Teachers notes for the Premium TimeMaps Unit

Classical China
500 BCE to 500 CE

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Introduction

This Premium TimeMaps unit on Classical China is a sequence of maps giving an overview of the history of the Indian subcontinent between 500 BCE and 500 CE.

The unit’s aim is to quickly and clearly show the main episodes and key developments in the history of classical Chinese civilization.

For teachers of AP World History, the unit - including the maps and these accompanying teacher notes - provides comprehensive coverage of all the thinking skills, theme and key concepts relevant to this Period 2 topic.

How to use this unit

The unit can be used in two ways:

(1) Whole-class presentation

or

(2) Student-based enquiry work

Teachers may wish to use only one of these approaches. Alternatively they could use both, perhaps using (1) as a quick introduction, and then (2) for students to carry out a more in-depth enquiry using the student-based questions; or (if they feel their students can manage this) starting them off with (2), to allow them to find out for themselves what happened at this period, before using (1) as a reinforcement exercise.

How this unit fits in with other Premium TimeMaps units

This unit is relevant to the period of World History in which the great classical civilizations of antiquity - Greece, Rome, India, China - developed and reached maturity (in AP World History, Period 2).

The unit starts at 500 BCE. The earlier history of ancient China, including the Shang and early Zhou dynasties, is covered in the premium unit Ancient Civilizations.

This unit on Classical China can be used as a stand-alone unit. It can also be used in conjunction with the other units relating to this period. These are currently Classical India, Greece and Persia, and Ancient Rome. Doing this will provide superb opportunities to analyze the similarities and differences between the various civilizations, and to analyze this period of world history as a whole.
Section 1: Whole-class presentation

Using a big screen, show the map sequence to your class, talking through each map. To help you do this, we have prepared accompanying Presentation Notes, which are set out below. You can use these either as a script or aide-memoire.

This activity can be used as a wrap up / reinforcement exercise, or as a stand-alone unit.

For each map, these notes mostly follow the same formula:

1. Date and introduction
   The date to which the map refers, followed by a small introductory paragraph which seeks to encapsulate in a sentence or two what’s going on in the map. These are in bold.

2. Bullet points
   One or more bullet points cover different points of interest in the map, or in the period it covers. The number at the end of a bullet point refers to the appropriate additional note.

   If you are not wanting to spend much time on the topic, these bullet points will be all you need to give your students a clear overview.

3. Additional Notes
   These give more in-depth information than the bullet points do.

   The premium map sequence offers a superb framework on which to hang a large amount of information.

   For teachers of AP World History, these notes cover the vast majority of, if not all, the points referred to in the course document (these are covered in even more depth in the TimeMaps articles listed at the end of this guidance.)

   Some key words or phrases are in bold; these are often referencing points covered in the AP World History document, but they are also there to help you see at a glance the key points in a paragraph.

   If you wish to use these Additional Notes, we suggest that, prior to showing the Presentation to your class, you read through them and highlight sections you will find especially useful or interesting.

4. Questions
   The notes for several of the maps end with one or more suggested questions. They are designed to be tackled as part of the Presentation, and as a class activity. They will help to break the Presentation up, stop the students from drifting off to sleep, give them the opportunity to engage with the subject and give your voice a rest.

   They are aimed either at reinforcing points made in the Presentation, or at provoking discussion; they do not necessarily have a “correct” answer. Some suggested answers are given underneath each question; these are in italics.

   Some (though not all) of the questions will work just as well if used as a reinforcement exercise at the end of the Presentation.
**Presentation Notes**

*If using these in class it might be helpful to print these notes out.*

The history of China up to 600 BCE should be briefly reviewed. In particular, students should be reminded of the following points:

1. Chinese civilization originated in the **Yellow Valley** region of northern China.

2. It entered its urban and literate phase under the **Shang dynasty** (18th to 11th century BCE). Already by then **ancestor veneration** had become established.

