**NOTE: This is an official document by Indexademics. Unless otherwise stated, this document may not be accredited to individuals or groups other than the club IDX, nor should this document be distributed, sold, or modified for personal use in any way.**

**IDX G9 HISTORY S STUDY GUIDE ISSUE 4**

**By Gavin Yu**

**Scope for History 9S 2024 S1 Final:**

**3.5, 12.1, 12.2, 12.3, 12.4**

**3.5 Rule Rulers Unit China**

**Unification of China**

Shi Huangdi, originally known as Zheng, unified China in 221 B.C. after defeating rival states. His reign marked the beginning of China's classical age, characterized by significant developments in governance, philosophy, and culture.

**Legalism and Authoritarian Rule**

* Shi Huangdi adopted Legalism, a philosophy emphasizing strict laws and harsh punishments, based on the teachings of Hanfeizi.
* Legalism viewed human nature as inherently evil, necessitating strong governance to maintain order.
* Shi Huangdi's regime was marked by severe measures against dissent, including book burnings and persecution of Confucian scholars.

**Centralization of Power**

To consolidate power, Shi Huangdi abolished feudalism, replacing it with military districts governed by loyal officials. He enforced high taxes on peasants to fund his projects and military.

**Standardization and Infrastructure**

* Shi Huangdi standardized weights, measures, and currency to promote unity.
* He initiated extensive infrastructure projects, including roads and canals, to enhance transportation.
* The Great Wall of China was constructed to protect against invasions, symbolizing the emperor's ability to mobilize resources.

**Collapse of the Qin Dynasty**

After Shi Huangdi's death in 210 B.C., widespread discontent over heavy taxation and forced labor led to revolts, culminating in the fall of the Qin dynasty in 206 B.C.

**The Rise of the Han Dynasty**

Gao Zu, a peasant leader, established the Han dynasty, restoring order and reducing taxes while incorporating Confucian scholars into governance.

**Emperor Wudi's Reforms**

* Wudi, the most renowned Han emperor, expanded the empire and improved the economy through infrastructure and granary systems.
* He established a monopoly on iron and salt, providing the government with alternative revenue sources.

**Silk Road and Expansionism**

Wudi's expansionist policies led to the establishment of the Silk Road, facilitating trade between China and the West. This network allowed for the exchange of goods, culture, and ideas.

**Civil Service System**

* The Han dynasty implemented a merit-based civil service system, promoting educated officials over hereditary positions.
* Confucian teachings guided the training of scholars, emphasizing moral integrity and knowledge.

**Achievements of the Han Golden Age**

The Han period is recognized as a golden age of Chinese civilization, marked by advancements in various fields:

* **Science and Medicine:** Innovations in astronomy, chemistry, and medicine, including acupuncture.
* **Technology:** Inventions such as paper, the rudder, and advanced shipbuilding techniques.
* **Arts:** Flourishing of literature, poetry, and craftsmanship, with notable works like Ban Zhao's "Lessons for Women."

**Buddhism's Influence**

By A.D. 100, Buddhism spread into China, offering a new spiritual path that contrasted with traditional values. Its emphasis on personal salvation resonated with many, especially during times of crisis.

**Conclusion**

The legacies of Shi Huangdi, Gao Zu, and Wudi shaped a unified China, establishing a framework for governance and culture that would endure for centuries. Despite periods of disunity, the foundations laid during the Han dynasty continued to influence Chinese civilization.

**12.1 Two Golden Ages of China**

The Tang and Song dynasties are often referred to as two golden ages of China, characterized by significant advancements in various fields. The Tang dynasty emerged in 618 AD, following a period of division after the Han dynasty's collapse. The Sui dynasty briefly reunited China, but it was the Tang that restored stability and prosperity.

**The Tang Dynasty**

* **Reunification:** The Tang dynasty was established by Li Yuan and his son Li Shimin, who became known as Tang Taizong. They successfully reunited China and expanded its territory.
* **Tributary States:** The Tang dynasty established tributary relationships with neighboring regions such as Vietnam, Tibet, and Korea, which acknowledged Chinese supremacy.
* **Government Reforms:** Empress Wu Zhao and other Tang rulers restored the Han system of government, expanded the civil service, and implemented land reforms to weaken large landowners and increase tax revenues.
* **Decline:** The Tang dynasty eventually weakened due to corruption, high taxes, and external pressures, leading to its fall in 907 AD.

