



Local District South Students:

We hope that you are adjusting to the difficult situation we all find ourselves in and that you are taking time to rest, care for yourself and those you love, and do something everyday to lift your spirits. We want you to know that you are missed and that we have been working hard to develop ways to support you.

We want to stay connected with you and provide you with opportunities to learn while you are at home. We hope that you find these activities interesting and that they provide you with something to look forward to over the course of the next week.

Stay home; stay healthy; stay safe. We cannot wait until we see you again.

Sincerely,

The Local District South Instructional Team and your school family

History, Grade 6

Week 3 Take Home Packet



Student Name_____

School_____ Teacher_____

Students:

Each of the Social Science Learning Opportunities Packet was developed based on a portion of the standards framework. The mini-unit you will be working on this week, is based on these questions from the framework:

- What factors helped China unify into a single state under the Han Dynasty?
- What social customs and government policies made the centralized state so powerful?

We encourage you to engage in the Extended Learning Opportunity if you are able.

Over the course of the next week, please do the activities listed for each day.

Week 3, Day 1

1. Read, "Ancient China: Society and Class Divisions" and annotate using the annotation bookmark.
2. Answer the quiz questions.
3. Write a response to this prompt: Describe what life would be like for a peasant in ancient China. How does social class impact the type of life people live?

Week, 3, Day 2

1. Read, "The Cultural Heights of China's Han Dynasty" and annotate using the annotation bookmark.
2. Answer the quiz questions.
3. Write a response to the prompt: Explain the changes the Han Dynasty made once they were in a position of power. How did their rule come to an end? Support your answer with details from the text.

Week 3, Day 3

1. Read: "Chinese Civilization: Understanding the Mandate of Heaven" and annotate using the annotation bookmark.
2. Answer the quiz questions.
3. Write a response to this prompt: How did the Mandate of Heaven govern the way a leader ruled? How did signs from heaven prove how a leader was doing their job? Cite evidence from the text to support your answer.

Week 3, Day 4

1. Read, "The Fall of the Han Dynasty" and annotate using the annotation bookmark.
2. Answer the quiz questions
3. Write a response to the prompt: Imagine you are asked to do a presentation for the class about the importance and downfall of the Han Dynasty. Write notes in your own words of the important points you want to include in your presentation from the article. Why is it important to use reliable sources but also write them in your own words?

Week 3, Extended Learning Opportunity

Use your notes from "The Fall of the Han Dynasty" to create a Google Slides, PowerPoint Presentation, draw a storyboard on the importance and downfall of the Han Dynasty.

Annotation Bookmark

While *reading*, annotate your text with the symbols below. Make notes in the margins of your text.



A Box

Box vocabulary words that are repeated, important, or unknown. *(Write the definition.)*



A Star

That's interesting or important. *(Write your thoughts.)*



1 Question Mark

I have a question. *(Write the question.)*



2 Question Marks

That's confusing. I don't get it. *(Write your thoughts.)*



Plus Sign

I can make a connection. *(Write your thoughts.)*



A Spiral

I can make a prediction. *(Write your prediction.)*



A Check Mark

I agree with this statement.



An Exclamation Mark

That's surprising!

Ancient China: Society and Class Divisions

By Ancient History Encyclopedia on 07.27.17

Word Count **750**

Level **960L**



People in ancient China discovered how to produce silk very early on from the cocoons of mulberry silkworms. Wearing the precious material was a clear sign of wealth and social status. Image from Wikimedia.

Daily life in ancient China changed through the centuries. Still, the Chinese maintained a belief in the gods and their ancestors during almost every time period. Chinese civilization began in about 5000 B.C., about 7,000 years ago, in the Yellow River Valley in northern China. In one of these early villages, called Banpo, archaeological evidence shows that women ruled and were in charge of religious life.

Small villages like Banpo grew into larger communities and then into cities. The Xia Dynasty was the first government in China that built large cities. The Xia family of kings lasted from 2070 to 1600 B.C.

After the Xia came the Shang Dynasty, which lasted 1600 to 1046 B.C. Writing was developed during this time period. During the Shang Dynasty, the first written evidence showed what life was like for people in ancient China.

Social class, clothing and adornments

Silk is thought to have been invented about 2696 B.C. The ancient Chinese believed it was discovered by the goddess Leizu, wife of the supreme god Shangti. She was having tea when a cocoon fell into her cup, and as it unraveled, she saw it was made from one, long thread of silk. Leizu planted mulberry trees for silkworms to eat. The nobles and royalty were the only people who could wear silk. Even those who made silk clothing and sold it could not wear silk. Most of the population of China wore clothing made of hemp.

A person's social class was determined, more or less, by birth. If one's father was a peasant, one would also be a peasant. The division between the ruling class, nobles, merchants and the working class peasants became even wider with the invention of writing. There was an upper class who could read and a peasant population who could not. From the Shang Dynasty on, though, a person could improve their station in life by passing the Imperial Examinations, a very difficult test which let them work for the government and move up to a higher class.