3. The Shang dynasty was replaced by the **Zhou dynasty**. This imposed a feudal system of rule across northern China, under a warrior aristocracy.

4. Under the Zhou, the Chinese kingdom and its civilization expanded, but in the early 8th century the Zhou were weakened when a group of “barbarians” sacked the capital. The numerous fiefs into which the kingdom was divided then effectively became independent **principalities**.
500 BCE: The later Zhou kingdom is fragmented amongst numerous local states, constantly at war with one another.

- The Zhou dynasty reigns on the throne of China, but by now does not have much power. The kingdom is effectively divided amongst numerous principalities (1).

- This is a period of instability and change. Old beliefs are losing their hold, and new teachings are being put forward - this is the beginning of the period of “the 100 schools [of thought]” (2).

Additional notes:

1. Fragmentation
A line of kings of the Zhou dynasty has ruled northern China since the 11th century BCE. Under them, Chinese culture has expanded over an ever-larger area.

In the early 8th century, however, the power of the Zhou king became effectively restricted to a small area round his capital. The rest of the kingdom became divided amongst numerous principalities. By 500 BCE their allegiance to the Zhou kings has become merely theoretical.

Without any central authority to keep them in check, the principalities are often at war with one another. The more powerful ones grab territories from the weaker, and larger, more powerful principalities emerge, effectively sovereign states in their own right.

2. Schools of Thought
As society changes, traditional beliefs and practices came under scrutiny. New schools of thought arise which offer new ideas. This is the period of “the One Hundred Schools [of Thought]”.

The most influential of the schools are Legalism, Mohism, Daoism and Confucianism.

Legalism teaches that people are inherently wicked, and need to be kept in line by means of harsh punishments. They should be ruthlessly subjected to the power of the state, and their highest duty is to obey the ruler’s commands without question.

Mohism, believes that all men, especially rulers, should treat each other with justice and compassion.

Daoism was supposedly founded by the philosopher Loaozu around 600 BCE, but its key text, the Dao De Jing, was probably written around 300/200 BCE (another text which Daoists held dear, the I-Ching, was a collection of ritual formulae and was far more ancient, dating from early Zhou times).

“The Dao” means “the Way.” This teaching holds that men should live in harmony with nature (or the universe), and encourages them to “go with the flow” of life. For example, where a situation needs to be rectified, direct confrontation of the problem should be avoided; an indirect approach is more effective.

Daoist ideas would have a profound influence on Chinese culture. They would later infect Buddhism and Confucianism, and would have a profound effect on medicine and science (it was Daoists who discovered gunpowder and magnetism); on poetry, painting and calligraphy (where its hallmark would be simplicity of style and the submission of humanity to nature); architecture (feng shui has its roots in Daoism); and popular thought (for example, the famous notion of Yin and Yang).
Confucianism promotes an ethical code by which people can live in harmony with one another. It teaches that all should behave in a moral way towards others, especially respecting one’s superiors - children their parents (filial piety), wives their husbands, subjects their rulers and so on.

In due course Confucianism will become the dominant belief-system in China, especially amongst the elite, and, along with ancestor veneration (which will retain its hold right up to the 20th century) will help to create a hierarchical and patriarchal society.

As the state ideology of imperial China, it will shape a widely-observed ideology in which obedience and respect will help keep the enormous country together for long periods of time.

The authoritative text for Confucianism is the Analects, a collection of the sayings of Confucius and some of his early disciples.

Suggested question:
Which states are best placed to expand, do you think?

Hopefully students will identify the outer states as being in a good position to expand into non-Chinese areas.
400 BCE: The Chinese culture area has continued to expand into lands inhabited by “barbarian” (i.e. non-Chinese) peoples.

- The Chinese culture area has continued to expand into lands inhabited by “barbarian” (i.e. non-Chinese) peoples. The Chinese states on the frontiers have become larger and more powerful as a result of this process (1).

- The most efficient states are developing centralized bureaucracies, staffed by educated officials from the gentry class (2).

