

Continuities/Patterns in Chinese History

1. Ethnocentrism

Chinese believed their culture superior to others
China as "Middle Kingdom"

2. Xenophobia

Fear and distrust of foreigners

3. Creativity and innovation

Science and technology/Inventions
Art and literature

4. Importance of family

Patriarchy
Ancestor worship

5. Low status of women

Social and economic

6. Conflict with nature

Floods, earthquakes, typhoons, droughts, insect infestations sometimes led to mass starvation

7. Authoritarian, strong, central bureaucratic government (not initially)

8. Dynastic cycle

Revolts against strong, often abusive, central government

9. Cultural conservatism

Limited cultural change over 3,500 years

10. Education valued

11. Hard lives of peasants

Why Study China?

World's oldest continuous civilization

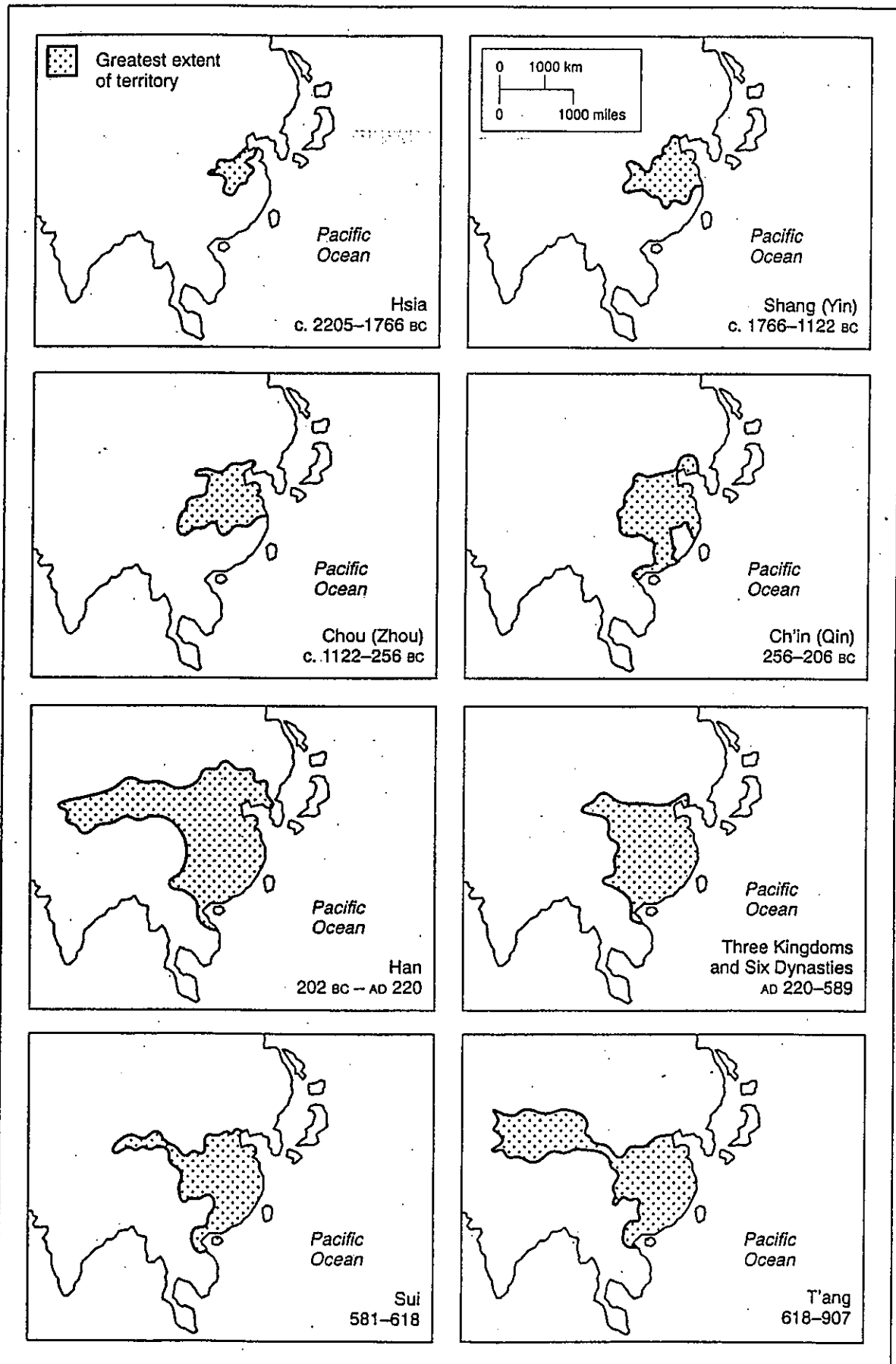
Cultural hearth influence on eastern Asia

