CHINA OVERVIEW:

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CHINESE DYNASTIES

The 4 Old-World River Valley Cultures

SILK ROAD

o China to Eastern Europe
o Followed northern borders of China, India, and Persia and ended in Eastern Europe near today's Turkey and the Mediterranean Sea.

GEOGRAPHY OF CHINA

- Larger than the United States
- Climate varies
  - North
    - Temperate and cold
  - South
    - Subtropical
    - Floods and droughts
- Important rivers
  - Hwang ho (Yellow River) – north
  - Yangtze River – central China
- Enclosed by high mountains, hot deserts, wide oceans
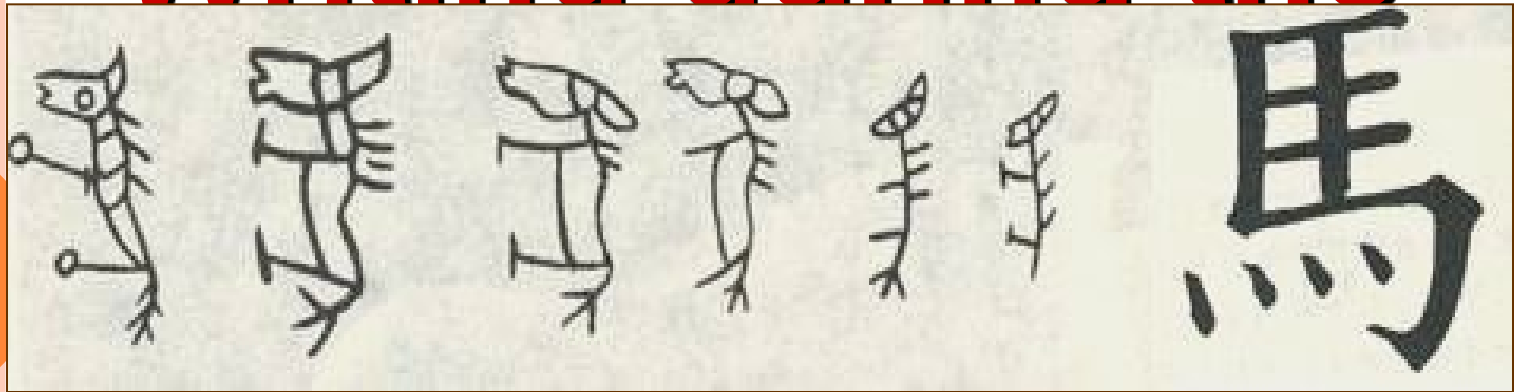- Isolated like Egypt

ANCIENT HISTORY

- Village settlements along Hwang ho River
- Farming, stone tools, weapons (bow and arrow), animal domestication, pottery
- Picture writing (oldest writing in existence)
- Now there are over 40,000 characters

The Evolution of Chinese Writing during the

Pictographs ⟶ Semantic-Phonetics

WHAT ARE DYNASTIES?

- A **dynasty** is a series of rulers from the same family.
- Historically, royal rule was descended from father to son.

DYNASTIC CYCLE

MANDATE OF HEAVEN –Belief that the emperor was chosen by heaven to rule.

"T'ien Ming"
The Mandate of Heaven

1. The leader must lead by ability and virtue.

2. The dynasty's leadership must be justified by succeeding generations.

3. The mandate could be revoked by negligence and abuse; the will of the people was important.

Start here→ A new dynasty comes to power.

The emperor improves government & life in general

Lives of common people improved; Taxes are reduced Promote farming

The Dynastic Cycle

Emperor is defeated

Rebels eventually attack emperor & Lords abandon emperor

Lords loyalty starts to lessen Poor not happy & start to rebel

Problems begin Wars Invasions, etc

Government spending increases

Corruption starts

Natural Disasters Droughts, floods, famines

N

CHINA

Chou
Dynasty

CHINA
Chou Dynasty
1027 – 256 B.C.

Land under rule

Current political
boundaries

Kilometers
0   500

0   500
Miles

ZHOU (A.K.A. CHOU) DYNASTY
(1045-256 BCE)

- Invaded China from the northwest
- Set up a loose central government
- Feudal power held by strong nobles

- Religions established
  - Confucianism
  - Taoism

CHINA

Ch'in Dynasty

CHINA
Ch'in Dynasty
221 – 206 B.C.

Land under rule

Great Wall

Current political boundaries

Kilometers
0   500

0   500
Miles

QIN (A.K.A. CHIN) DYNASTY
(221-206 BCE)

- Military dictatorship centralized China
- Emperor Shih Huang Ti
  - Destroyed nobles' feudal power
  - Created a system of taxation
  - Established weights and measures
  - Great Wall (1500 miles)/Terracotta Warriors

N

CHINA

LO YANG
CHANG'AN

Han
Dynasty

CHINA
Han Dynasty
206 B.C. - 220 A.D.

Land under rule

Great Wall

Current political
boundaries

Kilometers
0   500

0   500
Miles

Han Dynasty

(206-220 CE)

- Conquerors
- Trade – Silk Roads Developed
  - Chinese fruits, silks, and spices in Rome (1st century CE)
  - Buddhism came from India
- Civil service system
- First paper made