

Chinese

Dynasties



Shang Dynasty – 1500s-1100s BC

First Dynasty in China – 1500s to 1100s BC

Advances included China's first writing system, war chariots, bronze works, and calendars based on cycles of the moon

King Zhou overthrown to end Shang and begin Zhou Dynasty

Zhou Dynasty – 1100s – 221BC

Longest-lasting of any of the Dynasties in China!

Believed in the ***Mandate of Heaven*** – that heaven chose China's rulers

Formed new political structure – Emperor at the top, and he gave land in exchange for loyalty or military service

This system devolved into chaos and led to the end of the Zhou Dynasty

Qin Dynasty – 221-206BC

After a period of disorder, a Qin king managed to unify all of China under his control – **Shi Huangdi** – start of the Qin Dynasty

Strict ruler – wanted to make sure all thought as he did, so he had many books burned and executed some who spoke out against him

Very short Dynasty, but amazing advances/contributions to China:

Created a system of laws; uniform system of writing; built large network of roads and canals; built terracotta army; began construction on the Great Wall

Chaos ensued after Shi's death; grandson could not maintain control

Han Dynasty – 206BC-220AD

Started by emperor **Liu Bang** – first peasant to ever become emperor

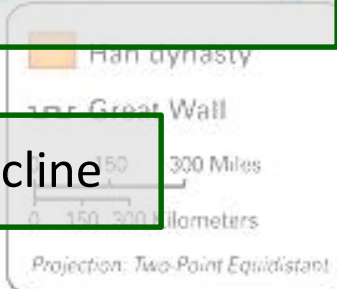
Wudi took control in 140BC and made **Confucianism** China's official government philosophy

Confucianism emphasizes importance of ethics/moral values, such as respect for elders and loyalty towards family members

Han achievements included seismograph, paper, and the sundial

The Silk Road connected Han Dynasty with the Roman Empire; resulted in the exchange of goods and ideas from East to West

Internal rebellion and conflicts within the ruling family led to the decline



Period of Disunion – 220AD-589AD

When the Han dynasty collapsed, China split into several rival kingdoms, each ruled by military leaders – War was common during this time

Sui Dynasty – 589AD-618AD

The man who ended the Period of Disunion was a northern ruler named **Yang Jian**. In 589, he conquered the south, unified China, and created the Sui (SWAY) dynasty.

The Sui dynasty did not last long - however, its leaders restored order and began the **Grand Canal**, a canal linking northern and southern China

Tang Dynasty – 618AD-907AD

Historians view the Tang dynasty as a **Golden Age**

Tang rulers conquered many lands and created law codes -- also included the only woman to rule China—**Empress Wu**. Tang Dynasty relied HEAVILY on the Silk Road for opportunities to trade with those outside of China

Period of Five Dynasties & Ten Kingdoms – 907AD-960AD

After the Tang dynasty fell, China entered another brief period of chaos and disorder, with separate kingdoms competing for power

Song Dynasty – 960AD-1279AD

City life grew tremendously during the Song Dynasty – China's capital and largest city, **Chang'an**, was the largest in the world with over one million citizens

Trade grew along with Chinese cities. This trade, combined with China's agricultural base, made China richer than ever before.

During the Song dynasty, sea trade became more important -- China opened its Pacific ports to foreign traders

Song achievements include world's first paper money, porcelain, moveable type, and contributions in arts and literature (specifically poetry)

Northern Song Dynasty ended by organized Mongol invasions led by **Genghis Khan**
Southern Song Dynasty ended by invasion by Mongols unified by **Kublai Khan**

Yuan Dynasty/Mongol Ascendancy – 1279AD-1368AD

Kublai Khan completed the conquest of China and in 1279 declared himself emperor of China - For the first time in its long history, foreigners ruled all of China

Chinese resented being ruled by Mongols, whom they saw as rude and uncivilized.

Part of what we know about the Yuan dynasty comes from an Italian named **Marco Polo** - When Polo returned to Europe, he wrote of his travels. Polo's descriptions sparked much European interest in China.

Mongols were not content with just China – failed conquests of Japan weakened them, and in 1368 a former monk named Zhu Yuanzhang led a successful rebellion

Ming Dynasty – 1368AD-1644AD

Ming Dynasty was one of the most stable and prosperous times in Chinese history

During the Ming dynasty, the Chinese improved their ships and their sailing skills - The greatest sailor of the period was **Zheng He**

The Ming were also known for their grand building projects -- Ming emperors built the **Forbidden City**: a huge palace complex that included hundreds of imperial residences, temples, and other government buildings. Called FC because commoners were NOT allowed to enter the complex!

Ming rulers also directed the restoration of the famous Great Wall of China

Under the Ming, Chinese society began to change - emperors worked to eliminate all foreign influences – China entered a period of **Isolationism**: avoiding contact with other countries

By the late 1800s the Western world had made huge leaps in technology; Partly due to its isolation and lack of progress, China was too weak to prevent invasions