Contemporary regional power

rising world power?

MAJOR CHINESE DYNASTIES AND PERIODS 1 c. 2205 BC – AD 907

CHINA



Match patterns w/ specific following events identified w/ *.

Shang Dynasty (~1750 - 1027 BCE)

○ First known Chinese dynasty (advanced urbana culture or civilization)

*importance - established long term cultural characteristics

Dynastic cycle established

*Strong emperors/kings - based on Mandate of heaven
energetic at first

stagnation, cruelty, natural disasters, and/or weak rulers

*peasant rebellions

new, energetic dynasty

**"Middle Kingdom" center of world & order

*surrounded by barbarians

Built along Hwang Ho/Yellow River

River cut through flat valley of compacted red dust (loess)

**Floods covered thousands of square miles

changed course 26 times

Weather hot in summer & cold in winter (continental climate)

○ ***Warlike - chronic warfare

Developed chariots to fight barbarian outsiders

enslaved captives

First Chinese writing - calligraphy

*Half the books in the world by 1800 AD - Chinese

Fine jade and bronze art

*Used molds, drills and rotary saws

Beautiful pottery and silk products

*Accurate calendar

*Peasants lived in crude, leaky pit houses near river, farmland

Used stone tools

Rice, fruit, millet, silk, cotton, wheat

Religion

Animism

*Ancestor worship

Human and animal sacrifice

○ *Women treated as inferiors - sometimes sold into slavery or as concubines

A. Aiken
Border H. 9

Last emperors cruel, lazy, hedonistic, hated
Mistress of last emperor tortured officials
(greased pole over coals)
*Overthrown by slave revolt
support from Chou (west) and many Shang
Lost Mandate of Heaven

Zhou Dynasty (1027 - 480 BCE)

Longest dynasty in Chinese history

Defeated more advanced Shang people
*Adopted and built on Shang culture/achievements
Expanded territory

*Extensive canals and dikes built in south for rice

*Iron - improvement over bronze
weapons and plow tip

Much warfare among nobility
*Crossbow first developed
Cavalry added to chariots and foot soldiers

Feudalism

Nobles lived in palaces inside walled cities
Fought other nobles for land and power
Merchants, artisans, government bureaucrats and laborers
Lived in cities
Trade developed w/ other cultures
*Did not adopt many foreign ideas
*Peasants lived in temporary thatched huts near fields
Winter - earthen pit houses
Farmed, paid taxes to nobles/landlords
Men served in army and on public projects
*Women often abused by nobles
Nobles protected peasants from wandering bandits and nomads
*Ended - infighting by independent nobles and weak emperors
Lost Mandate of Heaven

Warring States (480 - 221 BCE)

Confucius born 552 BCE - ideas not accepted until later Han Dynasty

Ancient China Problem Solving

The year is 120 B.C.E. and you are Emperor Wu Di. You have ruled China for twenty years. The Han emperors before you have created a relatively stable, peaceful and prosperous (wealthy) empire.

As emperor, you have many decisions to make. What actions would you take for each of the following problems? Give specific **reasons** for your actions, using past history and patterns in Chinese history to justify them. If you make good decisions you may become as famous (or infamous) as Ch'in Shih Huang Ti.

