

Patterns in Chinese History

1. Ethnocentrism

Chinese believed their culture superior to others
China as "Middle Kingdom"

2. Xenophobia

Fear and distrust of foreigners

3. Creativity and innovation

Inventions
Art and literature

4. Importance of family

Oldest male in charge, respected
Ancestor worship

5. Low status of women

Social and economic

6. Natural hazards

Floods and droughts sometimes led to mass starvation

7. Authoritarian, strong, central bureaucratic government (later)

8. Dynastic cycle

Mandate of Heaven
Revolts against strong, often abusive, central government

9. Cultural conservatism

very little change in culture for 3,500 years

10. Education important

11. Hard lives of peasants

Match patterns w/ specific following events identified w/ *.

Shang Dynasty (~1750 - 1027 BCE)

First known Chinese dynasty (advanced urbana culture or civilization)

*importance - established long term cultural characteristics

Dynastic cycle established

*Strong emperors/kings - based on Mandate of heaven
energetic at first

stagnation, cruelty, natural disasters, and/or weak rulers

*peasant rebellions

new, energetic dynasty

*"Middle Kingdom" center of world & order

*surrounded by barbarians

Built along Hwang Ho/Yellow River

River cut through flat valley of compacted red dust (loess)

**Floods covered thousands of square miles

changed course 26 times

Weather hot in summer & cold in winter (continental climate)

***Warlike - chronic warfare

Developed chariots to fight barbarian outsiders

enslaved captives

First Chinese writing - calligraphy

*Half the books in the world by 1800 AD - Chinese

Fine jade and bronze art

*Used molds, drills and rotary saws

Beautiful pottery and silk products

*Accurate calendar

*Peasants lived in crude, leaky pit houses near river, farmland

Used stone tools

Rice, fruit, millet, silk, cotton, wheat

Religion

Animism

*Ancestor worship

Human and animal sacrifice

*Women treated as inferiors - sometimes sold into slavery or as concubines

A. Aiken
Border H.

Last emperors cruel, lazy, hedonistic, hated
Mistress of last emperor tortured officials
(greased pole over coals)
*Overthrown by slave revolt
support from Chou (west) and many Shang
Lost Mandate of Heaven

Zhou Dynasty (1027 - 480 BCE)

Longest dynasty in Chinese history

Defeated more advanced Shang people
*Adopted and built on Shang culture/achievements
Expanded territory

*Extensive canals and dikes built in south for rice

*Iron - improvement over bronze
weapons and plow tip

Much warfare among nobility
*Crossbow first developed
Cavalry added to chariots and foot soldiers

Feudalism

Nobles lived in palaces inside walled cities
Fought other nobles for land and power
Merchants, artisans, government bureaucrats and laborers
Lived in cities
Trade developed w/ other cultures
*Did not adopt many foreign ideas
*Peasants lived in temporary thatched huts near fields
Winter - earthen pit houses
Farmed, paid taxes to nobles/landlords
Men served in army and on public projects
*Women often abused by nobles
Nobles protected peasants from wandering bandits and nomads

*Ended - infighting by independent nobles and weak emperors
Lost Mandate of Heaven

Warring States (480 - 221 BCE)

Confucius born 552 BCE - ideas not accepted until later Han Dynasty