There are many differences among the classes

Distinctions between the classes in ancient times were also seen in hair styles and other personal choices. Men and women of all classes wore their hair long. They thought that one's hair came from one's ancestors and it was disrespectful to cut it. Just like the hair, the body was thought to be a gift from one's ancestors and should be treated well. For this reason, most people looked down on those with tattoos.

Both men and women of the upper classes grew their fingernails long to show that they did not have to work. They had servants do everything for them, even feed them, so they would not damage their nails.

The period known as the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms lasted from 907 to 960 A.D. The practice of foot binding began during this time period. The idea developed that beautiful women should have tiny feet.

Girls as young as toddlers would have their feet wrapped in bandages so tightly it broke their toes. Girls were in constant pain for years. Although this practice started among the upper classes, it soon became common for all women in China. Foot binding made working in the rice fields or doing any kind of manual labor very difficult. It was outlawed in 1911. Many women described crying from the pain for years, and said it never made them feel any more beautiful.

Education and health care

Only males received an education in ancient China. Girls were expected to stay home and learn how to be housewives and mothers. Confucius was a teacher and philosopher who lived around 500 B.C. He created the basics of Chinese education. Everyone was expected to know the Five Virtues of Confucius by heart. The Li, or manners, considered the most important were Ren (kindness), Xin (loyalty), Yi (honesty), and Zhi (knowing the difference between right and wrong). In 105 B.C., paper was invented. During the Tang Dynasty, which lasted from 618 A.D. to 907 A.D., woodblock printing made it possible to produce many copies of books. Before, each book had to be copied by hand.

Doctors were also all males by the time of the Tang Dynasty, although herbalists in rural areas could be women. Most doctors were priests or had a background in religious practices.

After Buddhism arrived in China, Buddhist priests ran facilities. These were a combination of hospitals, clinics, orphanages, retirement homes, and counseling centers.

Quiz

1 Read one reader's conclusion.

Ancient Chinese standards of beauty involved harmful practices that disabled women.

Which sentence from the article offers the BEST support for the conclusion above?

- (A) They thought that one's hair came from one's ancestors and it was disrespectful to cut it.
- (B) Both men and women of the upper classes grew their fingernails long to show that they did not have to work.
- (C) Foot binding made working in the rice fields or doing any kind of manual labor very difficult.
- (D) Girls were expected to stay home and learn how to be housewives and mothers.

2 Which selection from the article BEST supports the idea that over time, some barriers between social classes could be broken?

- (A) In one of these early villages, called Banpo, archaeological evidence shows that women ruled and were in charge of religious life.
- (B) A person's social class was determined, more or less, by birth. If one's father was a peasant, one would also be a peasant.
- (C) From the Shang Dynasty on, though, a person could improve their station in life by passing the Imperial Examinations, a very difficult test which let them work for the government and move up to a higher class.
- (D) Doctors were also all males by the time of the Tang Dynasty, although herbalists in rural areas could be women.

3 Read the section "Education and health care."

What does this section show that other sections do NOT?

- (A) the first mention of ancient Chinese beliefs or religion
- (B) the values at the center of Chinese philosophy and education
- (C) how men and women were treated differently in ancient China
- (D) how writing was first developed in ancient China

4 Read the introduction [paragraphs 1-3].

What is the BEST way to describe the structure of this section?

- (A) a persuasive argument
- (B) a chronological account
- (C) a different perspective
- (D) a detailed narrative

The Cultural Heights of China's Han Dynasty

By UShistory.org, adapted by Newsela staff on 06.28.17

Word Count **822**

Level **950L**



Illustration of the construction of the Great Wall of China. During the Han Dynasty, the construction of the Great Wall continued. Photo from Wikimedia.

The Han dynasty will always be remembered for connecting Europe and Asia through the well-traveled Silk Road. Ideas such as Buddhism were exchanged as freely as silk and spices with lands as far west as India and the Roman Empire.

China's most famous landmark, the Great Wall, was built primarily during the Han period. Its walls protected the Chinese people from foreign invasions throughout the centuries.

Before the Han

The Shang dynasty fell in 1111 B.C. It was replaced by the dynasties of the Zhou (1111 to 221 B.C.) and the Qin (221 to 206 B.C.). They continued the great advances made by the early Chinese. Building skills improved and the use of iron became common.

However, during these dynasties, there was also a lack of unity. Feudalism became popular during the Zhou dynasty. This was a system in which the king shared his power with the area's lords. In return, the lords paid the king for their lands and titles. As the Zhou dynasty weakened, lords

fought among themselves. This Warring States period (403-221 B.C.) only ended when all of northern China was united under the Qin.

The Qin made necessary changes, but they were harsh leaders. They supported the idea of Legalism. This system taught that people could not be trusted and that society only worked well with strict laws and severe punishments. After only 15 years, the Qin dynasty fell, replaced by the Han. They took control over nearby states and established one of the most successful periods in Chinese history starting in 202 B.C.

