

Qin and Han Dynasties

Qin Dynasty

In 221 B.C., after ruling for over 20 years, the Qin ruler assumed the name Shi Huangdi (shihwahn•dee), which means “First Emperor.” The new emperor had begun his reign by halting the internal battles that had sapped China’s strength. Next he turned his attention to defeating invaders and crushing resistance within China to his rule. Shi Huangdi’s armies attacked the invaders north of the Huang He and south as far as what is now Vietnam. His victories doubled China’s size. Shi Huangdi was determined to unify China.

Shi Huangdi acted decisively to crush political opposition at home. To destroy the power of rival warlords, he introduced a policy called “strengthening the trunk and weakening the branches.” He commanded all the noble families to live in the capital city under his suspicious gaze. This policy, according to tradition, uprooted 120,000 noble families.

To prevent criticism, Shi Huangdi murdered hundreds of Confucian scholars. They also ordered “useless” books burned. These books were the works of Confucian thinkers and poets who disagreed with the Legalists. Practical books about medicine and farming, however, were spared. Through measures such as these, Shi Huangdi established an **autocracy**—a government that has unlimited power and uses it in an arbitrary manner.



A Program of Centralization

Shi Huangdi’s sweeping program of centralization included the building of a highway network of more than 4,000 miles. Also, he set the same standards throughout China for writing, law, currency, and weights and measures—even down to the length of cart axles. This last standard made sure that all vehicles could fit into the ruts of China’s main roads. Under Shi Huangdi’s rule, irrigation projects increased farm production. Trade blossomed, thanks to the new road system. Trade pushed a new class of merchants into prominence. Despite these social advances, harsh taxes and repressive government made the Qin regime unpopular. Shi Huangdi had unified China at the expense of human freedom.

Great Wall of China

Scholars hated Shi Huangdi for his book burning. Poor people hated him because they were forced to work on the building of a huge defensive wall. Earlier, Zhou rulers had erected smaller walls to discourage attacks by northern nomads. Shi Huangdi determined to close the gaps and extend the wall almost the length of the empire’s border. Enemies would have to gallop halfway to Tibet to get around it.

The Great Wall of China arose on the backs of hundreds of thousands of peasants. The wall builders worked neither for wages nor for love of empire. They faced a terrible choice: work on the wall or die. Many of the laborers worked on the wall and died anyway, victims of the crushing labor or the harsh winter weather.

Han Dynasty

The Han Dynasty, which ruled China for more than 400 years, was so influential that even today many Chinese call themselves “people of the Han.”

Liu Bang’s, the Han’s first emperor, first goal was to destroy the rival kings’ power. He followed Shi Huangdi’s policy of establishing centralized government, in which a central authority controls the running of a state. Reporting to Liu Bang’s central government were hundreds of local provincials called commanderies.

When Liu Bang’s great-grandson took the throne, he continued Liu Bang’s centralizing policies. Wudi (woo•dee), who reigned from 141 to 87 B.C., held the throne longer than any other Han emperor. He is called the “Martial Emperor” because he adopted the policy of expanding the Chinese empire through war.

Wudi also colonized areas to the northeast, now known as Manchuria and Korea. He sent his armies south, where they conquered mountain tribes and set up Chinese colonies all the way into what is now Vietnam. By the end of Wudi’s reign, the empire had expanded nearly to the bounds of present-day China.

Structures of Han Government

The Chinese emperor relied on a complex **bureaucracy, government officials**, to help him rule. Running the bureaucracy and maintaining the imperial army were expensive. To raise money, the government levied taxes. Like the farmers in India, Chinese peasants owed part of their yearly crops to the government. Merchants also paid taxes.

Besides taxes, the peasants owed the government a month's worth of labor or military service every year. With this source of labor, the Han emperors built roads and dug canals and irrigation ditches. The emperors also filled the ranks of China's vast armies and expanded the Great Wall, which stretched across the northern frontier.

The Nine Chapter Law is the most important law in the Han Dynasty and had great influence on the laws in the Chinese history.

