

## History of Ancient China

### 1. Hsia Dynasty (2000-1500 B.C.)

The Hsia family created China's first 'dynasty', or succession of rulers from the same family. During this period, the Chinese began casting bronze and cultivating silkworms.

### 2. Shang Dynasty (1500-1046 B.C.)

During this period, China developed organized government, a system of writing, and began to worship their ancestors.

### 3. Zhou Dynasty (1046-256 B.C.)

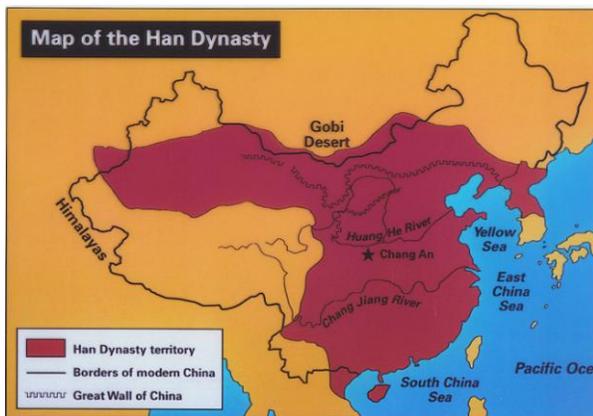
This was the longest ruling dynasty in Chinese history. During this period, the Chinese developed iron implements, written laws, and metal coins. The Chinese believed that their rulers were chosen by heaven and that heaven would overthrow a bad ruler'. These emperors ruled with the "Mandate of Heaven", or the favor and support of the heavens. The king was expected to rule justly and protect the people. If the king failed to rule effectively, he could be overthrown and replaced by a new ruler.

### 4. Qin Dynasty (256-206 B.C.)

Shi Huangdi became the first Chinese ruler to call himself an emperor. He sought to unify the empire by creating a strong centralized government and building roads, bridges and canals to unite distant parts of China'. He also created the "Great Wall of China" (1,500 miles long) to protect his empire from invasion.

### 5. Han Dynasty (206 B.C. - 220 A.D.)

The Han Empire marked the height of ancient China's power, prosperity,



and culture. Literature, art, science, and industry flourished during this period. The Chinese invented paper, gunpowder, the sundial, the water clock, and instruments to detect earthquakes. The Han rulers expanded China's territory and introduced a civil service examination system. Han rulers established an over-land trade route called the "Silk Road", which connected China to the Mediterranean region. China exported its silk and spices in exchange for gold, linen, glass, ivory, horses, and cattle.

The Chinese were so proud of this period that they often called themselves "the sons of Han". The fall of the Han Dynasty was followed by four centuries of civil war, invasion, and disorder. These turbulent years led many Chinese to accept Buddhism because it promised eternal peace.



## Questions to Answer

1. Why was the Shang Dynasty significant?
2. How did emperors rule with the "Mandate of Heaven"?
3. How did Shi Huangdi unify the empire?
4. Why was the Han Dynasty significant?