The rise of the Han

The Han dynasty restored lords to their positions of power. China prospered in peace once again. Paper and porcelain were invented during the Han dynasty, as was the wheelbarrow. Legend says that paper was first created in A.D. 105, but archaeological evidence suggests that it was in use up to 200 years earlier. In comparison, paper was not widely used in Europe until more than 1,000 years later.

The major achievements of the early Han dynasty revolve around Wu Ti. The people believed he had the "Mandate of Heaven." The Chinese believed the gods sent signs of approval or disapproval about emperors. Good times meant an emperor had the Heavenly Mandate. Bad times — marked by things like natural disasters — meant the gods were unhappy with an emperor. An emperor who people believed lost the Heavenly Mandate was usually overthrown.

Wu Ti reigned for 54 years, from 140 to 87 B.C. He expanded the borders in many ways, but it was his westward expansion that most influenced the Han Empire.

Stories of capture

Wu Ti had heard rumors of powerful and wealthy lands to the west. In 138 B.C., the emperor sent the explorer Chang Ch'ien with a party of 100 men westward. Thirteen years later, Chang Ch'ien returned with only one of his original men, telling stories of capture and imprisonment. He did not succeed in reaching the lands of Persia, Arabia or the Roman Empire, but Chang Ch'ien did learn about them.

Wu Ti sent Chang Ch'ien to central Asia again a few years later. Chang Ch'ien's journeys began the trade route later called the Silk Road. Goods such as ivory, glass, wool and precious metals were imported into China along the Silk Road. In return, China sent furs, spices, jade, iron and bronze objects west. Foreign lands also received silk. Few outside China had seen silk. By the first century A.D., silk clothing became an obsession for Roman citizens.

Another brick in the Great Wall

Arguably the greatest achievement in all of Chinese history continued during the Han dynasty. That was the building of the Great Wall of China. Originally begun during the Qin dynasty, Wu Ti restored the wall. He continued it another 300 miles into the Gobi Desert. The Great Wall is now regarded as one of the wonders of the world, but it came at a high price. At the height of its construction, 1 mile of the wall was created each day, at an average cost of 10 lives per mile.



Highs and lows

Acupuncture, the piercing of needles into the skin, became popular in the second century as a treatment for common illnesses. Herbal medicine did as well. The Han also studied astronomy. They created atlases showing the shapes of 29 different types of comets as well as the accurate positions of Venus, Jupiter and Saturn.

The Han dynasty lasted for well over 400 years. But by the beginning of the third century, corruption and other problems began to take a toll. The Han dynasty of China finally lost its Heavenly Mandate in A.D. 220. This kicked off nearly 400 years of political chaos.



Quiz

1 Which paragraph in the section "The rise of the Han" supports the idea that technology improved during the Han dynasty?

2 Which sentence from the section "Stories of capture" BEST describes a major accomplishment of the Han dynasty?

- (A) In 138 B.C., the emperor sent the explorer Chang Ch'ien with a party of 100 men westward.
- (B) He did not succeed in reaching the lands of Persia, Arabia or the Roman Empire, but Chang Ch'ien did learn about them.
- (C) Chang Ch'ien's journeys began the trade route later called the Silk Road.
- (D) By the first century A.D., silk clothing became an obsession for Roman citizens.

3 Read the section "Another brick in the Great Wall."

Arguably the greatest achievement in all of Chinese history continued during the Han dynasty. That was the building of the Great Wall of China. Originally begun during the Ch'in dynasty, Wu Ti restored the wall. He continued it another 300 miles into the Gobi Desert. The Great Wall is now regarded as one of the wonders of the world, but it came at a high price. At the height of its construction, 1 mile of the wall was created each day, at an average cost of 10 lives per mile.

What purpose does the following sentence in the section serve?

The Great Wall is now regarded as one of the wonders of the world, but it came at a high price.

- (A) It indicates a transition in contrast to the previous sentences.
- (B) It offers a solution to the problems presented in the previous sentences.
- (C) It explains the consequences of the decisions mentioned in the previous sentences.
- (D) It provides a summary of the previous sentences.

4 Read the paragraph from the section "Before the Han."

However, during these dynasties, there was also a lack of unity. Feudalism became popular during the Zhou dynasty. This was a system in which the king shared his power with the area's lords. In return, the lords paid the king for their lands and titles. As the Zhou dynasty weakened, lords fought among themselves. This Warring States period (403-221 B.C.) only ended when all of northern China was united under the Qin.

HOW does the paragraph MOST contribute to the article?

- (A) It explains how feudalism worked during the Zhou dynasty.
- (B) It shows that China was divided before the Han dynasty.
- (C) It describes the accomplishments of the Zhou and Qin dynasties.
- (D) It illustrates how the Warring States period began.