The authorship of the law is most commonly attributed to Xiao He. This law code was developed at the beginning of the Han Dynasty and learned lessons from the cruel and complex laws of the Qin. The new laws were less cruel and brief. For instance, previous punishments like branding, amputation of the nose, and cutting off the toes were replaced with imprisonment, being beaten with bamboo, or the death penalty. It covered almost every type of legal situation that could arise.

Confucianism—Civil Service Exams

Wudi's government employed more than 130,000 people. The bureaucracy included 18 different ranks of **civil service jobs**, which were government jobs that civilians obtained by taking **examinations**. At times, Chinese emperors rewarded loyal followers with government posts. However, another way to fill government posts evolved under the Han. This method involved testing applicants' knowledge of Confucianism—the teachings of Confucius, who had lived 400 years before.

Confucius had taught that gentlemen should practice "reverence [respect], generosity, truthfulness, diligence [industriousness], and kindness." Because these were exactly the qualities he wanted his government officials to have, Wudi set up a school where hopeful job applicants from all over China could come to study Confucius's works. After their studies, job applicants took formal examinations in history, law, literature, and Confucianism. In theory, anyone could take the exams. In practice, few peasants could afford to educate their sons. So sons of wealthy landowners had a chance at a government career. In spite of this flaw, the civil service system begun by Wudi worked so efficiently that it continued in China until 1912.

Technology Revolutionizes Chinese Life

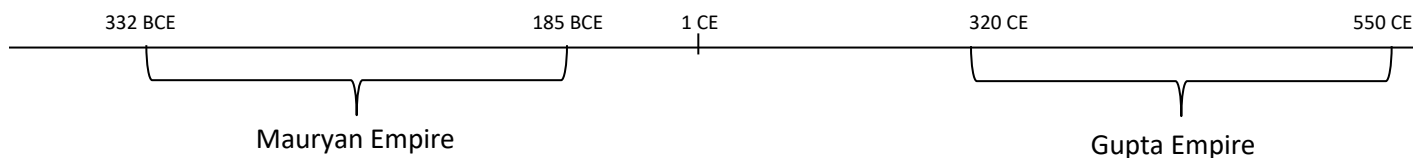
Advances in technology influenced all aspects of Chinese life. Paper was invented in A.D. 105. Before that, books were usually written on silk. But paper was cheaper, so books became more readily available. This helped spread education in China. The invention of paper also affected Chinese government. Formerly, all government documents had been recorded on strips of wood. Paper was much more convenient to use for record keeping, so Chinese bureaucracy expanded.

Another technological advance was the collar harness for horses. This invention allowed horses to pull much heavier loads than did the harness being used in Europe at the time. The Chinese perfected a plow that was more efficient because it had two blades. They also improved iron tools, invented the wheelbarrow, and began to use water mills to grind grain.



Beck, Roger B. *World History: Patterns of Interaction*. Evanston, IL: McDougal Littell, 2005. Print.

Mauryan Empire and Gupta Empire



Mauryan Empire

Chandragupta Maurya Unifies North India

Emperor Chandragupta moved northwest, seizing all the land from Magadha to the Indus. Around 305 B.C., Chandragupta began to battle Seleucus I, one of Alexander the Great's generals. Seleucus had inherited part of Alexander's empire. He wanted to reestablish Macedonian control over the Indus Valley. After several years of fighting, however, Chandragupta defeated Seleucus. By 303 B.C., the Mauryan Empire stretched more than 2,000 miles, uniting north India politically for the first time.

To win his wars of conquest, Chandragupta raised a vast army: 600,000 soldiers on foot, 30,000 soldiers on horseback, and 9,000 elephants. To clothe, feed, and pay these troops, the government levied high taxes. For example, farmers had to pay up to one-half the value of their crops to the king.