- This period sees continued change - economic and social (3).

- It also sees some important technological developments (4).

- The period of the “100 Schools of Thought” continues, and will do so for almost the next two centuries (5).

Additional notes:

1. Larger states
The people of these powerful frontier states are despised by the inhabitants of the inner Chinese states as semi-barbarian.

This contempt is due to the fact that these frontier states have a growing proportion of unassimilated or semi-assimilated non-Chinese “barbarians” within their expanding territories.

The process by which smaller states have been conquered by larger ones has continued: there are now far fewer states than there were, but they are much more powerful. The leading states are able to field huge armies. These are made up of massed infantry and cavalry formations recruited from the peasantry.

These centuries in Chinese history are traditionally called the “Warring States” period. The rulers of the more powerful of these states are now taking the title king, claiming equality with the Zhou kings.

2. The rise of professional bureaucracies
In order to organize and pay for large armies, as well as to control their states more thoroughly, the rulers centralize power by creating professional bureaucracies. This allows the states’ governments to tax the people directly, rather than relying on the contribution of local lords (see below).

These bureaucracies are staffed by educated officials of the gentry class. This class has less status and wealth than the old feudal aristocracy, so its members are less likely to challenge the rulers’ authority.

3. Social and economic changes
The princes of this period continue to promote trade and industry. Trade is facilitated by the increased circulation of metal coinage, introduced into China by about 400 BCE.

New towns and cities emerge, and older ones expand. Cities cease to be just administrative centers and became centers of industry and commerce as well.

The urban classes of merchants and artisans increase in numbers, and become wealthier and more important.
In the countryside, more and more peasants own their own land, and are able to buy and sell it at will. Many states encouraged this development, because it puts the peasantry more directly under the state’s control. As serfs of the local lords they had been beholden to their lords; as free farmers they have to pay taxes directly to the prince, render labor service on public works such as irrigation projects and royal palaces, and serve as soldiers in the prince’s army. This policy also weakens the landowning aristocracy, who are the main opponents of the princes’ power.

4. Technology
There are major technological advances. Most notably, the Chinese developed the manufacture of steel, more than a thousand years before the West.

Another innovation is a breast-collar harness (ancestral to the horse collar - see below, map 500 CE, note 4) which enables horses to pull greater weights for longer periods, increasing their utility as draught animals in farming and transport.

In the military sphere, the crossbow is developed.

It is in this period that canals designed primarily for transporting goods rather than for irrigation are first constructed. Chinese engineers would become the most advanced canal builders in the world (including developing highly sophisticated lock gate technology) until at least the late 18th century.

5. Religion and thought
The best-known philosopher the later part of the “100 Schools” period will produce will be Mencius. He is the most famous of all Confucian thinkers (after Confucius himself). He and fellow Confucians stress the importance of education, in order to train people - especially future rulers - in moral behavior. They also emphasize the already-ancient idea of the Mandate of Heaven (by which rulers only enjoy Heaven’s blessing while they rule righteously) into the idea that subjects have the right - even the duty - to rebel against an unjust ruler.

Suggested question:

The struggle between the states is continuing. Where, do you think, will this process lead?

Hopefully, a student will say that it will end in one conquering all the others. If so, you could ask:

Which of these states, do you think, will be the victor and thus unify China?

They are unlikely to say Qin; they may say Chu, perhaps Shu-Pa, or one of the northern states. (Chu was actually the state most feared by the others.)

The next map explain why it was Qin that succeeded.
360 BCE: Qin is the most ruthless state in the pursuit of military and administrative efficiency.

- The rulers of Qin have put into practice the teachings of the Legalist school of thought.

Additional note:

Located as it is on the western frontier of the Chinese culture area, the rulers of Qin are constantly facing threats from the non-Chinese barbarians on their doorstep. They therefore put into practice the teachings of the Legalist school of thought (see above, map 500 BCE, note 2).