1. Aggressive Nomads to the Northwest

The Xiongnu (Huns) have raided to northwest region of your empire for many years. They are wild, aggressive, nomadic, and warlike people. They fight lightly armed on horseback. They wear animal skins and are even more crude and barbaric than other foreigners. How will you deal with them? Factors to consider:

- You have sent diplomats with gifts of silk and art objects to negotiate peace. The Xiongnu rejected your gifts.
- Your army includes a cavalry (soldiers on horseback) of over a 1000,000, supported by many more infantry. It is much larger than the Xiongnu army, but they are more familiar with the territory.
- They grew up as horsemen and are much better riders. Most of your Han Chinese soldiers grew up as peasants. Only wealthy land owners could afford horses.
- in 201 B.C.E. they defeated a large Chinese army.
- Any war would be very expensive in lives and wealth lost.
- Some advisors want you to extend the Great Wall 300 miles to make the west of the northwest corner of the wall. This also would be expensive.

2. Foreign Trade

You sent a gentleman from your court, Zhang Qian, with one hundred men west through Xiongnu territory. He hoped to avoid Xiongnu and imprisoned for ten years. Zhang escaped and made his way to the Yuezhi. They rejected his request to join China in a war against the Xiongnu. After a year, he again escaped and returned to Chang'an to report to you.

Although disappointed with his failure to gain a military ally, you were fascinated by his stories of wealth to the west; of different foods and spices, strong and beautiful horses, elephants, wine and wool. Will you provide the necessary funds to establish a trade route? Factors to consider:

- Zhang and some of your advisors recommend establishing trade with the lands to the west.
- The horses from Central Asia are stronger and faster than the horses your cavalry now uses against the Xiongnu.
- You love your gardens at the palace in Chang'an, with their exotic plants, trees, peacocks, monkeys and pheasants.

- Other advisors argue against unnecessary contact with foreigners.
- Others point out the cost in protecting such a long trade route to the Arab world of the Middle East/ Southwest Asia.
- China is very wealthy and has all the natural resources it needs. Maintaining a large army for protection from the Xiongnu is expensive, though.

3. Increasing Government Income (Money/Revenue)

You government needs to raise more money than it has in the past in order to protect your borders, maintain the Great Wall, canals and roads, to keep your very high standard of living and luxuries, to possibly expand your territory, and protect trade routes. How will us raise the necessary money? Factors to considers:

- The peasants are already taxed by the central government and regional nobles to the point of near starvation.
- Some taxes are skimmed off (stolen) by corrupt tax collectors.
- Increasing taxes of the nobles could lead to the type of civil wars that plagued and ruled the Zhou Dynasty
- Prosperous salt and iron industries are owned by private merchants.
- Trade to the west might make many merchants wealthy.
- Many nobles would like high-ranking positions on the army, as officers.
- Most crimes are punished by loss of body parts or time in jail.

4. Government Organization and Bureaucrats (Officials)

You want the smartest young men in your empire, the best and the brightest, to serve in your government. How would you identify and train them? Factors to consider:

- You are a legalist, but respect Confucianism.
- Peasants make up about 90% of the population.
- Many of the wealthy land owners are greedy, corrupt, and hedonistic (pleasure loving) \.
- Most are not loyal to you, thinking of their families and wealth first.

Han Dynasty Peasant Problem Solving

You are a Chinese peasant in 18 C. E. during the Han Dynasty. Living in Long Bow village, next to the Hwang He River. You and your wife/husband have two girls, ages fourteen and ten, and boys twelve and seven. Each year is a struggle to produce enough food to feed your family and to pay the wealthy landlord for the rental of his land.

You work long, hard days, seven days a week, from sunrise to sunset, growing wheat and millet. You take some days off for holidays and to perform the rituals to honor your ancestors. You dread the month of work on the canals and roads of the local noble, because it means your wife/husband and four children have to work much harder (to farm, while you do the additional work). You also dread the arrival of the tax collector after the fall harvest. 40-50% of your crop goes to the landlord and tax collector. Another 15% is saved for seeding the next crop.

