

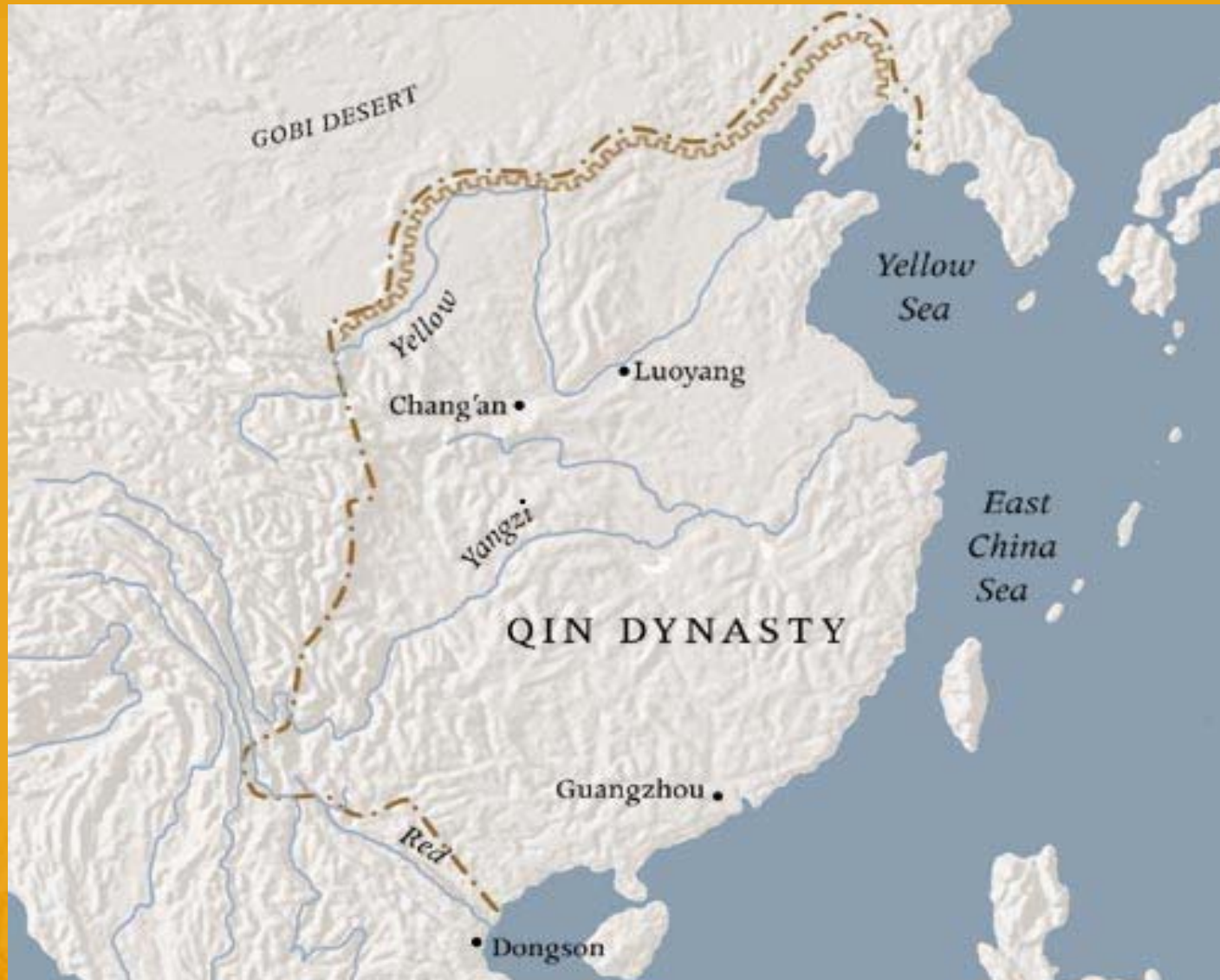


## T 12: China: The Han Empire

# **Qin Shi Huangdi and the Qin (220-210 BCE)**

- Assumption of ‘**Mandate of Heaven**’ by the **Qin** (*Chin*) from the **Zhou** during ‘**Warring States**’ period – establishment of Qin empire (221 - 206 BCE) – short-lived but organized
- **King Zhen**
  - Shi Huangdi: “first august emperor”
  - brutally conquered all of the other states between 230 to 221 BCE with the help of his chief minister Li Si
- Centralizes power once for all
  - Nobles forcibly moved to new, centrally located capital of Xianyang (near Xi’an)
  - Begins huge building projects: walls, canals, highways
  - Standard currency, measures, script, taxation

# Qin dynasty territorial extent, c.206 BCE





# The Terracotta Army



# Han Dynasty, 206 BCE-220 CE

- Qin empire falls due to constant warfare with nomadic warrior people from the steppes
- **Liu Bang** (206-195 BCE)
