Jonathan Quang 11/25/14

Global - Mr.Badgley

Homework #28 The Origins of Chinese Culture

1.The Mandate of Heaven was divine approval to rule. The Zhou leaders introduced this concept when they overthrew the Shang and established their own dynasty in 1027 B.C.E. The Mandate of Heaven was used to justify their conquest. When misfortune occurred during a dynasty, the Mandate of Heaven would be passed to a different family.  
Oracle bones were used y Shang kings to consult the gods. These were typically animal bones and tortoise shells which priests had scratched their questions for the gods. For the priests to get their answer, the priest applied a hot poker to the oracle bones, which caused the bones to crack. Then, the cracks were interpreted by the priest.   
Feudalism is a political system in which nobles or lords granted the use of lands that legally belong to the king. Loyalty, military service to the king, and protection to the people who lived on the lands was required in return.

2. Early Chinese society was organized by social class, utilized the patriarchal household system, and emphasized family. At least in Shang society, there was a sharp divide between nobles and peasants. Warrior-nobles headed by a king comprised the ruling class, These noble families owned the land. They governed scattered villages and sent tribute to the Shang ruler in exchange for local control over the land.

3.The dynastic cycle starts with a strong dynasty that establishes peace and prosperity. Those who establish the dynasty are considered to have the Mandate of Heaven. Eventually, the next stage occurs. The dynasty declines and becomes corrupt, taxes are raised, and the overall power of the dynasty grows weaker. Then, disasters, such as floods, revolts, and invasions, eventually occur. After that, the old dynasty is seen as having lost the Mandate of Heaven. Losing the Mandate of Heaven becomes a valid reason for rebellion. Soon, the dynasty is overthrown through rebellion and violence. From the ruins of the old dynasty, a new one emerges. Finally, the new dynasty gains power, restores peace and order, and claims to have the Mandate of Heaven.

4. The dynastic cycle is connected to the Mandate of Heaven by providing a reason for a family to rule. If a family is considered to have the Mandate of Heaven, then they have the right to rule. If the ruling family loses the Mandate of Heaven, then the family does not deserve to rule and is overthrown.