



The Han Dynasty

The Han Dynasty

- The Han Dynasty was a series of emperors of the same family who ruled ancient China for over 400 years
- The Chinese still refer to themselves as Han people in recognition of China's great achievements in this period
- Under Han rule, arts and sciences thrived and China became as large and as powerful as the Roman Empire

The Han Dynasty

- Liu Bang became king of the Han in 206 B.C., after the fall of the Qin Dynasty
 - He became emperor in 202 B.C. was known as Emperor Gao Zu
- Han emperors after Liu had strong centralized governments
 - They used a civil service examination to select officials

The Han Dynasty

- This examination stressed knowledge of the teachings of Confucius
- As a result, Confucian scholars held important government positions
- Emperor Wudi, who ruled from 140 to 87 B.C., made Confucianism the state philosophy

The Han Golden Age

- During the Han rule, education gained in importance and a central university was built in Xian
- Han poets and prose writers developed a clear style that is still famous in Chinese literature
- Scholars wrote long histories of China
- Artists produced glazed pottery and large stone carvings

The Han Golden Age

- Scientists wrote texts on chemistry, zoology, and biology
- Astronomers measured the movement of the stars and planets

The Han Golden Age

- The Han was also the most technologically advanced in the world
 - Paper was made from wood pulp
 - Wheelbarrows and suspension bridges were also invented

The Han Golden Age

- Han China expanded southwest to what is now Tibet
- Han warriors also conquered what are now North Korea and northern Vietnam and overcame nomadic tribes in the north and west
- Overland trade routes linked China with Europe for the first time

The Han Golden Age

- Emperor Wudi opened up a network of trade routes called the Silk Road
- Chinese silk and other products flowed into the Roman Empire

Fall of the Han Dynasty

- Eventually this dynasty fell due to the inability of emperors to control powerful warlords, or local military rulers
- During this time roads and canals were not maintained and further led to the decay of the dynasty
 - In 220 A.D. warlords overthrew the last Han emperor—this marked the end of 400 years of unity for China