Running the Empire

Chandragupta relied on an adviser named Kautilya (kow•TIHL•yuh), a member of the priestly caste. Kautilya wrote a ruler's handbook called the Arthashastra (AHR•thuh• SHAHS•truh). This book proposed toughminded policies to hold an empire together, including spying on the people and employing political assassination. Following Kautilya's advice, Chandragupta created a highly bureaucratic government. He divided the empire into four provinces, each headed by a royal prince. Each province was then divided into local districts, whose officials assessed taxes and enforced the law.

Ashoka Promotes Buddhism

Chandragupta's grandson, Ashoka (uh•SOH•kuh), brought the Mauryan Empire to its greatest heights. Ashoka became king of the Mauryan Empire in 269 B.C. At first, he followed in Chandragupta's footsteps, waging war to expand his empire. During a bloody war against the neighboring state of Kalinga, 100,000 soldiers were slain, and even more civilians perished. Although victorious, Ashoka felt sorrow over the slaughter at Kalinga. As a result, he studied Buddhism and decided to rule by the Buddha's teaching of "peace to all beings."

Throughout the empire, Ashoka erected huge stone pillars inscribed with his new policies. Some edicts guaranteed that Ashoka would treat his subjects fairly and humanely. Others preached nonviolence. Still others urged religious toleration—acceptance of people who held different religious beliefs.

One of Ashoka's edicts states, "If one hundredth part or one thousandth of those who died in Kalinga . . . should now suffer similar fate, [that] would be a matter of pain to His Majesty." Even though Ashoka wanted to be a loving, peaceful ruler, he had to control a huge empire. He had to balance Kautilya's methods of keeping power and Buddha's urgings to be unselfish. Ashoka softened Chandragupta's harsher policies. Instead of spies, he employed officials to look out for his subjects' welfare. He kept his army but sought to rule humanely. In addition, Ashoka sent missionaries to Southeast Asia to spread Buddhism.

Ashoka had extensive roads built so that he could visit the far corners of India. He also improved conditions along these roads to make travel easier for his officials and to improve communication in the vast empire. For example, every nine miles he had wells dug and rest houses built. This allowed travelers to stop and refresh themselves. Such actions demonstrated Ashoka's concern for his subjects' well-being. Noble as his policies of toleration and nonviolence were, they failed to hold the empire together after Ashoka died in 232 B.C.

Gupta Empire

After 500 years of invasion and turmoil, a strong leader again arose in the northern state of Magadha. His name was Chandra Gupta (GUP•tuh), but he was no relation to India's first emperor, Chandragupta Maurya. India's second empire, the Gupta Empire, oversaw a great flowering of Indian civilization, especially Hindu culture.

The first Gupta emperor came to power not through battle but by marrying a daughter of an influential royal family. After his marriage, Chandra Gupta I took the title "Great King of Kings" in A.D. 320. His empire included Magadha and

the area north of it, with his power base along the Ganges River. His son, Samudra (suh•MU•druh) Gupta, became king in A.D. 335. Although a lover of the arts, Samudra had a warlike side. He expanded the empire through 40 years of conquest.

Trade Expands

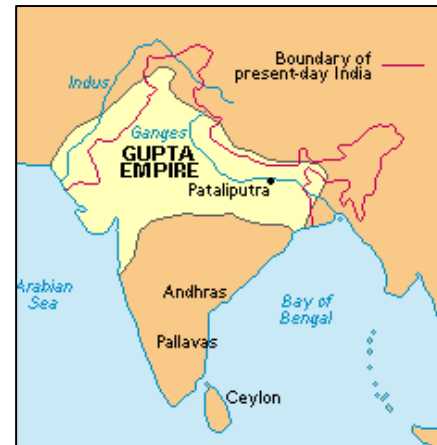
In addition to knowledge, India has always been rich in precious resources. Spices, diamonds, sapphires, gold, pearls, and beautiful woods—including ebony, teak, and fragrant sandalwood—have been valuable items of exchange. Trade between India and regions as distant as Africa and Sumeria began more than 4,000 years ago. Trade expanded even after the Mauryan Empire ended around 185 B.C.

