

# Imperial China: Qin to Tang Dynasties

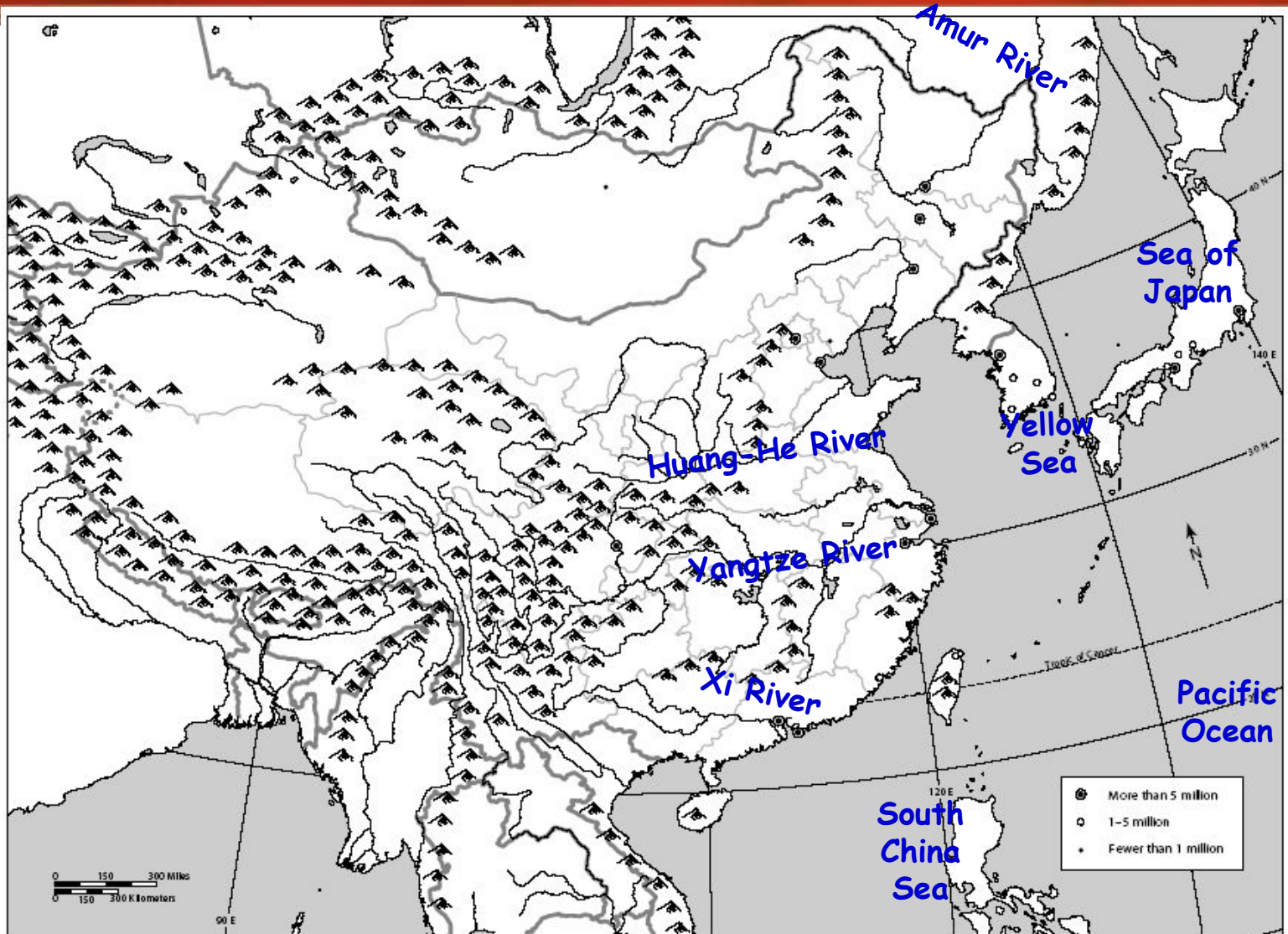


From the Warring States to Imperial  
Power

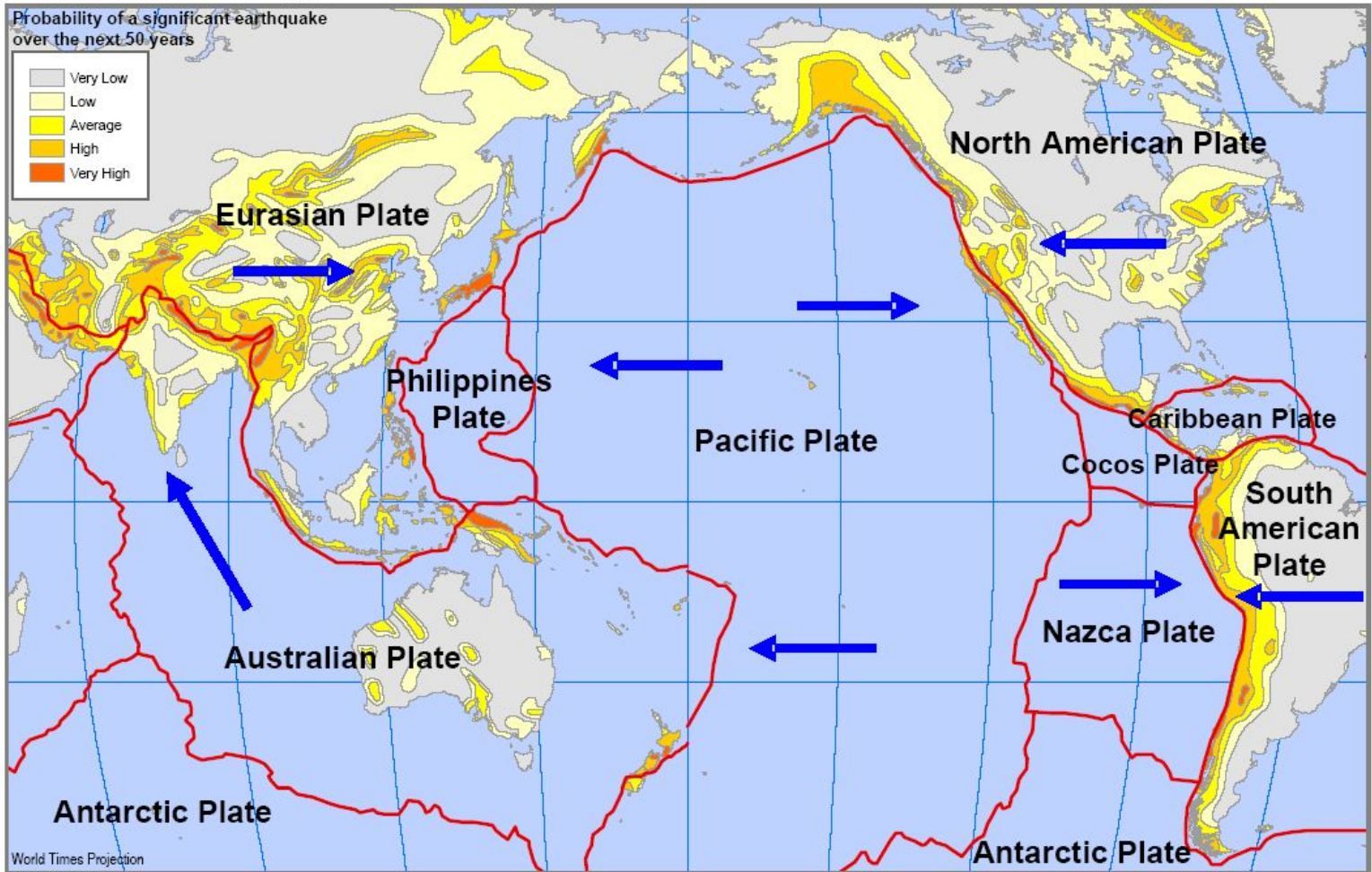
# Geography of China

- Two major regions- steppe, desert, high plateau west, and northwest, and the eastern zone, which is suitable for agriculture.
- Natural Resources- Timber, stone, metals
- Loess soil- North
- South- Rice