**Technological Advances**

* **Gunpowder:** Invented around 850 AD, initially used for fireworks and later for military applications.
* **Block Printing:** Developed in the 700s, this technique involved carving entire pages onto wooden blocks.
* **Movable Type:** Invented in the 1040s, allowing for more efficient printing processes.
* **Mechanical Clocks:** Introduced in the 700s, these clocks used a series of wheels and shafts to tell time accurately.

**The Song Dynasty**

Founded in 960 AD by Zhao Kuangyin, the Song dynasty ruled for 319 years but controlled less territory than the Tang. Despite facing constant threats from northern invaders, the Song dynasty was marked by significant cultural and economic achievements.

* **Economic Expansion:** Improved farming methods and the introduction of fast-growing rice led to increased agricultural productivity, allowing for two crops a year.
* **Trade Flourishment:** Foreign trade thrived, with merchants from various regions exchanging goods. The government introduced paper money to facilitate trade.
* **Grand Canal:** This canal linked major rivers, enhancing internal trade and allowing for the efficient transport of food to the capital.

**Social Structure**

China's society during the Tang and Song dynasties was well-ordered, with the emperor at the top, followed by a bureaucracy of officials. The two main social classes were the gentry and the peasantry.

* **Gentry:** Wealthy landowners who valued education and often served as scholar-officials. They were expected to master Confucian classics and pass civil service exams.
* **Peasants:** The majority of the population, who worked the land and lived on what they produced. They could improve their status through education.
* **Merchants:** Despite acquiring wealth, merchants held a lower social status due to Confucian beliefs that their riches came from the labor of others.

**Status of Women**

Women in the Tang and early Song dynasties enjoyed a higher status than in later periods. They managed family affairs and had authority within the home. However, the practice of foot binding emerged, symbolizing women's subordination and limiting their mobility.

**Cultural Achievements**

The Tang and Song dynasties were rich in culture, with advancements in art, literature, and architecture.

* **Art:** Chinese landscape painting flourished, emphasizing harmony with nature. Calligraphy and poetry were also highly regarded.
* **Architecture:** The pagoda evolved from the Indian stupa, becoming a prominent feature in Chinese architecture.
* **Literature:** Poetry was the most respected literary form, with notable poets like Li Bo and Du Fu addressing themes of nature, war, and social issues.

**12.2 The Mongol and Ming empires**

Around 1200, the Mongols began their expansion from Central Asia, ultimately conquering vast territories across Asia and Europe, including Song China. Genghis Khan, the leader who united the Mongol tribes, imposed strict military discipline and loyalty among his troops, leading to significant victories.

* Genghis Khan's reputation for fierceness included ordering massacres but also rewarding bravery.
* His successors continued the conquest, expanding the empire and dominating much of Asia for 150 years.
* The Mongols faced challenges when attacking fortified cities, leading them to adopt new military technologies like cannons.

**Pax Mongolica**

After their conquests, the Mongols established a period known as the Pax Mongolica, characterized by relative peace and stability. This era allowed for economic growth and cultural exchanges across Eurasia, particularly along the Silk Road.

* Trade flourished, and people could travel safely across vast distances.
* Technological and cultural exchanges included the spread of gunpowder and papermaking techniques from China to Europe.

**China Under Mongol Rule**

Genghis Khan's grandson, Kublai Khan, completed the conquest of southern China in 1279. He ruled from Khanbaliq (modern Beijing) and sought to maintain Mongol identity by reserving military and high government positions for Mongols while allowing Chinese officials to govern provinces.

* Kublai Khan adopted the Yuan dynasty name and integrated some Chinese customs into his rule.
* He improved infrastructure, including the Grand Canal, to facilitate trade.

**Marco Polo's Accounts**

Marco Polo traveled to China and served Kublai Khan for 17 years. His writings provided a vivid description of China's wealth and culture, sparking European interest in Asia. He detailed the grandeur of Kublai Khan's palace and the efficiency of the royal mail system.

**The Decline of the Yuan Dynasty**

After Kublai Khan's death in 1294, the Yuan dynasty faced decline due to heavy taxation, corruption, and natural disasters, leading to uprisings. Zhu Yuanzhang, a peasant leader, eventually overthrew the Mongols in 1368, establishing the Ming dynasty.