Amongst other policies they
- ruthlessly centralize power, appointing officials and commanders on the basis of merit rather than birth.
- introduce harsh laws and insist on unquestioning obedience to them.
- impose heavy taxes and labour duties on the population, and make all men liable to military service.
- the Qin also learn useful techniques from their “barbarian” foes, especially in warfare. For example, it is likely that they pick up cavalry skills from the steppe nomads on their borders.

In these ways the Qin regime develops the most efficient military organization and administrative institutions of all the states of China.
220 BCE: The state of Qin has conquered all the other states and so unified China.

- Its ruler is known as the “First Emperor” of China.

Additional note:

As well as through its first-class army and administration, the state of Qin has achieved this success through a judicious combination of raw military power and clever diplomacy - backed up by a superb espionage system. The Qin ruler now styles himself the First Universal Emperor of Qin: Qin Shih Huang.

Suggested question:
Qin has at least unified China under its rule. Will it now succeed in bringing peace to China?

The students will see in the next two maps that, sadly, no it will not.
210 BCE: The First Emperor, Qin Shih Huang, imposed a harsh, rigidly centralized regime on the whole of China.

- The Qin regime has pursued rigidly centralizing policies across the whole of China (1).
- The Qin have expanded their borders and created a unified system of defense (2).
- They have attempted to suppress all other schools of thought apart from their own (3).
- The ruthlessness with which these policies have been carried out has led to several rebellions breaking out (4).

Additional notes:

1. Centralization and standardization
Having achieved supreme power, the Qin emperor and his ministers - especially his chief minister, Li Si - has pursued rigidly centralizing policies across the whole of China.

The efficient Qin bureaucracy, staffed with officials drawn from the gentry class rather than the old feudal aristocracy, and appointed and promoted on merit, has expanded to run the whole empire.

The harsh Qin law code has been imposed across the country.

Coinage, weights and measures, road widths and cart axle sizes - all these have been standardized throughout the length and breadth of the empire.

2. Imperial expansion
The Qin have expanded their borders by conquering large parts of southern China. A major factor in the success of this endeavor has been the construction of a small canal joining the Yangtze and Pearl river systems, which allows the Qin government to transport large armies by water into the heart of southern China.

The Qin have protected the empire against nomadic attacks from north and west by creating a unified system of defense, the forebear of the Great Wall of China.

A comprehensive road and canal system has been developed, allowing supplies and troops to move quickly to where they were needed on the frontiers.

3. Religion and thought
As part of their attempt to dominate China, the Qin aim at wiping out all other schools of thought apart from their own, Legalist, state ideology.

They confiscated and burned thousands of Confucian, Mohist and Daoist books. Many Confucian scholars risked death to hide their books, so that this school of thought survived.

4. Rebellions
The ruthlessness with which the Qin have carried out their policies has caused immense misery, especially amongst the peasantry.

This class has had to pay the heavy taxes and provide the laborers for the great public works schemes - not just the roads and frontier walls, but also the gigantic tomb for the First Emperor.
The peasants have also been drafted in their hundreds of thousands into the Qin armies to fight on or guard the frontiers, often condemned to spend the rest of their lives far from home and family.

By the time of the First Emperor’s death several rebellions had sprung up in different parts of the empire.
180 BCE: Many rebellions sprang up after the death of the First Emperor. One of the rebels, Liu Bang, defeated the others to become the founder of a new dynasty, the Han.

- Many rebellions bring an end to the Qin. One of the rebels, Liu Bang, defeats the rest to become the founder of the Han dynasty (1).

- As emperor, he continues many of the Qin dynasty policies, but with less harshness (2).

Additional notes:

1. The foundation of the Han dynasty
A period of chaos follows the death of the First Emperor as many rebellions overwhelmed the Qin regime. One of the rebels, Liu Bang, is a man of peasant origin with little education, but outstanding shrewdness and ability.

He is at last able to defeat the other rebel leaders, and thus become the founder of the Han dynasty in 202 BCE.

