

# The Han Dynasty

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**206 BC**

The Han dynasty begins.

**200 BC**

**140 BC**

Wudi becomes emperor and tries to strengthen China's government.

**BC 1 AD**

**AD 25**

The Han move their capital east to Luoyang.

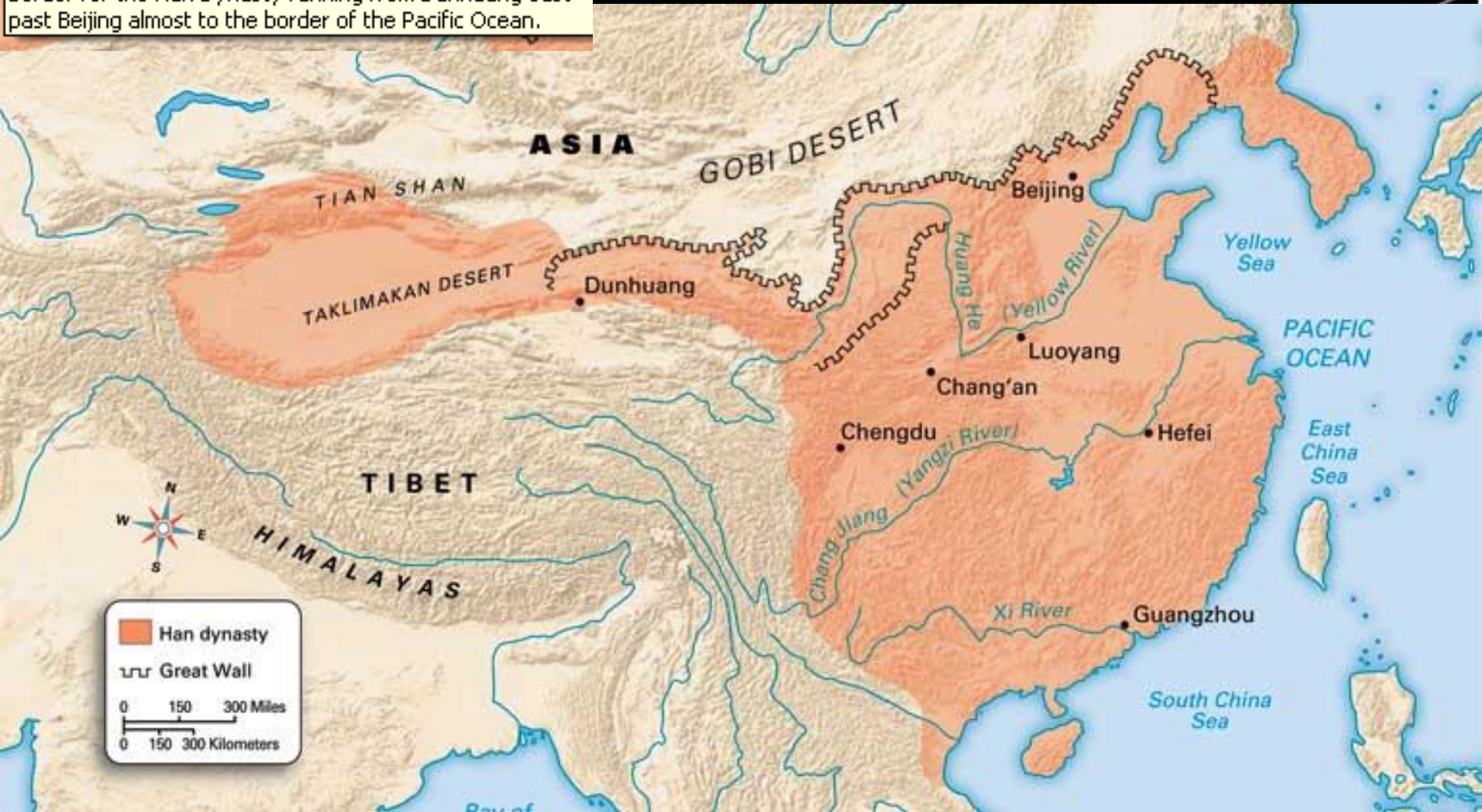
**AD 200**

**AD 220**

The Han dynasty falls.

