

Lesson 3 The Qin and the Han

MAIN IDEAS

Government Shi Huangdi conquered the warring states, unified China, and built a strong government.

Government The Han Dynasty took over China and established a strong empire that lasted 400 years.

Culture Life in Han China set a pattern that is still seen today.

The Qin Unified China

ESSENTIAL QUESTION How did the Qin Dynasty unify China?

A Legalistic Ruler

- Under Mandate of Heaven ongoing wars were signs for new ruler
- New ruler was emperor **Shi Huangdi** from state of **Qin**
- Shi Huangdi began ending battles between warring states in 221 B.C.
 - conquered rival states, drove out nomad invaders, expanded China
- Shi Huangdi ran country as Legalist, wiped out Confucian teachings
 - had 460 critics and Confucianists killed, burned books

Uniting China

- Shi Huangdi wanted personal control of strong central government
 - weakened noble families by taking land, making them live at capital
- United his lands by building highways, irrigation projects
 - forced peasants to work on projects, used high taxes to fund them
- Set government standards for weights, measures, coins, writing
 - made it easier to trade and do business everywhere in China

The Great Wall

- Shi Huangdi built long wall on northern borders to stop invaders
 - forced hundreds of thousands of peasants, criminals to build it
 - many died from hard labor, creating resentment among people
- First Great Wall linked smaller walls from Time of Warring States

The Qin Dynasty Ends

- Shi Huangdi died in 210 B.C., was buried in elaborate tomb
 - army of terra cotta soldiers buried nearby; was discovered in 1974

REVIEW QUESTION

Why did Shi Huangdi kill so many Confucianists?

The Han Dynasty

ESSENTIAL QUESTION How did the Han rule China?

The Han Replace the Qin

- Civil war broke out at the end of the rule of Shi Huangdi's son
 - General Liu Bang defeated the Qin, ended the war, reunified China
- Liu Bang began **Han Dynasty**—lasted from 202 B.C. to about A.D. 220

Han Government

- Liu Bang kept strong government, lowered taxes, reduced punishments
 - had peasants build roads, canals, irrigation system
- Set up **bureaucracy**—chosen officials ran offices, bureaus
 - officials were often Han family members and trusted people
- To find officials, they gave people system of tests on Confucianism
 - tests helped select educated, ethical people for bureaucratic state

Empress Rules

- Liu Bang died in 195 B.C.; his widow, Empress Lü, ruled for her son
 - outlived her son, kept power by placing infants on the throne
 - died in 180 B.C.; all her relatives were executed

Expanding the Empire

- Wudi, known as the Martial Emperor, ruled from 141 to 87 B.C.
 - wars expanded borders to south China, north Vietnam, north Korea
- Han stayed in power despite rebellions, revolts, floods, famines

REVIEW QUESTION

How did the Han rulers find people for government jobs?

Life in Han China

ESSENTIAL QUESTION What was life in Han China like?

Daily Life in Han China

- Much of Han society lived in villages, worked on farms
 - most lived in one or two-story mud houses
 - rich farmers used oxen to pull plows; poor pulled plows themselves
 - simple clothing included clothes stuffed like a quilt for cool months
- Raised wheat, millet in north; raised rice in south
- Fish, meat were expensive so most people ate them in small portions

City Living

- Han cities were centers of trade, education, government
- Cities were crowded with merchants, craftspeople, government officials
- Entertainment included musicians, jugglers, acrobats
- Some writers say the cities also had street gangs

REVIEW QUESTION

How were the lives of farmers different from those of city dwellers?

Lesson Summary

- In 221 B.C., the Qin ruler Shi Huangdi unified China and ruled by harsh Legalist principles.
- The Han Dynasty ruled over a large and successful land.
- The Han Chinese way of life is reflected in Chinese life today.

Why It Matters Now . . .

Strong government remains important in Chinese life today.