Classical China

Qin Dynasty 221 – 207 BCE
Han Dynasty 207 BCE – 220 CE
Impact of Geography

- Huang He (Yellow) and Yangtze Rivers provided silt for first Chinese civilizations/dynasties
  - Shang (1650 – 1027 BCE)
  - Zhou (1027 – 221 BCE)
- Isolated by Geography
  - Pacific Ocean, Taklimakan and Gobi Deserts, and Himalayan Mountains
- Isolation contributed to ethnocentrism or feelings of cultural superiority
  - Called themselves the “Middle Kingdom” believing they were the center of the universe
Mandate of Heaven and Dynastic Cycle

Ruling families (Dynasties) claimed they had the Mandate of Heaven or the approval of the gods
- Gained: prosperity, victory in war, peace, security, stability was evidence that the gods were happy
- Lost: natural disasters, famine, defeat in war, feelings of insecurity, decaying walls, roads, canals was evidence that the gods were angry

Dynastic Cycle: old dynasty loses the Mandate of Heaven and new family (dynasty) would gain the Mandate of Heaven
Qin Dynasty 221 – 207 BCE

- Emperor Shi Huangdi ruled China
  - Legalism philosophy
  - Centralized the government
  - Created military districts
  - National laws, writing, and money
  - Uniformed system of weights and measures
  - Repaired canals and roads
  - Promoted Chinese writing
- Began construction of the Great Wall of China connecting existing defensive walls
Great Wall of China

- Constructed over an 1800 year period
  - First defensive walls 8th century BCE
  - Great Wall: Qin 3rd century BCE
- Over 13,000 miles of walls built of earth, stone, and glutinous rice
  - Over 1,200 miles of wall gone
- 25 feet tall with watchtowers 40 feet
- Built, in part, by criminals as punishment
- Estimates of 400,000 – 1 million people died building the wall – buried inside wall
- Unsuccessful keeping out invaders
  - 1200s Mongols defeat Tang Dynasty
  - 1800s Manchurians defeat Ming Dynasty
- New sections of the wall discovered as late as 2012
Han Dynasty 207 BCE – 220 CE

- Han Emperors included Wudi
  - Confucian philosophy
  - Civil Service System educated government officials
  - Imperial universities taught Confucian philosophy
- Roads and canals improved for internal trade
- Government monopoly on salt, iron, and alcohol
- Developed the Silk Roads for trade with the west—breaking China’s isolation
- Began China’s first Golden Age

Han Emperor Wudi
Han Golden Age

- Medicine
  - Acupuncture
  - Anesthesia
- Paper making from plant fibers
  - Connected sheets to create “books”
- Farming Technology
  - Wheelbarrow and iron plow
  - Water mill to grind grain
- Science and Technology
  - Ship rudder
  - Seismograph to measure earthquakes
  - Magnetic compass
  - Calendar based on sun and moon
  - Estimated Pi (3.14)
- Art - Jade, ivory, porcelain, silk

Acupuncture Chart
Silk Roads

- 4,000 miles of trade routes connecting China, to the Middle East, the Mediterranean, and Europe
- Used by merchants from 1\textsuperscript{st} century BCE – 15\textsuperscript{th} century CE
- Traded silk, porcelain, ceramics, spices, foods, animals (horses), gems, slaves
- Given the name “silk roads” in 1870s
Decline of the Han

- Han lost the Mandate of Heaven following the death of Wudi
  - Unity lost to local warlords for 400 years
  - Canals and roads began to crumble and were not maintained
  - High taxes led to revolts
  - Northern invaders overran the Great Wall of China
- No single family will have the Mandate of Heaven until the Tang Dynasty in the early 7th century C.E.
China’s First Four Dynasties

- Shang Dynasty 1500-1027 BCE
- Zhou Dynasty 1027-256 BCE
- Qin Dynasty 221-206 BCE
- Han Dynasty 202 BCE - 220 CE
- Great Wall of China
- Silk Route