Once Indians learned of the Silk Roads, they realized that they could make great profits by acting as middlemen. Middlemen are go-betweens in business transactions. For example, Indian traders would buy Chinese goods and sell them to traders traveling to Rome. To aid their role as middlemen, Indians built trading stations along the Silk Roads. They were located at oases, which are fertile spots in desert areas.

Sea trade also increased. Traders used coastal routes around the rim of the Arabian Sea and up the Persian Gulf to bring goods from India to Rome. In addition, traders from southern India would sail to Southeast Asia to collect spices. They brought the spices back to India and sold them to merchants from Rome.

Increased trade led to the rise of banking in India. Commerce was quite profitable. Bankers were willing to lend money to merchants and charge them interest on the loans.

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Rome

The Roman Republic

Around 600 B.C., an Etruscan became king of Rome. In the decades that followed, Rome grew from a collection of hilltop villages to a city that covered nearly 500 square miles. Various kings ordered the construction of Rome's first temples and public centers—the most famous of which was the Forum, the heart of Roman political life.

In 509 B.C. the Romans established a republic, from the Latin phrase *res publica*, which means “public affairs.” A republic is a form of government in which power rests with citizens who have the right to vote for their leaders. In Rome, citizenship with voting rights was granted only to free-born male citizens.

Twelve Tables

An important victory for the plebeians was to force the creation of a written law code. With laws unwritten, patrician officials often interpreted the law to suit themselves. In 451 B.C., a group of ten officials began writing down Rome's laws. The laws were carved on twelve tablets, or tables, and hung in the Forum. They became the basis for later Roman law. The Twelve Tables established the idea that all free citizens had a right to the protection of the law.

Government Under the Republic

In the first century B.C., Roman writers boasted that Rome had achieved a balanced government. What they meant was that their government had taken the best features of a monarchy, an aristocracy, and a democracy. Rome had two officials called consuls. Like kings, they commanded the army and directed the government. However, their power was limited. A consul's term was only one year long. The same person could not be elected consul again for ten years. Also, one consul could always overrule, or veto, the other's decisions.



The senate was the aristocratic branch of Rome's government. It had both legislative and administrative functions in the republic. Its 300 members were chosen from the upper class of Roman society. Later, plebeians were allowed in the senate. The senate exercised great influence over both foreign and domestic policy.

In addition to their government, the Romans placed great value on their military. All citizens who owned land were required to serve in the army. Seekers of certain public offices had to perform ten years of military service. Roman soldiers were organized into large military units called legions. The Roman legion was made up of some 5,000 heavily armed foot soldiers (infantry). A group of soldiers on horseback (cavalry) supported each legion. Legions were divided into smaller groups of 80 men, each of which was called a century. The military organization and fighting skill of the Roman army were key factors in Rome's rise to greatness.

The Republic Collapses

Rome's increasing wealth and expanding boundaries brought many problems. The most serious were growing discontent among the lower classes of society and a breakdown in military order. These problems led to a shakeup of the republic—and the emergence of a new political system.

Many nobles and senators expressed concern over Caesar's growing power, success, and popularity. Some feared losing their influence. Others considered him a tyrant. A number of important senators plotted his assassination. On March 15, 44 B.C., they stabbed him to death in the senate chamber.

Beginning of the Empire

After Caesar's death, civil war broke out again and destroyed what was left of the Roman Republic. While he restored some aspects of the republic, Octavian became the unchallenged ruler of Rome. Eventually he accepted the title of Augustus (aw•GUHS•tuhs), or “exalted one.” He also kept the title emperor, or “supreme military commander,” a term from which emperor is derived. Rome was now an empire ruled by one man.

Rome was at the peak of its power from the beginning of Augustus's rule in 27 B.C. to A.D. 180. For 207 years, peace reigned throughout the empire, except for some fighting with tribes along the borders. This period of peace and prosperity is known as the Pax Romana— “Roman peace.” During this time, the Roman Empire included more than 3 million square miles. Its population numbered between 60 and 80 million people.

