

General China notes:

To be used with—

- your “China questions” on ancient Chinese history
- your notes on legalism

Great Wall of China

- Built by Shi Huangdi (Qin Shihuang) [Qin dynasty]
- To keep out invaders from the north
- Over 4,160 miles long (but extends over 4,500 miles with all of its branches)
- Peasants were forced to work on it; many died from the hard labor
- Rebuilt, updated, improved, and extended many times by later dynasties
- Can be seen from space

Terra Cotta Army/Warriors [“Terra Cotta” is baked clay]

- Commissioned (ordered) by Shi Huangdi [Qin dynasty, 221-206 BCE]
- Built as his tomb; took 38 years to complete (?)
- Discovered in 1974 by peasant farmers digging for a well
- Contains about 7,500 life-sized soldiers (2,000 excavated so far) and 600 horses/chariots
- No two soldiers are the same (sculpted based on real life soldiers), includes facial expressions
- Packed in battle formation to escort emperor to heaven
- Almost destroyed during an uprising that overthrew the dynasty in the 3rd century BCE (about 50 years after they were made)
- Lay dormant (undiscovered) for 2,000 years

Silk Road(s)

- The overland trade routes linking China (Asia) to the west (Europe) [trans-Eurasian]
- Well-established by 100 BCE.
- Accepted length is about 4,000 miles (although total length of all routes is debated)
- Began with the Han dynasty (206 BCE – 220 CE)
- Under consideration for being a UNESCO World Heritage site
- Exchange of goods and ideas

Cultural diffusion

- Definition: The spread of ethnic ideas and customs to other areas of the world
- “Culture” would include: religion, architecture, music, pottery designs, art, dance, medicine, politics, philosophy, military strategies/weapons, methods of producing various things, speech, technology, recreation/games, clothing/hair styles, etc.

Paper

- Invented in 105 CE
- Made books available and record-keeping easier (this paper was both durable and inexpensive)
- Used mulberry bark, old rags, hemp plant fibers
- Encouraged the use of mechanized printing

Silk

- Invented by Chinese
- Luxurious, beautiful, long-lasting, rare, came in brilliant colors
- At one time, a pound of silk was worth a pound of gold
- Led to increase in trade and establishment of trade routes (see “Silk Road(s)”)