# Bodies of Water

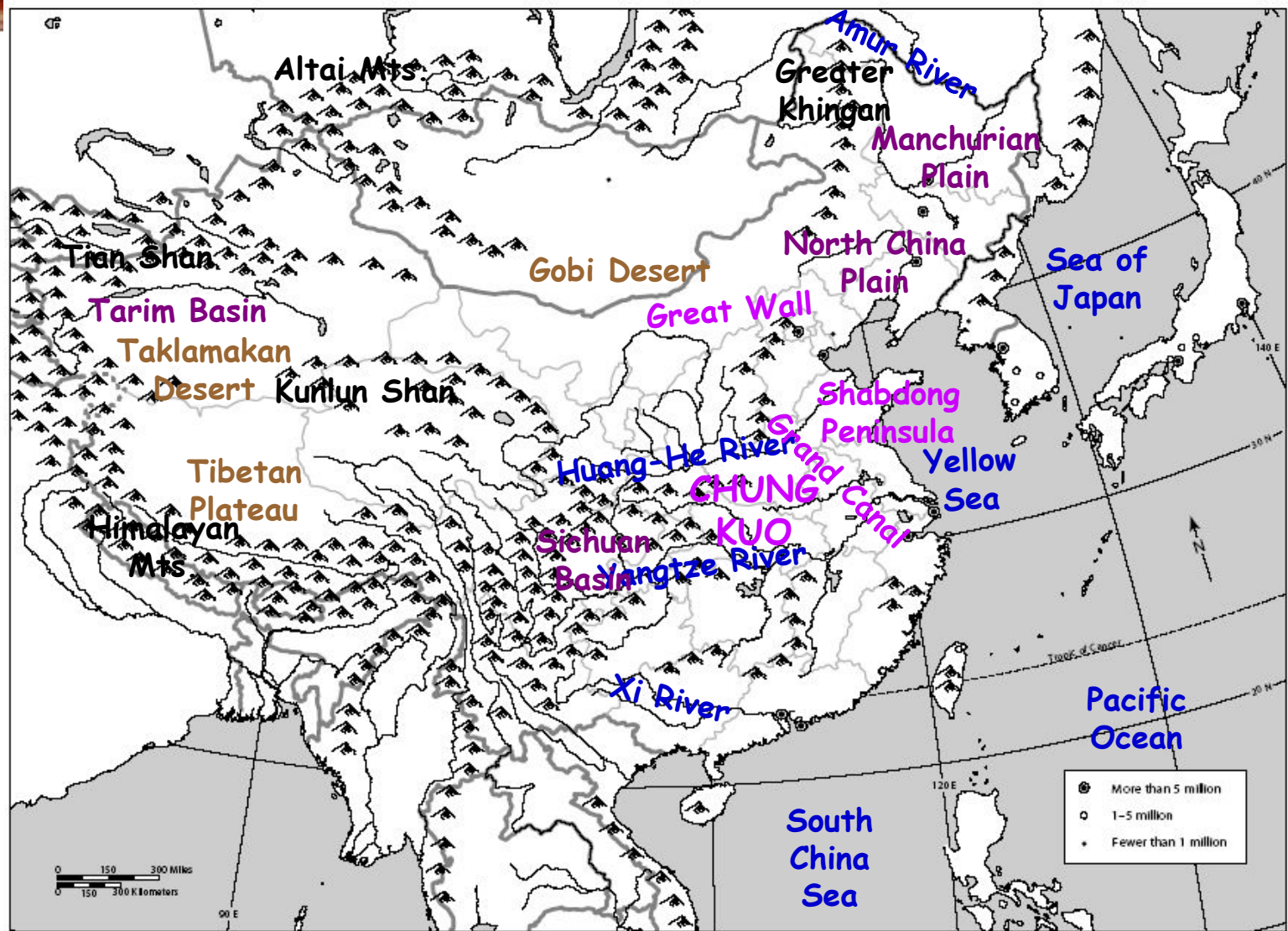


# Pacific “Rim of Fire”

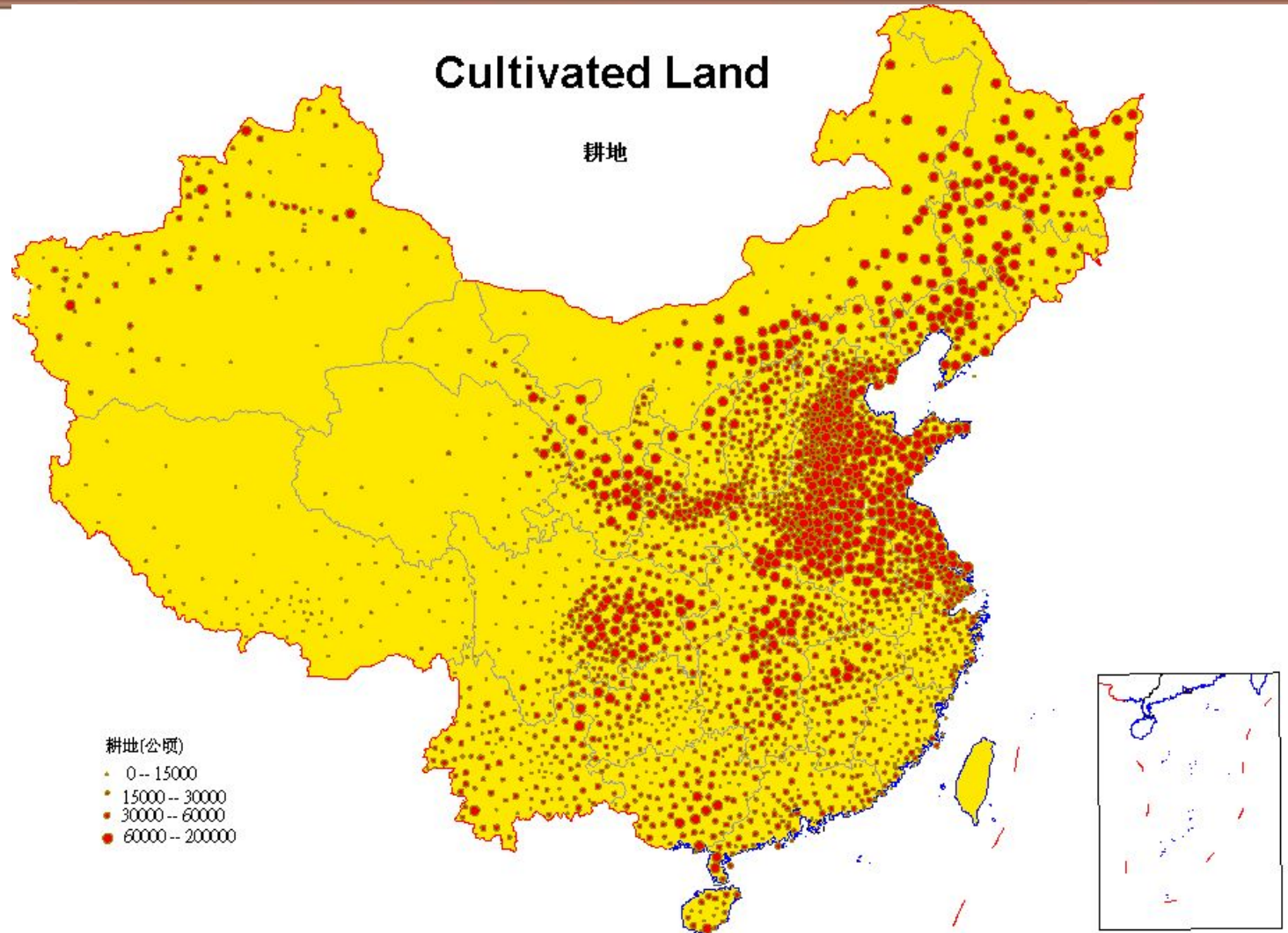




# Completed Topographic

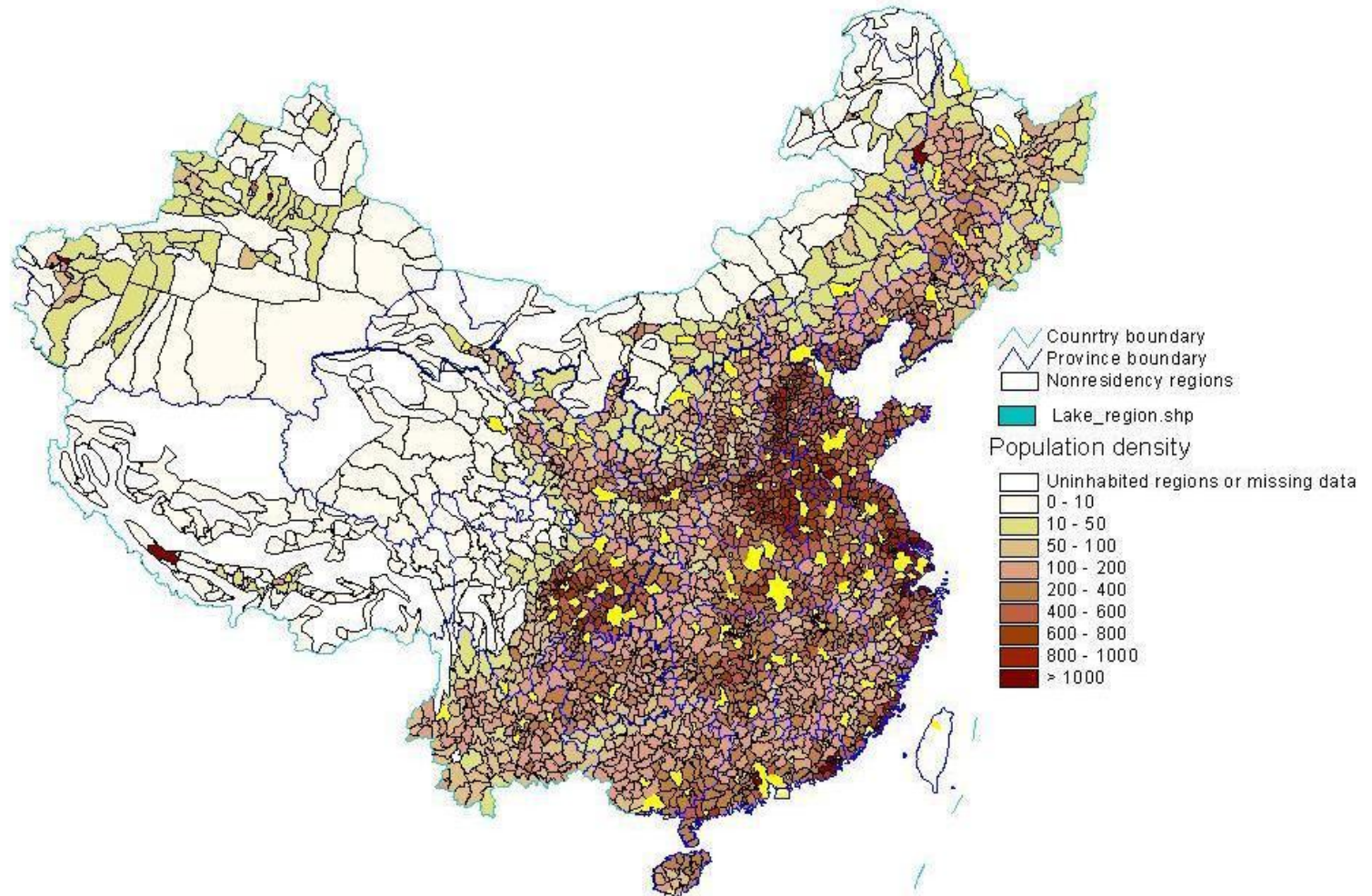


# Arable Land





# Population Density



# “Brown” China vs. “Green”

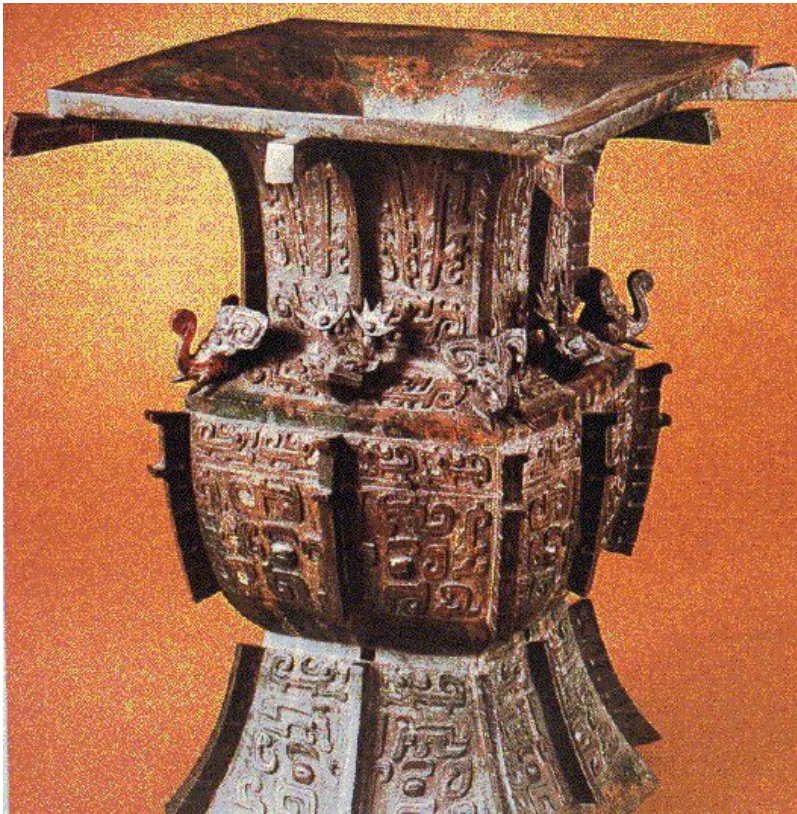




# Early Chinese Beginnings

- As in other parts of the world, the introduction of agriculture enabled individuals to accumulate wealth and preserve it within their families.
- Social distinctions began to appear during Neolithic times and became even clearer after the Xia, Shang, and Zhou Dynasties with the specialization of labor and ruling elites.