  - Successful general, son of peasants
  - First Han emperor
  - Established the Han Empire during the period of revolts after the death of Qin Shi Huangdi in 210 BCE
  - His descendants were able to create a stable administration
- The “golden age” of Chinese history



# Structure and nature of the Empire

- **Han Empire**, the first long-lasting empire – est. by **Liu Bang** (aka **Gaozu**)
- The **Han** adopted empire management, uniform script, code of law etc. introduced by the Qin
- A strong **bureaucratic state** – **registration** of all males for taxation, conscription etc. - **Centralization** of local administration
- **Commanderies** (over 30) governed by a civilian and a military commandant – accountable to the Emperor
- Formal schools to provide trained bureaucrats
- **Confucianism** as state philosophy

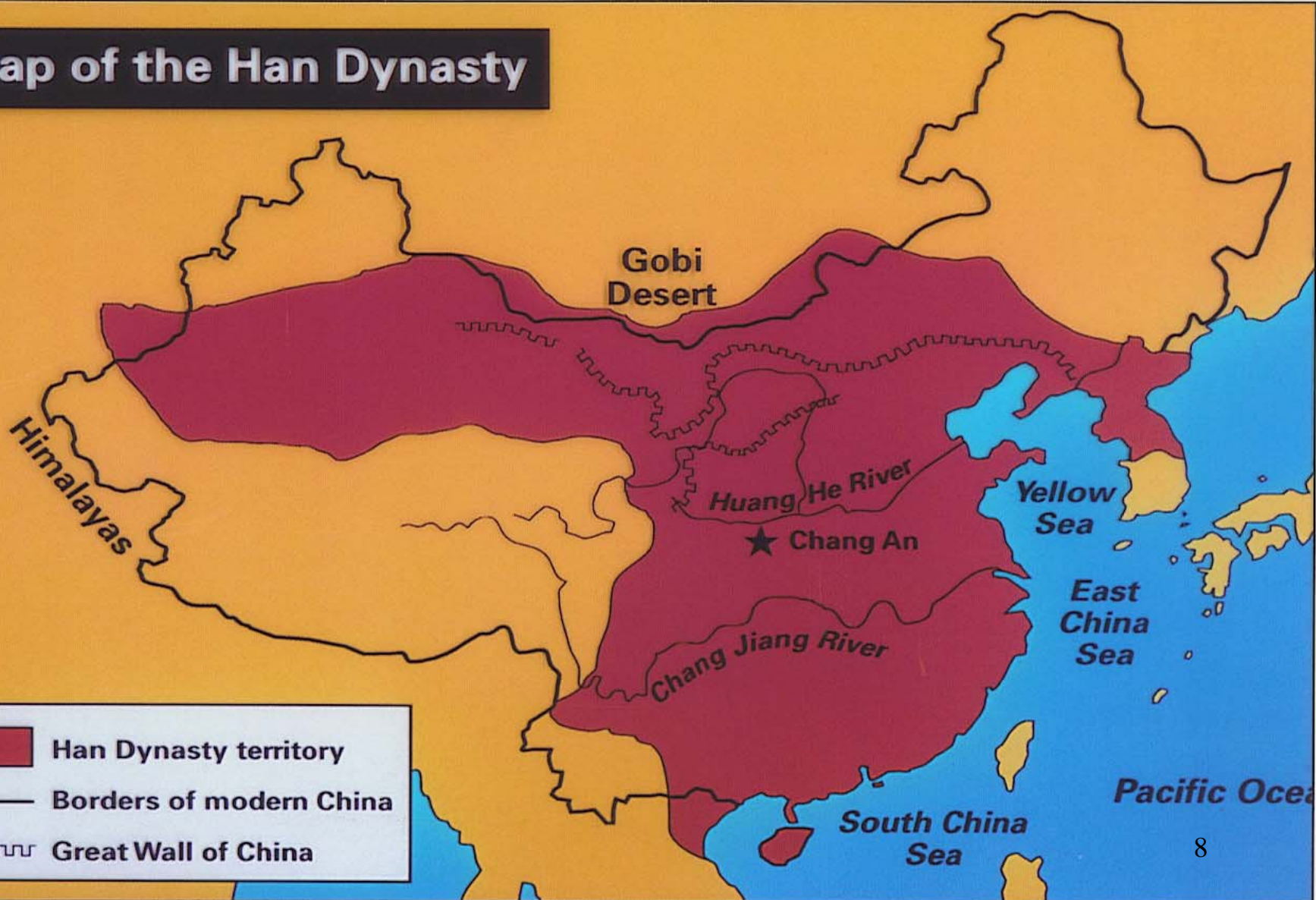
Confucian principles influencing legal code and governance, Emphasis on ritual, ethics and tradition

