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The Impact of Geography in China (map p. 43)

- Yellow River / Huang He: 2900 miles / carries rich, yellow silt from Mongolia to the Pacific Ocean.
- Yangtze / Chang Jiang River: 3400 miles - flows across central China to the Yellow Sea
- Lack of fertile fields: only about 10% of land in China is good for farming
- Many barriers: mountains and deserts surround much of China's populated areas in the west and south
- Northern frontier: Other people came into contact with the Chinese on their northern border. This was a source of great conflict over the years.
- Varied Climates: significant climate differences exist, depending on elevation and amount of rainfall. This causes great temperature variations as well.

The Shang Dynasty (1750 BC-1045 BC)

- Xia Dynasty: first dynasty in China, mostly unknown (over 4000 years ago)
- 2nd Dynasty: SHANG - (1750 BC -1045 BC)
- Aristocracy: an upper class rule based on wealth through land ownership / power passes on from one generation to the next
- Location: Huang He River Valley
- Features: huge city walls, royal palaces, large royal tombs
- King: defended the land with help of warlords (aristocratic military leaders) The king could remove them at any time. Kings were buried in royal tombs, often accompanied by their servants (buried alive with them). The Chinese believed that the gods helped the king to rule
- Social Order: King>>Aristocracy>>peasants (farmers)>>merchants, artisans>>slaves
- Oracle Bones: priests used questions scratched on the bones to ask questions of the gods. They would heat them and interpret the cracks as the answers from the gods
- Veneration of Ancestors: Chinese believed it was important to respect their ancestors, and to treat their spirits well >> ancestor worship
- Bronze casting: Shang's best known accomplishment. 1000's of objects have been found in the tombs >> highly admired

The Zhou Dynasty (1045 BC - 256 BC)

Zhou (Joe) 2nd longest dynasty in Chinese history - almost 800 years

Shang practices: the Zhou continued the Shang ways of ruling and dividing the kingdom into territories governed by officials (the aristocracy)

Mandate of Heaven: the Zhou claimed it overthrew the Shang because they were wicked & that the gods were in their favor. The Zhou king was the link between heaven and earth. *(See Dynastic Cycle)* This became a major principle of Chinese government.

Dao: The king was also supposed to rule well for the people according to the proper WAY (Dao). If the king failed in his rule, he would be replaced as well. Sometimes natural disasters were blamed on the rulers because of this.

Era of Warring States: civil wars began around 403 BC as the Zhou were challenged by powerful states - this lasted for many years

Changes in Warfare: Iron weapons, cavalry, the cross-bow caused the Zhou to lose power

Qin (Chin): came to power in 221 BC (more on that later...)

Family importance: the family was the basic unit in China, but it was more than that...families worked together and were essential to survival.

Filial piety: the duty of members of the family to put their needs last and to submit to the male head of the family...every member has his or her place.

Male supremacy: this idea was key in China's social system: men worked and provided for their families and women raised the families at home.

Population growth: improvements in farming increased food supplies and China's population was 50 million during the Zhou period.

Improved trade: Silk was the most desired item and would fuel China's exports for centuries

Pictographs: Chinese writing using symbols to represent an idea