A Sound Government

The Romans held their vast empire together in part through efficient government and able rulers. Augustus was Rome's ablest emperor. He stabilized the frontier, glorified Rome with splendid public buildings, and created a system of government that survived for centuries. He set up a civil service. That is, he paid workers to manage the affairs of

government, such as the grain supply, tax collection, and the postal system. Although the senate still functioned, civil servants drawn from plebeians and even former slaves actually administered the empire.

After Augustus died in A.D. 14, the system of government that he established maintained the empire's stability. This was due mainly to the effectiveness of the civil service in carrying out day-to-day operations. The Romans managed to control an empire that by the second century A.D. reached from Spain to

Mesopotamia, from North Africa to Britain. Included in its provinces were people of many languages, cultures, and customs.

The three major elements of the Imperial Roman state were the central government, the military, and provincial government. The military established control of a territory through war, but after a city or people was brought under treaty, the military mission turned to policing: protecting Roman citizens (after 212 AD, all freeborn inhabitants of the Empire), the agricultural fields that fed them, and religious sites. Without modern instruments of either mass communication or mass destruction, the Romans lacked sufficient manpower or resources to impose their rule through force alone. Cooperation with local power elites was necessary to maintain order, collect information, and extract revenue. The Romans often exploited internal political divisions by supporting one faction over another.

Communities with demonstrated loyalty to Rome retained their own laws, could collect their own taxes locally, and in exceptional cases were exempt from Roman taxation. Legal privileges and relative independence were an incentive to remain in good standing with Rome. Roman government was thus limited, but efficient in its use of the resources available to it.

Central Government

The dominance of the emperor was based on the consolidation of certain powers from several republican offices, including the inviolability of the tribunes of the people and the authority of the censors to manipulate the hierarchy of Roman society. The emperor also made himself the central religious authority as Pontifex Maximus, and centralized the right to declare war, ratify treaties, and negotiate with foreign leaders. While these functions were clearly defined during the Principate (early period of Roman Empire), the emperor's powers over time became less constitutional and more monarchical, culminating in the Dominate.

The emperor was the ultimate authority in policy- and decision-making, but in the early Principate he was expected to be accessible to individuals from all walks of life, and to deal personally with official business and petitions. A bureaucracy formed around him only gradually. The emperors relied on an informal body of advisors that included not only senators, but trusted slaves and freedmen. After Nero, the unofficial influence of the latter was regarded with suspicion, and the emperor's council became subject to official appointment for the sake of greater transparency. The women of the emperor's family often intervened directly in his decisions.

Although the senate could do little short of assassination and open rebellion to contravene the will of the emperor, it retained its symbolic political centrality during the Principate. The senate legitimated the emperor's rule, and the emperor needed the experience of senators to serve as generals, diplomats, and administrators.

The practical source of an emperor's power and authority was the military. The legionaries were paid by the Imperial treasury, and swore an annual military oath of loyalty to the emperor. No emperor could hope to rule without the allegiance and loyalty of the Praetorian Guard and of the legions. To secure their loyalty, several emperors paid the donativum, a monetary reward. In theory, the Senate was entitled to choose the new emperor, but did so mindful of acclamation by the army or Praetorians.

Roman Emperors, A.D. 37–A.D. 180					
Bad Emperors			Good Emperors		
Caligula • 37–41 • Mentally disturbed	Nero • 54–68 • Good administrator but vicious • Murdered many • Persecuted Christians	Domitian • 81–96 • Ruled dictatorially • Feared treason everywhere and executed many	Nerva • 96–98 • Began custom of adopting heir Trajan • 98–117 • Empire reached its greatest extent • Undertook vast building program • Enlarged social welfare	Hadrian • 117–138 • Consolidated earlier conquests • Reorganized the bureaucracy Antoninus Pius • 138–161 • Reign largely a period of peace and prosperity	Marcus Aurelius • 161–180 • Brought empire to height of economic prosperity • Defeated invaders • Wrote philosophy