Ascenso y caída de la dinastía Han, de China

By UShistory.org, adaptado por la redacción de Newsela on 07.11.17

Word Count **1,175**

Level **1010L**



Ilustración de la construcción de la Gran Muralla china, la cual continuó durante la dinastía Han. Fotografía de: Wikimedia

El reinado Han siempre será recordado por abrirse al mundo occidental a través del uso de la Ruta de la Seda. Las ideas como el budismo fueron intercambiadas tan libremente como la seda y las especias con territorios tan lejanos hacia el oeste como la India y el Imperio romano.

El monumento más emblemático de China, la Gran Muralla, fue construido fundamentalmente durante el período Han. Durante siglos, sus paredes de barro protegieron al pueblo chino de invasiones extranjeras.

Antes de los Han

Tras la caída del reinado Shang en el año 1111 a. C., los reinados subsiguientes de los Chou (1111-221 a. C.) y los Ch'in (221-206 a. C.) continuaron los grandes adelantos hechos por los primeros chinos. Se mejoraron las técnicas de construcción y se adoptó el uso del hierro. Se utilizó un sistema de tecnología hidráulica, o de energía producida por la fuerza del agua, para profundizar los cauces de los ríos, lo que redujo el número de inundaciones que destruían las tierras de cultivo y ponían las vidas en peligro.

Aunque los Ch'in crearon el cambio necesario en el gobierno de China, fueron líderes severos. Ellos apoyaban la idea del legalismo, el cual enseñaba que no se podía confiar en la naturaleza humana, y que la sociedad solamente podía ser exitosa con leyes estrictas y castigos severos. Después de solo 15 años, el reinado Ch'in colapsó y fue reemplazado por Liu Pang, de los Han. Fue él quien obtuvo el control de los estados fronterizos y estableció uno de los períodos más exitosos en la historia china, el reinado Han, en el 202 a. C.

El reinado Han restauró inmediatamente a los señores feudales en sus posiciones de poder y el pueblo chino prosperó en paz una vez más. El papel y la porcelana se inventaron durante el reinado Han, así como la carretilla. La leyenda establece que el papel fue creado primero en el año 105 d. C., pero la evidencia arqueológica sugiere que ya se usaba hasta 200 años antes. En comparación, el papel no circuló ampliamente en Occidente hasta el año 1150 d. C., más de 1.000 años después.

This map illustrates the Han Dynasty's vast empire, which encompassed much of modern-day China and parts of Central Asia. The core of the empire was the **Dinastía china Han**, with the capital at Chang'an. The empire was divided into several administrative regions, including **Tribus tibetanas** in the northwest, **Tribus Xianbei** in the north, and **Tribus Xiongnu del norte** and **Xiongnu del sur** in the north and northeast. The Han Dynasty also controlled **Magadha** in the south, **Kalinga** (Maoela) in the southwest, and **Satavajanas** (Dinastía Andhra) in the south. The Han Dynasty's influence extended to the **Reino Lam Ap** in the south and **Funan** in the southeast. The Han Dynasty's territory was bordered by the **Wuhuan** and **Buyeo** in the north, and the **Goguryeo** and **Silla** in the northeast. The Han Dynasty's control over the **Yue** and **Manchu** peoples is also indicated. The map shows the Han Dynasty's expansion into the **Yue** and **Manchu** regions, and its control over the **Yue** and **Manchu** peoples. The Han Dynasty's influence extended to the **Yue** and **Manchu** regions, and its control over the **Yue** and **Manchu** peoples is also indicated.

El "Shiji"

Wu Ti volvió a enviar a Chang Ch'ien al Asia central unos años más tarde, esta vez para hacer alianzas usando regalos de ganado, oro y seda. El historiador principal de Wu Ti, Ssu-ma Ch'ien,

conservó luego un registro de esos viajes en su obra llamada "Shiji" ("Los archivos del historiador"), que cuenta la historia de China desde el reinado Xia hasta el reinado de Wu Ti.

Con los viajes de Chang Ch'ien, se inició el uso extendido de la ruta comercial conocida como la Ruta de la Seda. Llegó tan lejos hacia Occidente como el Mar Caspio, y las mercancías tales como el marfil, el vidrio, la lana, los tapices, las frutas y los vegetales raros, los metales y las piedras preciosas, incluso animales como los elefantes y los leones fueron importados a China a través de la Ruta de la Seda. A cambio de esto, los chinos enviaron pieles, especias, jade, hierro y objetos de cerámica y bronce a otras tierras occidentales. Estos países recibían la muy solicitada seda. Para el siglo I (1) d. C., la ropa de seda se convirtió en la moda y la obsesión de los ciudadanos romanos.

Otro ladrillo en la Gran Muralla

Se puede decir que el mayor logro en toda la historia china continuó durante el reinado Han: la construcción de la Gran Muralla de China. Comenzada originalmente durante el reinado Ch'in, Wu Ti restauró la muralla y la continuó por 300 millas más hasta el desierto de Gobi, para que sirviera como protección contra los ataques del Asia central. La Gran Muralla se considera hoy como una de las maravillas del mundo, pero tuvo un alto precio. Durante el período más álgido de su construcción, cada día se creaba una milla de pared, lo que en promedio costaba 10 vidas por milla.