- Tomb artifacts suggest trade from Mesopotamia, the Malay Peninsula, and the Indian Ocean...Silk Road beginnings?

# Early Chinese Dynasties



- Xia Dynasty - 2205-1766 B.C.E.
- Shang Dynasty- 1776- 1122 B.C.E.
- Zhou Dynasty- 1029 B.C.E.- 258 B.C.E.

# Early Chinese Dynasties

- Chinese legends speak of three ancient dynasties- the Xia, Shang, and the Zhou- that arose before the Qin and the Han Dynasties brought China under unified rule.
- Initially many historians believed the Xia and Shang were merely mythical fantasies.
  - Archeological evidence has helped to shape our understanding of them.
- By formal control of the region, the Xia established a precedent of **hereditary rule**.



# Xia Dynasty 2205-1766 B.C.E.

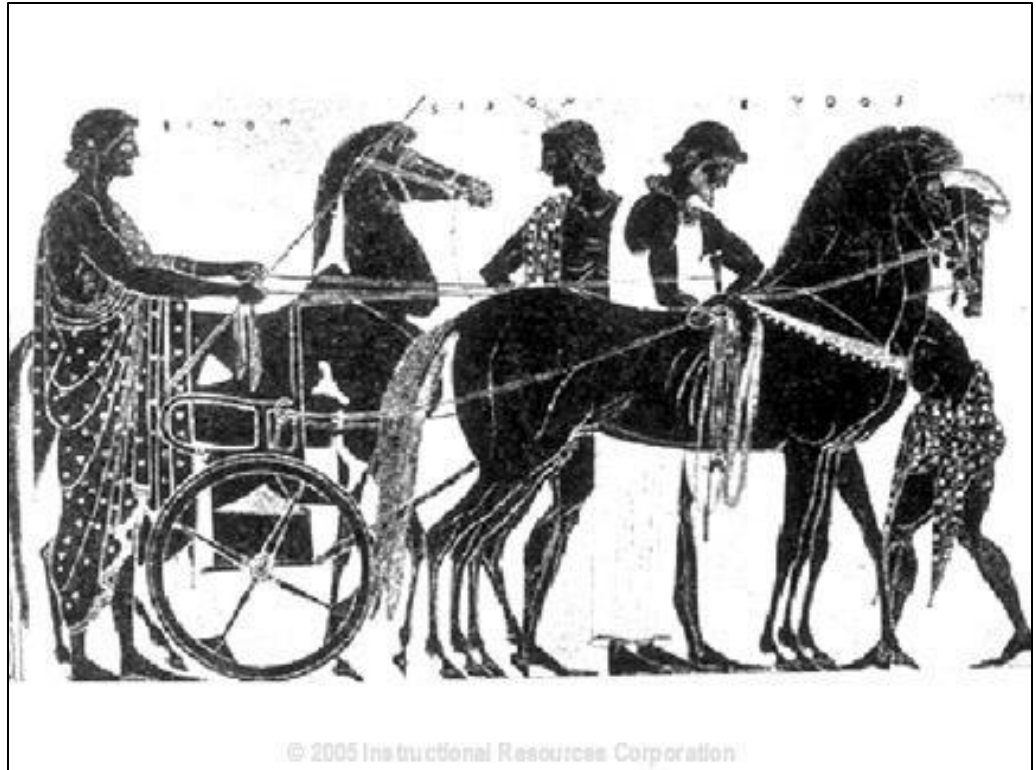
- Ancient legend credits the dynasty's founder, the sage-king Yu, with the organization of effective flood control and large scale public works.
  - No information survives of the political institutions
- The dynasty encouraged the founding of cities and the development of Metallurgy, primarily Bronze.
- New digs are still under way but much is believed to have been lost to time, robbers, and the waters of the Huang He.

