Wudi becomes emperor
  - 5th emperor of Han Dynasty
  - Became the most powerful emperor of Han Dynasty

- Wudi was a firm believer in Confucianism
  - Confucianism became the official government philosophy
  - Built a university that taught Confucian ideals
  - Rewarded his officials with higher rank if they were familiar with Confucian principles
Emperor Wudi

- Wudi spent much of his time as emperor expanding the Chinese empire
- Wudi raised taxes and expanded trade in order gain money for his constant warfare
- Wudi started trading for Central Asian horses to use them in war
  - He traded silk for horses
  - This is the first version of the Silk Road
Han Dynasty

Han Dynasty, c. 206 BC–AD 220

Region: What features marked the northern boundary of the Han dynasty?
Han Dynasty Social Classes

• Upper Class:
  – The Emperor, his court, and his scholars

• Second Class:
  – The peasants, who farmed on a daily basis

• Third Class:
  – The artisans, who made goods

• Fourth Class:
  – The merchants, who bought and sold what others made
Family Life

• People were taught to respect their elders

• The more respect you gave to elders, the higher you climbed in society

• Rulers:
  – It was a crime to disobey a ruler

• Men:
  – Men were head of the household

• Women:
  – Women were taught to obey their husbands
Han Achievements

• **Art:**
  – The Han artists made many realistic scenes from everyday life, and very realistic figures.

• **Invention of Paper:**
  – The Han made paper by grinding plant fibers into a paste and then setting the paste out to dry in sheets. Later they rolled the dried pulp into scrolls.

• **Sundial:**
  – A device for telling time, using the sun.
Han Achievements

- **Seismograph:** This device measures the strength of an earthquake.

- **Acupuncture:** Acupuncture is the practice of inserting needles into the skin to cure disease or relieve pain. This practice is still widely used today.
New Technology

• Farming and manufacturing expand a lot
  – The Iron Plow was created, which helped in farming
  – The wheelbarrow was able to haul more products
  – Iron swords were invented along with Iron Armor
  – Silk was manufactured at a much higher rate
    • Silk – a light, highly valued fabric