Altas y bajas

La acupuntura, o las perforaciones de agujas en la piel, y la medicina herbaria se volvieron famosas en el siglo II (2) como tratamiento para enfermedades comunes. Los Han también estudiaron temas de astronomía. Ellos creían que los cometas, los eclipses y otros sucesos celestes inusuales eran signos de mala suerte que podían usarse para predecir desastres futuros. Crearon mapas que representaban las formas de 29 tipos diferentes de cometas, así como las posiciones precisas de Venus, Júpiter y Saturno.

![Una carta de acupuntura china del siglo XVII (17). Foto de Wikimedia.]
(https://media.newsela.com/article_media/extra/ChineseAccupuncture1.jpg)

El reinado Han duró más de 400 años. Pero a inicios del siglo III (3) d. C., la corrupción en el Gobierno comenzó a pasar factura. Esta corrupción se combinó con las luchas políticas y el aumento de la población, lo que hizo que fuera imposible tener una China unida. El reinado chino de Han finalmente perdió su Mandato del Cielo en el año 220 d. C., cuando se dio inicio a casi 400 años de caos político.

Quiz

- 1 ¿Cuál de las siguientes opciones es la que MEJOR respalda la idea de que China abrió las puertas para que el resto del mundo conociera otras creencias religiosas?
- (A) Las ideas como el budismo fueron intercambiadas tan libremente como la seda y las especias con territorios tan lejanos hacia el oeste como la India y el Imperio romano.
 - (B) Los logros más importantes del primer reinado Han giran alrededor del emperador que reinó bajo el Mandato del Cielo, Wu Ti, o Wudi.
 - (C) Según el mandato, los emperadores estaban bajo las órdenes del cielo. Su éxito se basaba en la opinión de los dioses.
 - (D) Si los dioses ya no estaban contentos con el gobierno de un emperador, se creía que se enviarían señales al pueblo chino, usualmente en forma de desastres naturales.

- 2 ¿Cuál de los siguientes extractos informativos es el que MEJOR explica la razón por la cual China logró superar los problemas que afectaron la tranquilidad de sus habitantes?
- (A) Tras la caída del reinado Shang en el año 1111 a. C., los reinados subsiguientes de los Chou (1111-221 a. C.) y los Ch'in (221-206 a. C.) continuaron los grandes adelantos hechos por los primeros chinos.
 - (B) Ellos apoyaban la idea del legalismo, el cual enseñaba que no se podía confiar en la naturaleza humana, y que la sociedad solamente podía ser exitosa con leyes estrictas y castigos severos.
 - (C) El reinado Han restauró inmediatamente a los señores feudales en sus posiciones de poder y el pueblo chino prosperó en paz una vez más.
 - (D) Aunque no pudo alcanzar las tierras de Persia, Arabia o el Imperio romano, Chang Ch'ien sí aprendió mucho sobre ellos.

- 3 Lea la siguiente oración del artículo.

Durante el período más álgido de su construcción, cada día se creaba una milla de pared, lo que en promedio costaba 10 vidas por milla.

¿Cuál será el motivo principal por el cual se incluye información sobre las millas que se construían diariamente?

- (A) Para demostrar la gran capacidad de trabajo que tenían los chinos.
- (B) Para dar a entender que se trató de una construcción que no se realizó con el rigor que debía hacerse.
- (C) Para señalar las razones por las cuales la Gran Muralla es tan importante hoy en día.
- (D) Para explicar por qué tantas personas murieron ante un proyecto tan demandante.

- 4 Lea los siguientes fragmentos del artículo.

¿Cuál de ellos constituye un giro o una transición fundamental en el desarrollo del artículo?

- (A) El reinado Han siempre será recordado por abrirse al mundo occidental a través del uso de la Ruta de la Seda. Las ideas como el budismo fueron intercambiadas tan libremente como la seda y las especias con territorios tan lejanos hacia el oeste como la India y el Imperio romano.
- (B) El monumento más emblemático de China, la Gran Muralla, fue construido fundamentalmente durante el período Han. Durante siglos, sus paredes de barro protegieron al pueblo chino de invasiones extranjeras.
- (C) Después de solo 15 años, el reinado Ch'in colapsó y fue reemplazado por Liu Pang, de los Han. Fue él quien obtuvo el control de los estados fronterizos y estableció uno de los períodos más exitosos en la historia china, el reinado Han, en el 202 a. C.
- (D) Esta corrupción se combinó con las luchas políticas y el aumento de la población, lo que hizo que fuera imposible tener una China unida. El reinado chino de Han finalmente perdió su Mandato del Cielo en el año 220 d. C., cuando se dio inicio a casi 400 años de caos político.