# Shang Dynasty 1766 - 1122 B.C.E.

- Shang Dynasty left written records as well as material remains
  - Basic features of early Chinese society come into focus during this period.
- Technology and diffusion helps to explain the rise and success of the Shang.
  - Bronze, horses, and wheeled vehicles are believed to have come from SW Asia aiding in conquest of others.
  - Control of Copper and tin ore reserves as well helped the Shang to control the area.

# Shang Technology

- Bronze weapons, ceremonial vessels
- Horse drawn chariot
- Writing
  - Developed during Shang Period
  - Today's Writing Directly related





# Shang Dynasty

- Like state builders in other regions, the kings claimed a generous portion of the surplus agriculture to support military forces.
- Created a vast network of walled towns
  - The Shang capital of Ao had a city wall of 10 meters (33 ft) high with a base of 20 meters (66 ft) thick
- Like the Egyptians, the Shang Kings built large graves that housed thousands of objects and humans to serve the kings in death
- Very little information survives to illustrate the principles of law, justice, and administration by which the Shang maintained order

# Artwork from Shang



# Shang Discoveries



- A new source of information came to light in the 1890's and early 1900's
- Oracle bones made from birds and animals, and the shells of turtles were inscribed with symbolic notations were then placed in fire and read to predict the future



Shang Civilization  
800 kilometers  
500 miles

**GOBI DESERT**





# Zhou Dynasty

1100 B.C.E.-256 B.C.E.

Shang Civilization

800 kilometers

500 miles



# Zhou Dynasty

## 1100 - 256 B.C.E.

- Supplanted the Shang by adhering to a **code of ethical conduct**
- The Zhou theory of politics rested on the assumption that earthly events were closely related to heavenly affairs
- More specifically, heavenly powers granted the right to govern--the **Mandate of Heaven**
- Ruler served as a link between heaven and earth
- He had the duty to govern conscientiously, observe high standards of honor and justice, and maintain order and harmony within his realm.



# Zhou Dynasty

- As long as the ruler abided by these principles, the heavenly powers would approve and the ruling dynasty
  - “Mandate of Heaven” Used by the Zhou to justify their actions in overthrowing the Shang
- Until the 20<sup>th</sup> c, Chinese ruling houses emulated the Zhou Dynasty by claiming the Mandate of Heaven for their rule & the emperors took the title “Son of Heaven.”
- Unlike the Shang, Zhou rulers realized they could not control large areas and thereby decentralized administration giving power, authority, and responsibilities to subordinates who in return owed allegiance, tribute, and military support.

# Warring States Period

- This decentralized system led to other rulers to become independent of the Zhou Dynasty.
- Eventually territorial princes ignored the central government and used their resources to build, strengthen, and expand their own states.
- So violent was this period that it became known as the **Period of Warring States** (403-221 B.C.E.)
- In 221 B.C.E., after a hundred years of warfare, the Qin (Ch'in) Dynasty defeated the others, unifying north China and creating the first unified Chinese Empire.

# Setting the Foundation

- Gender roles appear to be rather fixed by this time. Only males could inherit land...
- Iron technology around 600 B.C.E. dramatically changed China and everyday life
- Veneration of Ancestors and the belief these ancestors passed into another realm of existence from which they had the power to support and protect their families if they displayed proper respect
  - Tightly knit patriarchal families linked to extended family networks
- Governments organized research in astronomy & maintained historical records

# Religion and Culture

- Zhou dynasty: little attention given to the nature of the deity
  - Stress on earthly life
- Kong Fuzi, **Confucius**, (551-478 B.C.E.) started to gain favor by looking to the past.
  - Not a religious leader; did not speculate on the divine order
  - Emphasized personal virtue and reverence for tradition among all classes
  - Confucianism was primarily a system of ethics with recommends obedience and respect
  - Doctrine recorded in the book, *Analects*



# Daoism

- Dao: “the way of nature”
  - Nature contains a divine impulse that directs all life
- Promoted a set of ethics
  - Harmony with nature through humility and frugal living
  - Political activity and learning were irrelevant
- Many emperors favored Daoism but China would not unite under one religion
  - Later priests added expressions of loyalty to temple services



# **Qin Dynasty**

221 B.C.E. - 206 C.E.



# Qin Dynasty

- The Qin ruler who united China was Qin Shi Huangdi
  - He and his successors would go onto to forge China into a massive economic, military, and administrative power.
- The Qin Dynasty expanded from a geopolitical base around the Huang He (Yellow) and the Wei Rivers.
- Although the dynasty itself lasted a relatively brief time after it established the empire, the model it would create would essentially last with a few interruptions to the present.