**The Ming Dynasty's Restoration of Chinese Rule**

The Ming dynasty sought to restore Chinese culture and governance after years of foreign rule. They moved the capital back to Beijing and reinstated the civil service system, emphasizing Confucian learning.

* The economy thrived due to improved agricultural practices and the introduction of new crops from the Americas.
* Ming cities became centers of industry, producing porcelain, paper, and tools.

**Cultural Flourishing in the Ming Era**

The Ming dynasty saw a revival in arts and literature, with unique styles of painting and the production of blue and white porcelain. Popular literature emerged, including novels and detective stories.

**Zheng He's Voyages**

Admiral Zheng He led seven expeditions from 1405 to 1433 to promote trade and collect tribute. His fleets visited Southeast Asia, India, and East Africa, showcasing China's power and establishing trade networks.

* Zheng He's voyages demonstrated China's naval capabilities and fostered international relations.
* After his death, the Ming emperor banned seagoing ships, leading to a decline in overseas exploration.

**12.3-12.5 Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia**

The geography of the Korean peninsula, characterized by mountains and a long coastline, shaped its development. Most Koreans live along the western coastal plains, which are the primary farming regions due to the difficulty of agriculture in mountainous areas.

**Historical Context of Korea**

* **Silla Dynasty:** United the Korean peninsula in 668, flourishing in arts and culture.
* **Koryo Dynasty:** Known for advancements in printing and celadon pottery, it lasted from 935 to 1392.
* **Choson (Yi) Dynasty:** Established in 1392, it emphasized Confucian principles and saw the creation of the Korean alphabet, Hangul, under King Sejong.

**Geography's Role in Development**

Korea's location near China allowed for cultural exchanges, but it also served as a cultural bridge to Japan. The mountainous terrain and extensive coastline influenced settlement patterns and economic activities, particularly fishing.

**Influence of Buddhism**

Buddhism became a powerful force in Korea, leading to the construction of numerous temples and the establishment of a national Confucian academy. However, conflicts between peasants and aristocrats eventually led to the downfall of the Silla dynasty.

**Japan's Cultural Development**

Japan, located on an archipelago, was influenced by both Chinese and Korean cultures while maintaining its unique identity. The Yamato clan emerged as a dominant force, establishing Japan's first dynasty and claiming descent from the sun goddess, Amaterasu.

**Shinto and Early Japanese Society**

Shinto, the indigenous religion of Japan, emphasized the worship of kami, or natural spirits. The early Japanese society was organized into clans, with women holding respected positions. However, as feudalism developed, the status of women declined.

**Chinese Influence on Japan**

Prince Shotoku of the Yamato clan sought to learn from China, sending students to study there. This led to the adoption of Chinese governmental structures, writing systems, and cultural practices, although Japan selectively borrowed and adapted these influences.

**The Heian Period**

During the Heian period (794-1185), Japanese culture flourished, with notable contributions from women in literature. Murasaki Shikibu wrote "The Tale of Genji," the world's first novel, reflecting the sophisticated culture of the time.

**Feudalism in Japan**

As feudal warfare increased, a warrior aristocracy emerged, with the shogun holding real power while the emperor remained a figurehead. The samurai followed the bushido code, emphasizing honor and loyalty.

**Economic Growth and Cultural Exchange**

Despite the rigid social structure, Japan's economy grew, leading to the rise of a wealthy merchant class. The Tokugawa shogunate (1600-1868) established centralized feudalism, promoting stability and economic development.

**Influence of Buddhism in Southeast Asia**

In Southeast Asia, Buddhism spread alongside Indian culture, significantly impacting local societies. The region's geography facilitated trade, leading to cultural exchanges between India and Southeast Asia.

**Geography of Southeast Asia**

* **Mainland Southeast Asia:** Includes countries like Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam.
* **Island Southeast Asia:** Comprises over 20,000 islands, including Indonesia and the Philippines.

**Indian Influence in Southeast Asia**

Indian traders and priests introduced Hinduism and Buddhism, influencing local cultures. The Pagan kingdom in Myanmar and the Khmer empire in Cambodia exemplified the blend of Indian and local traditions.

**Vietnam's Unique Identity**

Vietnam experienced significant Chinese influence after being conquered by Han armies in 111 B.C. However, the Vietnamese maintained a strong sense of identity, exemplified by the uprising led by the Trung sisters in A.D. 39.