

# Lesson 3 The Qin and the Han

## MAIN IDEAS

**Government** Shi Huangdi conquered the warring states, unified China, and built a strong government.

**Government** The Han Dynasty took over China and established a strong empire that lasted 400 years.

**Culture** Life in Han China set a pattern that is still seen today.

---

## The Qin Unified China

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION** How did the Qin Dynasty unify China?

### A Legalistic Ruler

- Under Mandate of Heaven ongoing wars were signs for new ruler
- New ruler was emperor **Shi Huangdi** from state of **Qin**
- Shi Huangdi began ending battles between warring states in 221 B.C.
  - conquered rival states, drove out nomad invaders, expanded China
- Shi Huangdi ran country as Legalist, wiped out Confucian teachings
  - had 460 critics and Confucianists killed, burned books

### Uniting China

- Shi Huangdi wanted personal control of strong central government
  - weakened noble families by taking land, making them live at capital
- United his lands by building highways, irrigation projects
  - forced peasants to work on projects, used high taxes to fund them
- Set government standards for weights, measures, coins, writing
  - made it easier to trade and do business everywhere in China

### The Great Wall

- Shi Huangdi built long wall on northern borders to stop invaders
  - forced hundreds of thousands of peasants, criminals to build it
  - many died from hard labor, creating resentment among people
- First Great Wall linked smaller walls from Time of Warring States

## The Qin Dynasty Ends

- Shi Huangdi died in 210 B.C., was buried in elaborate tomb
  - army of terra cotta soldiers buried nearby; was discovered in 1974

### REVIEW QUESTION

Why did Shi Huangdi kill so many Confucianists?

---

# The Han Dynasty

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION** How did the Han rule China?

## The Han Replace the Qin

- Civil war broke out at the end of the rule of Shi Huangdi's son
  - General Liu Bang defeated the Qin, ended the war, reunified China
- Liu Bang began **Han Dynasty**—lasted from 202 B.C. to about A.D. 220

## Han Government

- Liu Bang kept strong government, lowered taxes, reduced punishments
  - had peasants build roads, canals, irrigation system
- Set up **bureaucracy**—chosen officials ran offices, bureaus
  - officials were often Han family members and trusted people
- To find officials, they gave people system of tests on Confucianism
  - tests helped select educated, ethical people for bureaucratic state

## Empress Rules

- Liu Bang died in 195 B.C.; his widow, Empress Lü, ruled for her son
  - outlived her son, kept power by placing infants on the throne
  - died in 180 B.C.; all her relatives were executed

## Expanding the Empire

- Wudi, known as the Martial Emperor, ruled from 141 to 87 B.C.
  - wars expanded borders to south China, north Vietnam, north Korea
- Han stayed in power despite rebellions, revolts, floods, famines

## REVIEW QUESTION

How did the Han rulers find people for government jobs?

---

# Life in Han China

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION** What was life in Han China like?

## Daily Life in Han China

- Much of Han society lived in villages, worked on farms
  - most lived in one or two-story mud houses
  - rich farmers used oxen to pull plows; poor pulled plows themselves
  - simple clothing included clothes stuffed like a quilt for cool months
- Raised wheat, millet in north; raised rice in south
- Fish, meat were expensive so most people ate them in small portions

## City Living

- Han cities were centers of trade, education, government
- Cities were crowded with merchants, craftspeople, government officials
- Entertainment included musicians, jugglers, acrobats
- Some writers say the cities also had street gangs

## REVIEW QUESTION

How were the lives of farmers different from those of city dwellers?

## Lesson Summary

- In 221 B.C., the Qin ruler Shi Huangdi unified China and ruled by harsh Legalist principles.
- The Han Dynasty ruled over a large and successful land.
- The Han Chinese way of life is reflected in Chinese life today.

## Why It Matters Now . . .

Strong government remains important in Chinese life today.