Many rebel leaders had been his allies, and even after his victory he had to accept their status as kings of different areas, under his overall authority. However, first he reduced their ability to challenge his power by arranging a swap of territory so that he had the frontier areas (where the bulk of the armies were stationed) under his direct control, leaving the wealthier, more civilized but less militarized areas under these various kings.

Then, in the following years, he and his successors have, one by one, moved against these kings, in most cases encompassing their downfall. They either brought their territories under their direct control, or set up their own relatives as kings there.

2. Continuity and change
As the emperor Gaozu, he continues many of the Qin dynasty policies, but reduces the harshness with which they are applied.

Suggested questions:
The Qin failed to maintain themselves in power - so why doesn’t Gaozu ditch their policies altogether?

Surely because the Qin policies were actually pretty effective in running an empire - it was the way they implemented them that was their undoing. The information on the next map should clarify this.

Which Qin policies in particular does Gaozu keep, do you think?

Answers on the next map.
100 BCE: The Han dynasty has given peace and stability to the huge empire, and expanded its borders.

- The Han emperors have largely kept in place the governing structures they had inherited from the Qin (1).
- In contrast to the Qin, however, the Han regime has made Confucianism their official ideology (2).
- Under the Han, the economy of China has expanded strongly (3).
- The Han empire has dramatically pushed out its borders in all directions (4).

Additional notes:

1. The Qin heritage

The Han government has continued the Qin policy of maintaining a centralized government. In particular, successive emperors have increasingly restricted the power of the subordinate kings (see above, 180 BCE, note 1). Even though these are all now members of the royal clan, their loyalty has been questionable. By now, the government has ensured that they are little more than figureheads within their kingdoms, shorn of any real power.

The Han have kept a large, tightly organized bureaucracy and a huge standing army. As under the Qin, government officials are drawn from the gentry class, not the aristocracy.

To further ensure that the ranks of the bureaucracy are filled by capable administrators, the Han have taken the first steps towards creating the famed imperial examination system of later centuries. Despite the fact that most of the emperors are nonentities, government continues to run smoothly in the hands of capable ministers and officials.

One result of the centralization of government is to establish an early form of northern Mandarin as the official language of the Chinese state (which has remained to this day).

To supply their frontier armies, and move troops around their empire, the Han have maintained and expanded the road and canal network inherited from the Qin. Like the Qin they also operate an efficient governmental postal system along which government messages can travel quickly.

2. Confucian government

The Han emperors have increasingly surrounded themselves with Confucian scholars, and by now Confucianism is the unchallenged ideology of the Han regime.

Since Confucianism teaches that rulers should govern with the interests of their subjects at heart, the Han regime governs remarkably well by pre-modern standards. For example, under the Han, just as in Qin times, all males are liable for military service and labor service, but the Han government makes sure these duties are not too onerous.

3. A prosperous empire

The stability that good government has brought has allowed trade to flourish (despite the low status of merchants, whom Confucianists regard as parasitic on society as a whole). The Han road system acts as a boon to commerce.

Farming has expanded into new lands (often with government aid), and industry has increased. The wheelbarrow is developed in China at this time, as is an early version of a seed drill.
China is almost certainly the most prosperous state on the world at this time, with the Han empire’s capital, Chang’an, the biggest city. Like all Chinese cities until modern times, it was surrounded by a stout wall, and divided into quarters. One quarter was entirely devoted to the imperial palace, the seat of government, and its grounds. Another quarter was the commercial quarter. The city’s streets were laid out in a grid, providing a model for future Chinese capitals as well as the capitals of other East Asian countries such as Korea and Japan. As the terminus of the Silk Road (see below), Chang’an was thronging with foreign merchants, especially from central Asia and Persia.

Trade along the Silk Road is conducted mostly by foreign merchants, from central Asia. For greater security in untamed regions of the world, these merchants travel in caravans of pack animals. Bactrian camels, with their great strength and endurance, are the favored beast of burden. Wheeled vehicles are unusable here given the lack of properly-constructed roads.