# Qin [Ch'in] Dynasty, 221-206 B.C.E.

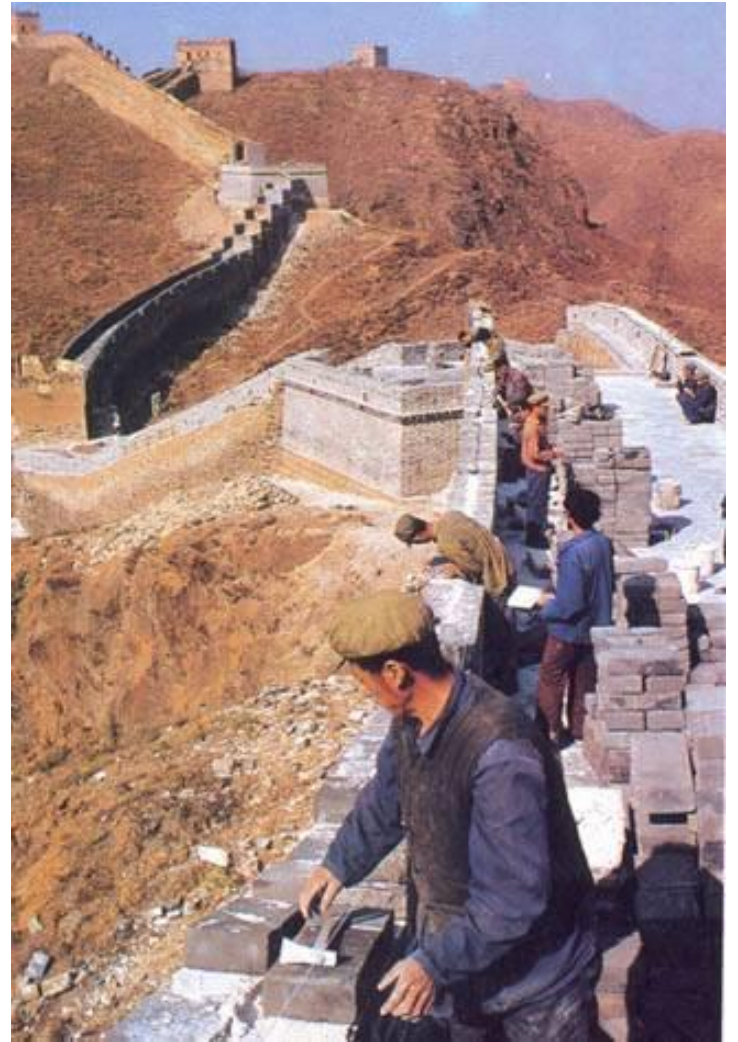
- Established China's first empire 📌
- **Shi Huangdi** (221-206 B.C.E)
- Legalist rule 📌
- Bureaucratic administration
- Centralized control
- Military expansion
- Book burnings → targeted Confucianists
- Buried protestors alive!
- Built large section of the **Great Wall**



# Great Wall



- Although the Great Wall which stands today is only 500 years old, the original building of the wall was begun under the Emperor Shi Huangdi.
- The Wall was built to keep out the Xiongnu who it is believed were Mongols but there is debate about their origins.
- The Great Wall is 3,000 miles long and over 25 feet high. The Great Wall stretches from the East China Sea to the Gobi Desert.







# Qin Dynasty

- Took control of feudal estates
  - Appointed non-aristocratic officials to rule provinces
- Extended territory to the south to present-day Hong Kong
- Ordered a national census
- Standardized coinage, weights, and measures
- Made Chinese written script uniform



# Major Legalist Principles

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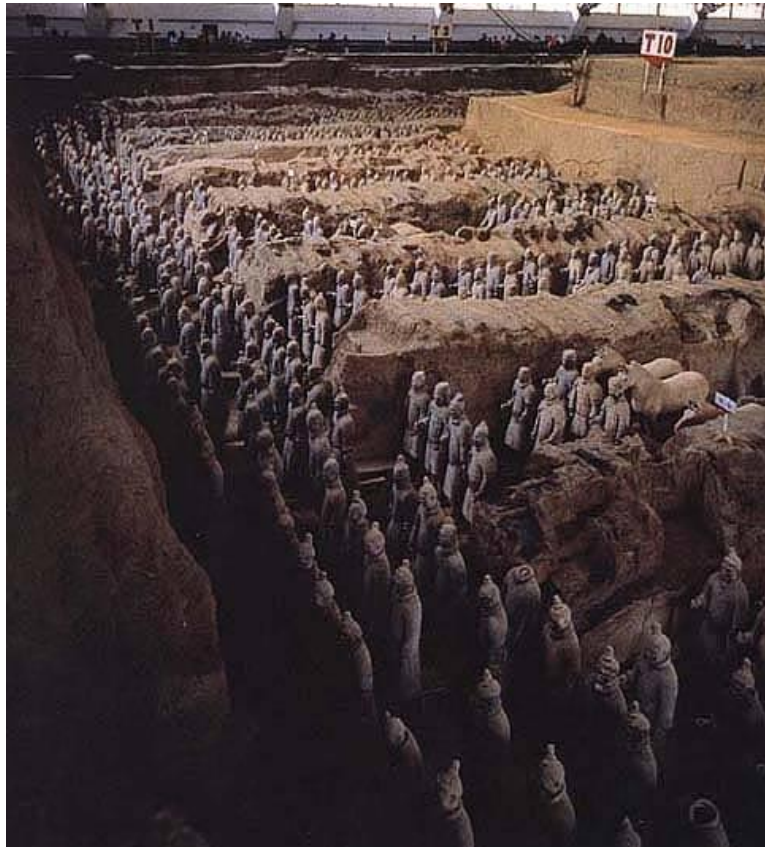


# Struggle between Legalism and Confucianism

- The philosophies of Legalism and Confucianism collided during the Qin Dynasty.
- The Qin success was due in large part to its orderly system of laws and efficient governance.  
[Legalism]
  - Army controls the people who labor
  - The emperor first had Confucians texts burned and than later Confucian scholars.
    - Confucianism lacked a spiritual side