Chinese Civilization: Understanding the Mandate of Heaven

By Ancient History Encyclopedia, adapted by Newsela staff on 08.09.17

Word Count **997**

Level **1060L**



Performers reenact a traditional Qing Dynasty ceremony, in which the emperors prayed for good fortune, at the Temple of Heaven in Beijing, China, on February 14, 2015, as part of Chinese Lunar New Year festivities. Photo by: STR/AFP/Getty Images

The people of ancient China believed there was a supreme powerful god, known as Heaven or Sky. When a new king or emperor of China came to power, they believed that they had special permission from Heaven to rule people on Earth. This is known as the Mandate of Heaven.

Although the ruler had been given great power, he also had a responsibility to do good for his people. If he did not, his land would suffer terrible disasters and he would lose the right to govern.

Wen and the responsibility of rule

The first Chinese ruler to claim he had been chosen by Heaven to rule was King Wen. He ruled the Zhou, a feudal state in the Wei River Valley of China. In Chinese feudalism, the emperor gave some of his land to the area's nobles. In return, the nobles were expected to serve the emperor for life. The nobles relied on the commoners, who had neither land nor power. These commoners were peasants, servants, artisans and slaves.

At this time, the Chinese had a well-established tradition of worshipping their ancestors. Building from this tradition, Wen was known as "Son of Heaven," as were all the kings after him. He was considered the head of the royal family, the state, the courts and religious leadership.

One night in the year 1059 B.C., five major planets aligned in the night sky. This was said to be a sign from the heavens that Wen should be the divine ruler. When Wen and his successors died, it was thought that they rose to Heaven and served at court there. Soon, rulers and emperors were treated with awe by any person lucky enough to even touch them.

Wen had a long, peaceful reign during the 11th century B.C. His governing choices were seen as good for all people, and he became a model for many later kings, emperors, politicians and historians. His reign also stood in strong contrast to the corruption of the previous king of Zhou.

The concept of the Mandate of Heaven has roots in Confucianism, a major religious and philosophical movement that emerged in China around 2,500 years ago. The Confucian author Mencius and others looked up to Wen as the great example of a ruler whose every decision was based on the best interests of his people. Wen even shared parts of his palace with common people. Mencius believed that the ruler must at all times be guided by the principle of benevolence, or jen. He is both the mother and father of the people.

If China were hit by a flood and drought, this was seen as a sign from Heaven that the ruler was doing something wrong. In this instance, Mencius considered it appropriate for the people to overthrow their ruler, or at least to show their disapproval through rebellion and protest.

Wen built up so much goodwill and trust, ancient Chinese historians believed, that it made it possible for the next king, Wu Wang, to finally conquer the powerful Shang Dynasty. The Shang had ruled China for centuries.

Afterward, Wu Wang would establish the long-lasting Zhou Dynasty. In his Announcement of Shao, the Duke of Zhou described the Mandate of Heaven. He explained that his new ruler was called to control Shang and that the king would rule fairly over them:

"Heaven has rejected and ended the Mandate of this great state of Shang. Thus, although Shang has many former wise kings in Heaven, when their successor kings and successor people undertook their Mandate, in the end wise and good men lived in misery ...

"Look at the former peoples of ancient times, the Xia. Heaven guided, indulged and cherished them, so that they would strive to understand what Heaven favors, but by this time they have let their Mandate fall to the ground. Now look at the Shang; Heaven guided them, stayed near them, nourished them, so that they would strive to comprehend what Heaven favors; but now they have let their Mandate fall to the ground."

According to the Duke, the Xia and Shang rulers no longer had the approval of Heaven because they were poor leaders who misbehaved.

The Zhou rulers who followed Wen's reign were aware that if they did not rule well, then they too could lose the Mandate of Heaven. If that happened, they would no doubt be conquered by a more virtuous enemy state. If they ruled well, then they were chosen by heaven to conquer the very same rival states.

The evolution of the mandate

During China's Warring States period, there was a lack of unity, and many states were fighting for total power. One was the state of Qin. Its early rulers claimed to have the Mandate of Heaven and that it no longer belonged to the Zhou.

But later rulers, such as China's first emperor Shi Huangdi of the Qin and the Han Emperor Gaozu, were much less concerned with being kind, gentle rulers. They thought they earned their victory because of a strong military and because of good luck.

Later thinkers believed that the emperor wasn't given power from heaven at all. Rather, he was a necessary public servant. Still, right up to the 1800s, emperors continued to argue that they had the Mandate of Heaven.

Despite having absolute power, an emperor could not do all that he wished. His ability to rule effectively depended on how big or small his state was. He depended on loyal supporters to carry out his policies using traditional government methods.

Finally, although the emperor was powerful and influential, he had to follow many rules that had been written before his time. King Wen, especially, was seen as the ultimate example to follow. Since all rulers were chosen by a divine power, all kings who came after them had to respect the policies the old kings had written. So even the "Son of Heaven" had to, at least sometimes, work within certain limits.