4. Imperial expansion
The Han empire has shown its ability, through high levels of logistical organization and military effectiveness, to project its power a long way beyond its borders.

Especially under the vigorous rule of the emperor Han Wudi (reigned 140-87 BCE), the Han are bringing vast areas of southern China under their rule.

Although this region will remain a frontier area throughout Han times, southern ports such as Canton will give China its first toe-hold in the maritime trade of the Indian ocean. For a long time this would predominantly be in the hands of foreigners: South East Asians, Indians and later Arabs. In the later Han period, merchants from as far away as the Roman empire would visit China.

The Han have also imposed their control, as much by diplomacy as by military action, over the eastern steppes of central Asia, where the Xiongnu people had been a growing threat for several centuries. Diplomacy has also created client kingdoms in northern Vietnam, who acknowledge the overlordship of the Han emperor and send tribute to the Han court.

This has allowed the Silk Road, the great trade route to the Middle East and Europe across central Asia, to become established. This has been accomplished by diplomacy as well as military force: Chinese diplomats travel as far as Parthia to secure the route. Chinese armies also occupy a large part of the Korean peninsula, with other parts of the peninsula being tributary states acknowledging Han overlordship.

Under the early Han, all males are liable for military service, sometimes far from their homes and for long periods of time. Later, the army will come to be manned by long-service professionals.

Suggested question:
So, to clarify, which Qin policies do the Han keep, and which ditch - and what does this say about what it takes to run an ancient empire effectively?

Kept: bureaucracy; merit-based, gentry officials; large army, expansionism; road system.

Ditched: harsh approach, brutal law code (though Han law code pretty harsh to modern eyes!), attempts at thought-control, anti-Confucian persecutions.
100 CE: In 9 CE a chief minister, Wang Mang, usurped the throne, but his policies roused such opposition that the Han dynasty was restored to power in 23 CE.

- Wang Mang’s policies were aimed at trimming the wealth and power of the elite, and created so many powerful enemies that he was assassinated, and the Han dynasty restored (1).

- Long running trends, however, are sapping the strength of the Han regime (2).

- Buddhism has recently arrived in China (3).

- This is a period of technological innovation, most notably with the invention of paper (4).

Additional notes:

1. Coup and counter-coup
In 9 CE a powerful chief minister, Wang Mang, seized the throne. By 23 CE, his policies, which were aimed at trimming the wealth and power of the elite, had created so many powerful enemies that he was killed.

After a period of widespread and very destructive disturbance the Han dynasty was restored. (This later period of Han dynasty rule is traditionally called the “Eastern Han”, to distinguish it from the “Western Han”. This is because the dynasty shifted its capital from Chang'an to Luoyang, further east).

The Han empire reimposed its control over central Asian territories and the Silk Road.

2. Long-term trends
At the imperial court, problems have begun to build. The Han emperors have become more and more surrounded by their wives and concubines, and the eunuchs who attend them.

Ministers and senior officials are increasingly kept at arms length, and standards of government are slipping.

Long-running social trends are also working against the stability of the Han empire. Under the early (“Western”) Han a class of large landowners gradually emerge, and the later (“Eastern”) Han dynasty largely owed its rise to the support of this new elite.

As a result, government policies now favor this group. Landed estates are growing unchecked and many peasants are losing their land to become tenant farmers or serfs.

The rich, in short, are getting richer, and the poor, poorer.

3. Religion and thought
Confucianism remains the official ideology of the Han empire. However Buddhism has come to China from India via central Asia in the 1st century AD, brought by traders and monks.

This alien religion is treated with great suspicion. For example, a feature which the Chinese find horrifying is its promotion of monasticism, and the cutting of family ties which this implies. Confucianism teaches that maintaining family relationships is key to social harmony. Some Chinese, however, do convert.

