Shi Huangdi

When China’s warring states period ended, the Qin dynasty emerged victorious and created an empire whose emperor was known as Shi Huangdi.

The Qin dynasty was a legalist dynasty, and it rules over its subjects with an iron fist. Shi forced thousands of families to migrate to the capital so the empire could watch over them.

Anyone that criticized of disagreed with Shi got punished severely. Shi is said to have killed hundreds of scholars.

Even though his methods were cruel, he brought order to China.

* He standardized units of measurements
* Established the national language and currency
* He expanded the empire and conquered new lands.
* One of his most famous construction projects was the great wall of China.

Shi Huangdi died in 210 BCE and was buried in a tomb with terracotta soldiers that were meant to protect him from evil spirits in the afterlife.

The Great Wall of China

Shi Huangdi built the great wall of China in order to keep invaders out of China.

While China’s other borders were protected by natural barriers, its north border was open to attack from nomadic, horseback riding traps from central Asia.

The emperor forced hundreds of thousands of pheasants to work and build the great wall and many of these workers fell ill of the extreme labor and died.

The Han Dynasty

Lui Bang, a rebelling farmer, overthrew the Qin dynasty and became the emperor of the Han Dynasty in 202 BC.

Han emperors used less cruel practices than those of the Qin Dynasty. They replaced legalism with Confucianism and used Confucius’s teachings as a guide on how to rule society.

The Han dynasty was a Bureaucracy where appointed officials ran the offices.

Liu Bang’s wife was the first woman ruler in China’s history for the Han dynasty after Lui bang died.

The Han dynasty had large cities where merchants, locals and officials lived with Some of them having populations up to 500,000. However, most of the people in China were pheasants and lived in small villages close to their farms.

The Han Dynasty lasted c. 400 years. People in China sometimes call themselves “People of the Han” just because of the accomplishments of the Han dynasty.

Genghis Khan

Before he died, Genghis Khan has united the nomadic tribes, conquered China, and ruled as the emperor for all of central Asia.

The Mongols were a loose collection of nomadic tribes from the steppes (the vast grasslands north of China). A child named Temujin was born, and he became an ambitious, clever and great warrior. He received the title “Genghis Khan” by the Mongols, which means “Universal Ruler”. Genghis Khan united all of the Mongol tribes in order to conquer more land for the Mongols.

In 1212, Genghis Khan and the Mongols invaded northern China while destroying more than 90 cities and killing their inhabitants. After, he invaded and captured southern Russia and Iran; he eventually destroyed China’s capital in 1215.

After Genghis died in 1226, his 4 sons divided the Mongolian empire in 4 khanates (regions) and expanded their borders into Europe and Southern China.

Kublai Khan, a grandson of Genghis Khan, became leader of the Mongolian empire in 1264 and by 1271 conquered most of southern China. He declared himself emperor of China and adopted the Yuan Dynasty.

Life in Yuan, China

Kublai Khan, the first emperor of the Yuan dynasty, took a different approach to governing his subjects that previous emperors. Instead of destroying villages and innocents, Kublai Khan let the people live and accepted them into the bottom 2 social classes in classical life. Any rebellion was shut down instantly, Ex: the Song dynasty uprising with over 200,000 troops was almost instantly crushed.

The yuan dynasty had major accomplishments:

* Built Roads
* Build the great canal
* Created a postal service
* Introduced an accurate calendar
* Chinese literature flourished

Geography of Japan

Japan is known as an archipelago (a group of islands in the ocean) that is located on the east side of Asia. Japan is roughly the size of Montana. Japan is located on the ring of fire. Japan’s isolation has had a large impact on its culture, this isolation lead to Japan being made up of just one ethnicity and lead to the nation having a strong sense of unity.

Because of Japan being on the ring of fire, it is prone to tsunamis, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

Japanese Culture

Original religion- Shinto ;AKA the way of the gods

Shinto is based on the belief that spiritual powers reside in nature.

Shinto worship is relatively simple. People typically visit a shrine and purity themselves. After, people perform rituals that often involve bells, music and dancing.

People from Siberia and Korea settled in Japan around 30,000 years ago. Around 300 BC, a new wave of immigrants came into Japan. Japan was ruled by powerful clans. After 300 AD the power of the Japanese society increases.

The Shinto religion served as a strong and unifying factor in the development of Japan.