# Foundations

- **Efficient rule** by the Emperors in consultation with **‘scholar-officials’**
- moral foundation - **Confucian ideology**
- **‘People’s Mandate’** – people’s welfare as the foundation of legitimate rule
- **Central control** of economic assets (trade and commerce, agriculture, natural resources)
- Over 1 mln-strong professional **standing army** ensuring security

# Han Dynasty

**Map of the Han Dynasty**





# Pax Sinica (149-87 BCE)

- Long period of **peace**, stability and prosperity ensured by **military success**
- Facilitated long-distance trade and travel through the Silk Road
- **Free farmers** – paid a small portion of crops in taxes - Food storage and distribution – ensuring **uninterrupted food supply** to citizens
- China became a **culturally homogenous country**

# Han Achievements

- Founding of the **Silk Road**
- State academy established by Emperor **Wu (Wudi)** for training civil servants – selection through written tests
- **Great Wall of China** for protecting state borders and the silk road
- Development of paper, printing, acupuncture
- Flourishing agriculture, commerce and manufacturing
- **Expansion** of the empire from Southeastern China to Northern Vietnam, Northern Korea

# Silk Road/Route



red is land route and blue is sea route



# Great Wall





# Great Wall





# Decline and demise

- Weak, inefficient rule by later Hans
- Shortfall of tax revenue - peasant unrest - rise of generals and warlords
- Continuous raids by nomadic people (Uighurs, Kazakhs, Mongols) from the North and West
- Peasant rebellion in 184 CE – disintegration of Han Empire into 3 Kingdoms



# Legacy

- Influenced the East just as Greece and Rome influenced the West
- Rise of Confucianism as state ideology – nearly as influential as religion
- First example of administrative **meritocracy** – model for selecting civil servants on competitive basis
- ‘Chinese’ and ‘Han’ became synonymous - *Han rem* (Han people)

# Study questions

- What kind of a state did the Hans create?
- What was “*Pax Sinica*”?
- What were the Han achievements?
- Why did the Han empire decline?
- What legacy did the Hans leave behind?

# Thank You