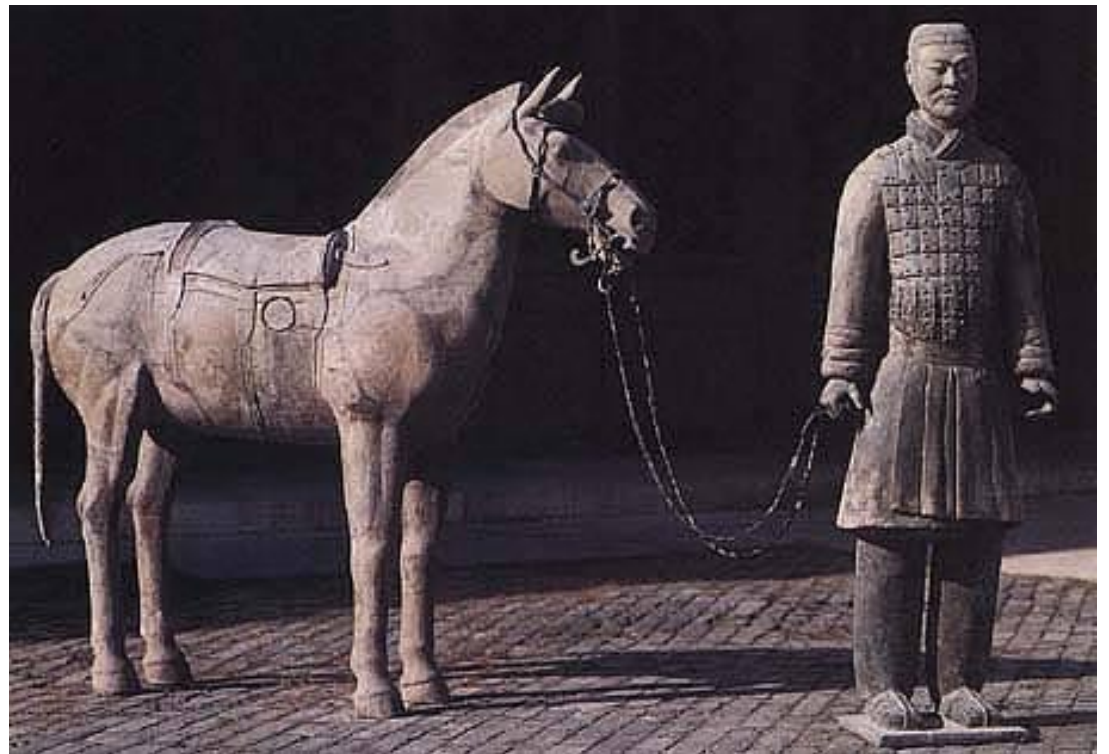
# Tomb of Shi Huangdi

- The most elaborate tomb yet to be excavated in China. Comparable to the Great Pyramids of Egypt.
- It was comprised of thousands of soldiers, battle formations, and all the items that the emperor would need for the afterlife.
  - Terra Cotta Army on the outside of the tomb



















# The Fall of the Qin

- Within four years Huangdi's apparently powerful, centralized, productive, and well organized dynasty collapsed.
  - The main cause was the harsh manner in which the Qin oppressed the peasantry who paid taxes, served in the armies, and built massive projects.
  - Another reason was sending of several hundreds of thousands to fight the Xiongnu in the far north beyond the Great Wall.
- With no clear successor, warfare broke out and **Liu Bang** emerged victorious and established the **Han Dynasty**.



# Han Dynasty

202 B.C.E. - 220 C.E.



# Qin to the Han Dynasty

- Han historians proclaimed that the Qin had lost their Mandate of Heaven which was started during the Zhou.
- With the Qin's new innovations in legalism and bureaucracy, the formations of the Qin empire were to form Chinese imperial ways for the next 2000 years.

# Han Dynasty


- The new empire led by a single emperor.
  - The principal Legalist ministers who guided the Qin were replaced, but their administrative bureaucracy remained.
- Coming from common stock, **Lui Bang** chose for his ministers Confucian scholars.
- Slowly, a new social and political hierarchy developed with scholars on top followed by farmers, artisans, and merchants.
- Legalism still influenced administrative systems as did Taoism principals but Confucius' teachings were the formation of the Han.

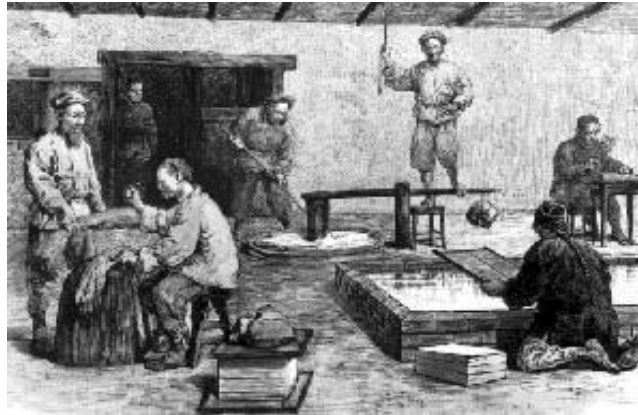


# Han Legacies

- 1. History and record keeping became important.  
[Tradition and continuity]**
- 2. Establishment of imperial academy to teach the wisdom of Confucius. While landed class remained part of the bureaucracy, appointment was based on exam success. (Tang firmly established this)**
- 3. Imperial conference of Confucian scholars to codify law which solidified the Chinese legal system.**
- 4. Established codes of women conduct.  
(subservience?)**

# Han Dynasty, 202 B.C.E.-220 C.E.

- “People of the Han” → original Chinese
- Paper invented [105 B.C.E.] 



- Silk Road trade develops; improves life for many
- Buddhism introduced into China but not fully embraced
- Expanded into Central Asia but problems will emerge

Early Civilizations

Select Buttons

Magna Graecia

Spread of Islam

Rome + Han China

Mongol Empires

Barbarian Invasions

1500-1800 AD.

c.100-200 AD.



Temple communities

Maps from the 'World History Chart







Chang'an

Daming Palace



0 5 km  
0 3 miles




- |  |         |   |                          |
|--|---------|---|--------------------------|
|  | palaces |  | administrative buildings |
|  | markets |  | residential buildings    |





