Chinese Notes

Concepts

--Mandate of Heaven

--Dynastic Cycle

--Chinese Dynasty Song

Shang, Zhou, Qin, Han
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Sui, Tang, Song
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Yuan, Ming, Qing, Republic
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Mao Zedong
Deng Xiaoping

Dynasties

Xia – Legendary Neolithic

Decentralized

Shang - took over the Xia;

Use of Oracle Bones;

Bronze Age Dynasty;

control of irrigation – comparable to: Egypt

Decentralized

Zhou / Period of Warring States – Took over from Shang in the same way they were taken over;

first use of Mandate of Heaven;

first explanation of Dynastic Cycle.

Compare to Ottoman Empire (Dying Man of Europe);

Compare to the Fall of Rome (Civil Strife)

Birth of Traditional Chinese Philosophies (Confucianism and Daoism) (Compare to Christianity)

Decentralized

Five Classics: Book of Poems, Book of History, Book of Changes, Spring and Autumn Annals, Book of Rites

The Analects during Period of Warring States. New ideas come from times of strife.

Qin – short lived, but powerful…the start of the empire.

Ch’ang-an (later copied by the Japanese) capital city; Great Wall(s) of China; Terra Cotta Soldiers

Centralized Gov’t

Standardization of Measurements

Standardization of Currency

Flying Money (Paper Money)

Han- created by Qin General Liu Bang in a rebellion;

Centralized Gov’t

Empire goes north into Manchuria

Civil Service Exam created (later with Neo-Confucianism (Tang Dynasty) will have required Confucian writings)

Liu Ch’e (ruled 140 BCE- 87 BCE) longest ruling emperor of Han

Use of leveling of prices –keeping prices the same regardless of actual price, by price fixing by the gov’t

Buddhism enters into China

Silk Road (China-Central Asia- Mediterranean)- jade, silk, Chinese goods in exchange for gold, silver, wool, Greek/Roman goods

50 million Chinese population

Paper-Gunpowder Irony (Spread of Christianity AND Spread of Islam). Paper used to define Europe and printing press…spreads Christianity through the printing of the Bible. Gunpowder defines Muslim empires of Ottomans, Safavids and Mughals (helps win battles and spread Islam).

Sui

Replace the Han in 589 CE

Han is disrupted in 220, and there is going to be several waves of invaders, just like the Roman dynasty for several hundred years all the way to the late 500’s, the Sui will be the invaders who successfully invade China.

Sui were brief rulers who built the Grand Canal creating good trade conditions connecting North and South China (first connection…will help set the stage for Tang “Golden Age”

They didn’t last because they tried to do too much at once such as:

Conquering too much at once, because they lacked infrastructure such as roads and canals. (in other words, they were winning too fast and expanded without infrastructure catching up…which led to its downfall.

Tried to attack Southern part of Manchuria and northern Korea

Defeated by Turks in 615 (who were much further east in the 600s)

Tang

618 Sui ended and Tang replaced them after an uprising

The Tang got rid of the Turks and extended China’s frontiers to the furthest west they have ever been – butting up against India

To the East China is influencing Korea and Japan

Art included figurines used in burials

700s New Capital City Xi’an two million people living in this capital, overwhelming all other cities as the largest cities in the world (Compare populations of Europe in Renaissance, which may reach 100,000)

Li Bo (Daoist) was a famous poet from this era as well as Du Fu (Confucian) writing during the 700’s who both stole from philosophers

Outside influence of new thought, Buddhism peaks in China

Had all ethnics living side by side there – Very cosmopolitan empire

Empress Wu (c. 625-705) is an outspoken supporter of Buddhism, was only empress who held power in her own name; this was because Buddhism doesn’t believe in class systems such as Man over Women…as is the case with Confucianism.

Buddhism forms several sects of religion such as Zen Buddhism (later to be exported to Japan), but Zen Buddhism is born in China. China creates a Buddhist/Daoist mix.

Government worried about Buddhist monasteries, and eventually the Tang dynasty destroys monasteries. 250,000 monks had to return to everyday life. Neo Confucianism is the new social order and sticks around for about 1000 years all the way up to the 1900’s. This is when the civil service exam requires Confucian writings and ultimately solidifies Chinese dependency on Confucian thought.

Tang dynasty peaks around 750 and declined ever since until it falls in about 900. (another sample of Dynastic Cycle)

Ended in 907 along with the ending of the Golden Age of China

Sung (or Song) 269

Yuan 274

Ming410

Qing 410

Republic 573

Communist (Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping…) 660