The years your harvests are low (due to floods, drought, or insects), you and your family cut back to one or two meals a day of a watery millet (grain) soup. In the winter you move as little as possible in your mud and thatched hut, to save on energy- to survive until the spring planting.

Your friends and family tells stories of how they survived starving times in Long Bow village. (We will sample a few of the testimonies)

The Hwang He River has flooded twice in the last eight years. Yesterday, another flood wiped out your spring planting and destroyed your home. Thousands drowned and millions are now homeless.

What actions will you take? Consider the following factors as you decide what specific actions you will take:

- Peasants make up about 90% of the population of China
- Bands of roving bandits are in the area.
- Some desperate peasants have joined a large army of armed peasants (called the "Red Eyebrows", for painting their eyebrows) opposed the Emperor Wang Mang
- Bandits and rebels captured by the Emperor Wang Mang's soldiers are... either cut in half at the waist, decapitated, or boiled alive in water.
- Your youngest boy cannot walk very quickly or for long distances.
- The remains of your ancestors are in Long Bow. Rituals honoring them have been your most important duty and have always taken place in Long Bow.
- Confucius stated:

When your parents are alive, comply with the rites of serving them,
When they die, comply with the rites in burying them; comply with the
rites in sacrificing to them.

Let the ruler be a ruler and the subject a subject; let the father be a
father and the son a son.

- You are very worried about the future of your children,
especially your two daughters.
- The local noble/land lord is corrupt, greedy, and hedonistic.

What actions will you take to survive? Give specific reasons why, (using the
past history and patterns in Chinese history to justify them). You may choose
to be either the father or mother of the family,

Early Chinese Inventions and Technology

- A. Read the description of the problems faced by the ancient Chinese.
- B. On a separate sheet of paper, describe what device or invention might be developed to solve the problem.
- C. Estimate what year the same device was invented or adopted in Europe.
- D. Answer the questions on the back.

1. **6th century BC/BCE** - Wooden plows and tips were exhausting and inefficient to use, would not plow the earth very deeply, quickly became dull and broke easily. Plowing with a wooden plow "may rank as one of history's single greatest waste of time and energy." How could they be improved?

2. **4th century BCE** - Sailors were limited to sailing within sight of shore in good weather, because they could not navigate in the dark, fog, or away from land-based landmarks with the maps they had. What device could help them?

3. **4th century BCE** - The Chinese used cast iron bits to drill down to 4,800 feet for salt from brine (salty water). Sometimes they hit pockets of natural gas. What could the natural gas be used for?

4. **4th century BCE** - Enemy soldiers in the past have tunneled under the walls of your city. What could be devised to pour into their tunnels to stop them?

5. **2nd century BCE** - Suspension bridges across rivers and deep ravines had traditionally been made with iron. Over the years they rusted and had to be replaced. What metal stronger than iron could be developed?

6. **2nd century BCE** - A mathematical concept was needed in accounting to indicate when people were in debt.

7. **1st century BCE** - What type of mechanical device, operated by one person, could haul heavy (200-2,000) military equipment over difficult terrain?

8. **1st century CE** - Long steering oars could not turn small sailing vessels effectively. Unless a better steering device could be devised, larger ships necessary for long distance trade and exploration would be impractical.

9. **3rd century CE** - China has always been plagued by terrible, destructive earthquakes that have killed up to 800,000 people. Earthquakes often triggered food riots or attempts at rebellion. The emperors wanted to know as soon as possible when an earthquake took place, to send food aid and military forces - to prevent violence.

10. **3rd century CE** - Cavalry soldiers had to jump up on the saddles of their horses and then use one hand to hold on to the mane when galloping. That left only one hand free for fighting. How could they stay on their horses better and leave both hands free for fighting at fast speeds?