# Emperor Wu Ti, 141-87 B.C.E.

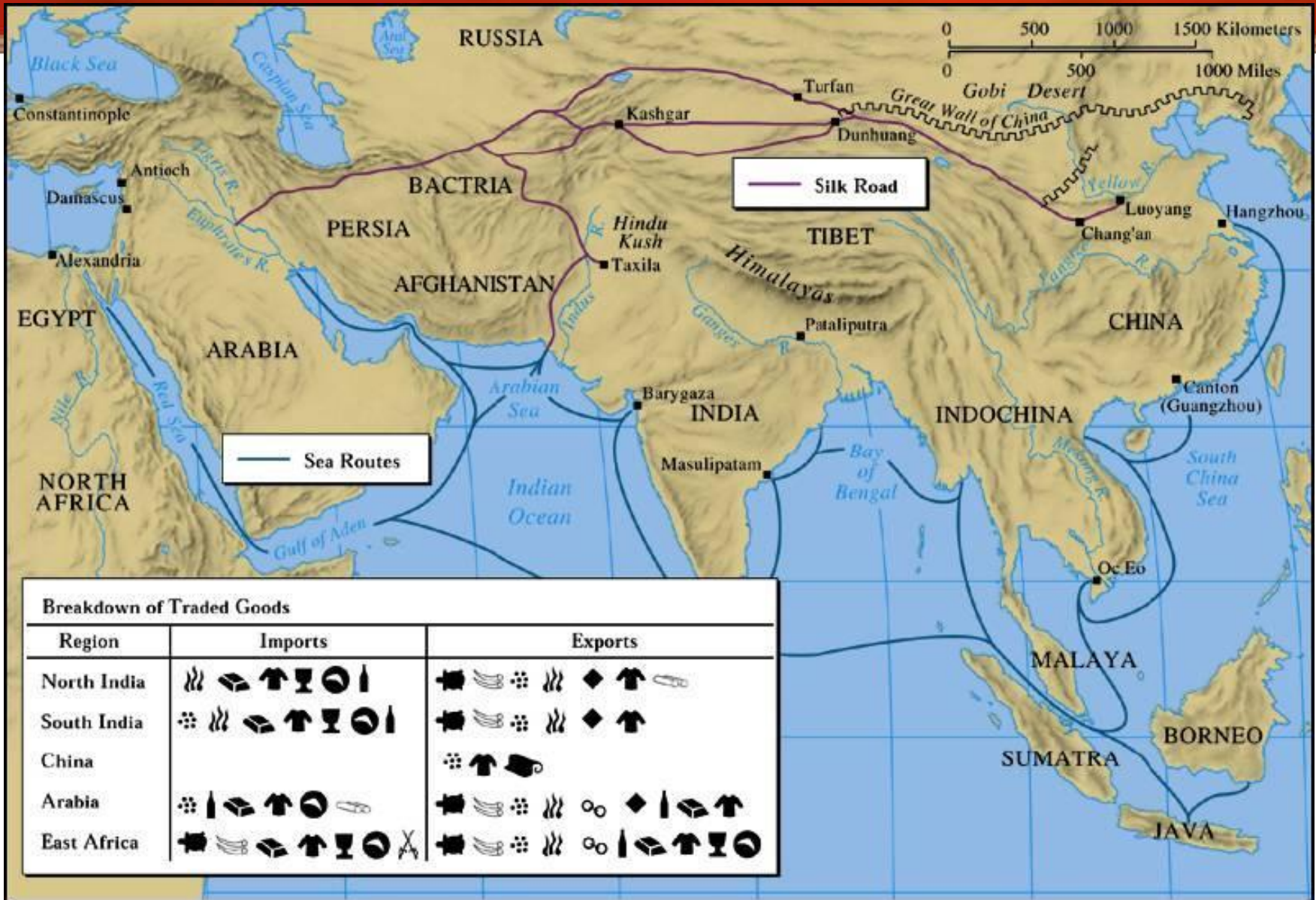
- Started public schools.
- Colonized Manchuria, Korea, & Vietnam.
- Civil service system 
- bureaucrats
- Confucian scholar-gentry
- Revival of Chinese landscape painting.
- Peace and prosperity

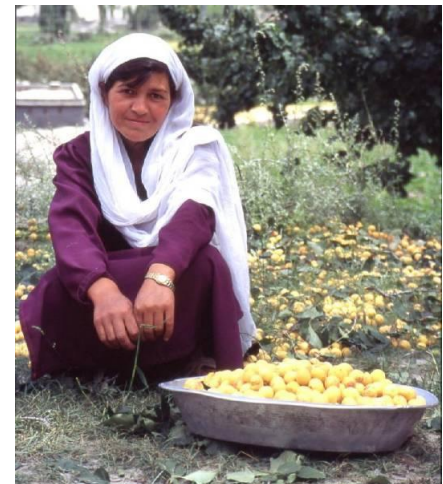
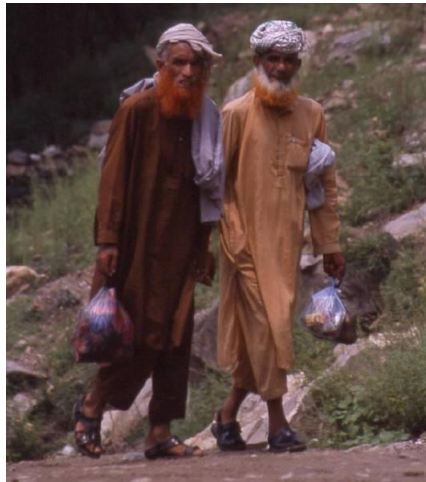
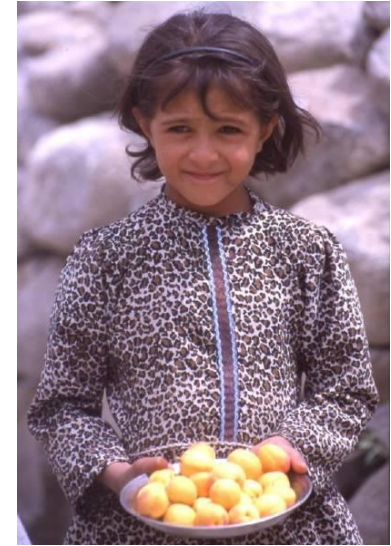
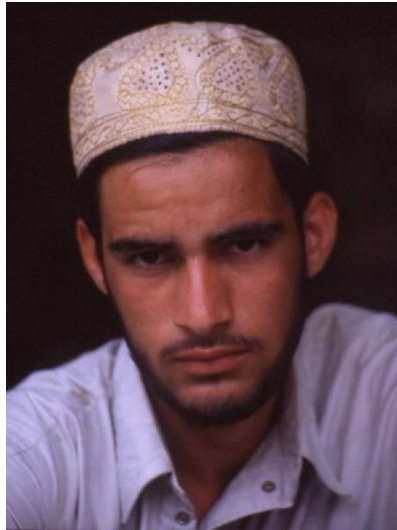


















# The Fall of the Han

- Like most empires, poor rulers and a perhaps too expansive empire, brought the fall of the Han.
- After the collapsed, the empire was divided into three separate states, the Wei, the Shu, and the Wu, but a united Chinese empire was not lost.
  - During the centuries of division, many dynasties governed and some were foreign.
  - Chinese language and ways were continued by various rulers.

# From Division to Unity

- After several centuries of foreign leaders but Chinese (Han) administrators, tensions remained.
  - These differences would eventually lead to conflict and the rise of the Sui Dynasty.
- Despite almost 400 years of division, Chinese culture, language, ideology, and administration were in place but they lacked the military power to unite.
  - Sui did have the needed skills and united China once again, briefly.

# China's Imperial Dynasties

- **Xia** c.2205-1766 B.C.E
- **Shang** c. 1600-1100 B.C.E.
- **Zhou** c. 1100- 256 B.C.E.
- **Qin** 221-206 B.C.E.
- **Han** 202 B.C.E.- 220 C.E.
- **Three Kingdoms** 220 C.E.-65 C.E
- **Sui** 581 C.E.-618 C.E.
- **Tang** 618 C.E.- 907 C.E.