Quiz

1 Read the selection from the section "Wen and the responsibility of rule."

The Confucian author Mencius and others looked up to Wen as the great example of a ruler whose every decision was based on the best interests of his people. Wen even shared parts of his palace with common people. Mencius believed that the ruler must at all times be guided by the principle of benevolence, or jen.

What is the BEST definition of "benevolence" as used in the selection above?

- (A) perfection
- (B) intelligence
- (C) kindness
- (D) excitement

2 Read the selection from the section "Wen and the responsibility of rule."

The Zhou rulers who followed Wen's reign were aware that if they did not rule well, then they too could lose the Mandate of Heaven. If that happened, they would no doubt be conquered by a more virtuous enemy state.

Why does the author use the word "virtuous"?

- (A) to show that conquering states believed they would automatically receive the Mandate of Heaven
- (B) to show that a conquering state would need to have greater qualities of honor and goodness
- (C) to suggest that Wen was afraid of being conquered by states that were braver and stronger in battle
- (D) to suggest that Zhou rulers would need to be sneaky and strategic to keep from being conquered

3 Which two sentences from the article include MAIN ideas?

1. *Although the ruler had been given great power, he also had a responsibility to do good for his people.*
2. *When Wen and his successors died, it was thought that they rose to Heaven and served at court there.*
3. *During China's Warring States period, there was a lack of unity, and many states were fighting for total power.*
4. *Since all rulers were chosen by a divine power, all kings who came after them had to respect the policies the old kings had written.*

- (A) 1 and 3
- (B) 1 and 4
- (C) 2 and 3
- (D) 2 and 4

Which statement would be MOST important to include in a summary of the article?

- (A) The Mandate of Heaven had its roots in the belief that a good and just ruler was given permission from Heaven to rule on Earth.
- (B) The Mandate of Heaven had its roots and support from the religious and philosophical movement of Confucianism.
- (C) The Mandate of Heaven was believed to be lost when there was a flood or drought that caused people to overthrow their ruler.
- (D) The Mandate of Heaven was believed to be an old and ineffective idea about rulers by later thinkers and citizens.

The Fall of the Han Dynasty

By Dennis RM Campbell, Big History Project, adapted by Newsela on 04.26.19

Word Count **1,156**

Level **930L**



Image 1. Li Ling, a Han Dynasty general, and his army attacking the Huns in 99 B.C. Photo by: Universal History Archive/UIG via Getty Images

The "golden age" of the Han Dynasty was a period of economic, cultural, and scientific growth. It led to the creation of a Chinese identity. In the Han dynasty, the emperors all belonged to the Liu family. The Han was China's second imperial dynasty. Its rule spread over two periods. The Western Han lasted from 206 B.C. to A.D. 9, and the Eastern Han lasted from 25 to 220. Between those two periods, a non-Liu general was able to take control for nine years, establishing the Xin Dynasty. But that was just a short interruption in the Han Dynasty's rule. Really, this era was still all about the Han.

At its height, the Han emperors controlled about 2.5 million square miles of territory and ruled over nearly 60 million people. The emperor, or "huangdi" in Chinese, was more than just a worldly ruler. His people saw him as closely connected to the spiritual world and respected him as a kind of holy being.

The collapse of the Han Dynasty

The Eastern Han emperors faced many challenges, including natural disasters beyond their control. These included droughts, floods and earthquakes. The empire was strong enough to withstand these disasters for almost 200 years. However, over time the expense of dealing with these disasters became too great. By the year 220, warlords had torn the empire into three separate kingdoms.

The Han and outsiders

Tribal groups living along China's borders had a tense relationship with the Han. The Han believed that people not born in China were inferior to the Chinese. The emperors saw themselves as "enlightened" bringers of peace and order to the tribes. They believed this even when "bringing peace" meant fighting those outside tribes.

Tribal groups that continually caused problems for the Han would be resettled deep in the empire. Many officials mistreated and cheated these tribes. Over time, they would become a source of greater trouble for the empire.

In 89, the Han defeated a large tribal group known as the Xiongnu and drove the group away from China. Later this tribe would become known as the Huns. Before pushing out the Xiongnu, the Han did not realize that this particular tribe had been serving as a buffer against other dangerous tribes. The Xiongnu had been effectively protecting the empire's border. Their departure left an opening for other tribes to invade China. Fighting off these tribal threats seriously drained Han resources.

Problems from within

The Han also experienced struggles within the empire. By 100, bringing in enough money to support the government through taxation was a growing problem. Small farmers contributed the most in taxes, while local elites, who owned large estates, contributed less of their wealth to the empire. Many small farmers started giving up their land to work for these local elites. As a result, the wealthy could increase their productivity and the smaller farmers could stop paying taxes. This meant less and less tax money for the empire.