# Han Dynasty

Map: Han Dynasty, c. 206 BC-AD 220: This map shows the Han Dynasty in the shaded part of China. This dynasty extended from the southern border of the Gobi Desert down to the Southern border of China by the South China Sea. It also extended west to the Taklimakan Desert, but did not include Tibet. The Great Wall acts as a northern border for the Han Dynasty running from Dunhuang east past Beijing almost to the border of the Pacific Ocean.



# Han Dynasty Government

- Liu Bang (lee-oo bang), a peasant, led the army that won control of China after the collapse of the Qin dynasty.
- He earned the people's loyalty and trust. He lowered taxes for farmers and made punishments less severe.
- He set up a government that built on the foundation begun by the Qin.

# Han Dynasty Government

- Liu Bang's successor, Wudi (WOO-dee), made Confucianism the official government policy of China.
- To get a government job, a person had to pass a test based on Confucian teachings. However, wealthy and influential families still controlled the government.

# Family Life

- A firm social order took hold during Han rule.
- In the Confucian view, peasants made up the second highest class.
- Merchants occupied the lowest class because they merely bought and sold what others had made.
- However, this social division did not indicate wealth or power. Peasants were still poor and merchants were still rich.

# Artifact



This Han artifact is an oil lamp held by a servant.

# Family Life

- During Wudi's reign, the family once again became the center of Chinese society.
- Children were taught from birth to respect their elders.
- Within the family, the father had absolute power. Han officials believed that if the family was strong and people obeyed the father, then people would obey the emperor, too. Chinese parents valued boys more highly than girls.
- Some women, however, still gained power. They could influence their sons' families. An older widow could even become the head of the family.

# The Importance of Family



Honoring one's family was an important duty in Han China. In this painting, people give thanks before their family shrine. Only the men participate. The women watch from inside the house.

# Han Achievements

- The Han dynasty was a time of great accomplishments.
- Art and literature thrived, and inventors developed many useful devices.
  - Han artists painted portraits and realistic scenes that showed everyday life. Poets developed new styles of verse. Historian Sima Qian wrote a complete history of China until the Han dynasty.

# Paper

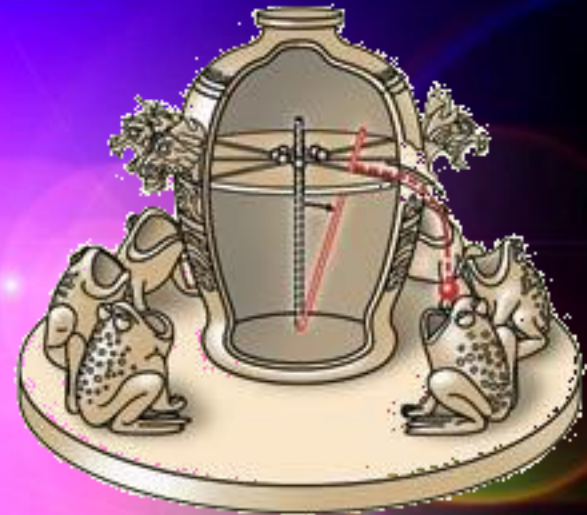


- The Han Chinese invented paper.
- They made it by grinding plant fibers into a paste and then letting it dry in sheets.
- They made “books” by pasting sheets together into a long sheet that was rolled into a scroll.

# Innovations

- Other Han **innovations** included the **sundial** and the **seismograph**.
- They developed the distinctive Chinese medical practice of **acupuncture** (AK-yoopunk-cher).
- These and other Han inventions and advances are still used today.

# Seismograph



This is a model of an ancient Chinese seismograph. When an earthquake struck, a lever inside caused a ball to drop from a dragon's mouth into a toad's mouth, indicating the direction from which the earthquake had come.

# Medicine and Art



## Medicine

Han doctors studied the human body and used acupuncture to heal people.

## Art

This bronze horse is just one example of the beautiful objects made by Chinese artisans.