Throughout the first and second centuries, eunuchs became a powerful group in the empire. The eunuchs were men who were castrated, meaning they had their reproductive organs removed. They had no children or wives, and so could give all their loyalty to the empire. The elites felt threatened by the eunuchs. Under the reign of Emperor Ling in the 160s, a small group of elites hatched a plan to kill hundreds of eunuchs. They failed spectacularly. One of the three leaders of the planned murders was thrown in prison and killed. The other two committed suicide after losing to the eunuchs. Their severed heads were put on display. As for Emperor Ling, he was seen as weak and corrupt. His reign was marked by rebellions and protests. One of the most dangerous was the Yellow Turban Revolt. It happened in 184.



The Yellow Turban Revolt was a peasant rebellion. It was sparked by outbreaks of a deadly plague. People began to blame the emperor for the plague. They believed he had the power to end the disease if he wanted to. The emperor could not stop the plague, though, and to make matters worse, he raised taxes.

The peasants started turning to faith healers, looking for magical cures. One of these faith healers, Zhang Jue, was very successful and gained a huge following. By the year 184, Zhang Jue led his followers to revolt against the Han. The army was able to defeat the rebels, but peasant rebellions continued to flare up over the next decade.

Five years after the Yellow Turban Revolt, Emperor Ling died. His 13-year-old son was proclaimed Emperor Shao by the dowager empress He. She was the widowed wife of Emperor Ling. He's brother, He Jin, took this opportunity to attack the eunuchs. In the chaos that followed, a general named Dong Zhou was able to take control of the capital city of Luoyang. He overthrew the young emperor Shao. In Shao's place, Dong Zhou put on the throne an even younger puppet emperor, the 8-year-old Emperor Xian. The general tried to control the government through Xian, but he was not well liked, and was eventually killed. The Han Empire quickly broke down after that as warlords fought each other for control. In 220, about 1,800 years ago, Emperor Xian was forced to give up his throne, officially ending the Han Dynasty.



Theories of collapse

Chinese historians have spent more than a thousand years trying to understand why the Han Dynasty collapsed. Over time they developed three main theories. The first theory says that the empire fell simply because of bad rulers. The second theory blames the fall on the influence of dowager empresses and court eunuchs over child emperors too young to rule by themselves. The third theory suggests that the Yellow Turban Revolt caused the end of the dynasty.



Modern scholars offer many more theories. According to one argument, the Han victory over Xiongnu was the beginning of the end of the Han. Some believe that only warfare could keep the generals loyal to the empire. When there were no more strong tribal enemies to fight outside the empire, generals turned their aggression on the empire itself. They tried to take power for themselves. Other scholars blame the fall on the divide between the empire and its wealthiest members. They point out that the emperors needed the support and money of the elites. Without it, they could not keep responding to crises such as invaders, rebellion, and natural disasters.

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Quiz

- 1 How does the section "The collapse of the Han Dynasty" relate to the section "The Han and outsiders"?
- (A) "The collapse of the Han Dynasty" explains how the Han Dynasty split into kingdoms, and "The Han and outsiders" explains how the kingdoms changed over time.
 - (B) "The collapse of the Han Dynasty" explains what caused the Han Dynasty to end, and "The Han and outsiders" explains what caused it to begin.
 - (C) "The collapse of the Han Dynasty" describes problems beyond the Han's control, and "The Han and outsiders" describes problems they caused themselves.
 - (D) "The collapse of the Han Dynasty" describes problems the Hans experiences with weather, and "The Han and outsiders" describes how they solved them.
- 2 How effective is the concluding section, "Theories of collapse," at closing the topic of the fall of the Han Dynasty?
- (A) The conclusion is effective because it summarizes the main ideas about the causes of the dynasty's end that are described in the article.
 - (B) The conclusion is effective because it provides details about the effects of the dynasty's end on dowager empresses and court eunuchs.
 - (C) The conclusion is not effective because it introduces new ideas about wealth in the Han Dynasty that do not appear elsewhere in the article.
 - (D) The conclusion is not effective because it fails to present the ideas about the end of the Han Dynasty in chronological order for readers.
- 3 Based on the images and the article, what conclusion can the reader make?
- (A) Horses were a prized gift given by emperors during the time of the Han Dynasty.
 - (B) An outbreak of deadly plague had little effect on science or culture in the Han Dynasty.
 - (C) Warriors and warfare played an important role in the history of the Han Dynasty.
 - (D) Allowing the wealthy to avoid taxes was the main reason for the downfall of the Han Dynasty.
- 4 How do Image 2 and the information in the introduction [paragraphs 1-2] develop an understanding of the Han Dynasty?
- (A) They illustrate what happened to the Han Dynasty's lands during the period of the Xin Dynasty.
 - (B) They illustrate that the control of the Han Dynasty's territory required the Great Wall of China to be built.
 - (C) They illustrate that the Han Dynasty was divided into two periods called the Eastern Han and Western Han.
 - (D) They illustrate that the Han Dynasty played a large role in creating what would later become modern China.