4. Technology
Sometime during the Later Han, the technology of paper making has been developed in China. This has apparently occurred at the imperial court itself, to solve the major problem of document management which the bureaucracy suffered from.
Previously, bamboo scrolls had been used, but these were awkward to make and heavy to carry. Silk was far too expensive for everyday use. Paper is cheap and simple to manufacture, and easy to carry around. Its use has quickly spread throughout China.

*Suggested question:*
The damaging trends mentioned in this information will continue - so what will the next map look like?

*The next map will show!*
220 CE: The Han empire splits into three kingdoms.

Social unrest, peasant rebellion, instability at court and over-mighty generals lead to the fall of the Han dynasty and its empire.

Additional note:

The sequence of events leading to the fall of the Han empire went like this:

• After 180 CE a succession of child emperors sat on the Han throne. This allowed violent factionalism to go unchecked at court, completely undermining stable government.

• Corruption spread, and the rich landowners prospered further at the expense of the poor farmers. Peasant unrest grew, culminating in the huge uprising of the “Yellow Turbans”.

• This almost toppled the Han regime, but forces under the control of three powerful generals eventually defeated it. These three generals, however, effectively divided the empire between themselves.

• One of them has removed the last Han emperor (a child) from his throne and proclaimed himself king. The other two have also declared themselves kings of their own realms. The great Han empire has gone.

Suggested Questions:

From the notes for this and the previous map, what factors were at work undermining good government in Han China? - distinguish between long-term and short-term causes, and the relationship between the two.

Long term factors: Rise of landowning class; impoverishment and enserfment of peasants; increasing corruption in the bureaucracy; weak emperors (esp. child emperors); factionalism at court.

Short term factors: peasant unrest; over-mighty generals.
280 CE: The three kingdoms have struggled for supremacy, until one of them has conquered the other two and thus reunited China.

- Just as the Wei dynasty defeats the other two, it is itself overthrown by one of its generals. He has founded the Western Jin dynasty. This is a miserable period for the Chinese people (1).
- In these troubled times, Buddhism is spreading in China (2).
- Daoism is also more popular, and this has stimulated pseudo-science (3).

Additional note:

1. A miserable time
The final decades of the Han empire and the period of the “Three Kingdoms” have seen extremely high levels of chaos and violence, especially in the north. In this situation, wealthy landowners have fortified their estates and raised bands of armed followers to protect them.

These landowners are able to dominate their localities, while their friends and relatives monopolize the highest offices in the bureaucracies and royal courts (a measure enacted in the last days of the Han has given local landowners the power to recommend candidates for high office). This in turn allows the landowners to grab more land for themselves with impunity.

Millions of peasants have been forced into serfdom, and millions more have fled south.

The period of the “Three Kingdoms” is a famous one in Chinese history; many thrilling tales are set in that turbulent time. In reality it was a wretched period for the people of China, in which millions lost their lives, and many more their homes and livelihoods.

2. Religion and thought
The troubles of the times have weakened the hold of Confucianism, which has no answers to the sufferings so many people are experiencing. Though it remains the official ideology in all the Chinese states, both Daoism and Buddhism have made gains at all levels of Chinese society.

3. Technology and science
A by-product of the spread of Daoism has been an upsurge in what could be called the “proto-sciences”. The search for immortality, a central concern of Daoist devotees, is stimulating the study of medicine and alchemy. In later centuries this will lead to major scientific and technological breakthroughs, such as the compass and gunpowder.

Suggested question:
Phew - China’s been re-united again. But will it last?

 Students should ask themselves - have the baleful factors which led to the fall of the Han been corrected? 
The answer is in the next map.
316 CE: The re-unification of China under the Western Jin dynasty was brief. Non-Chinese invaders have taken control of northern China.

- Several nomadic groups from the beyond China’s borders have occupied large amounts of territory in northern China (1).
- The Jin emperors have been forced to retreat to southern China (2).
- It is probable that the stirrup is developed in China at this time (3).
- Many Chinese, of all ranks, are turning to Buddhism, with its messages of comfort and salvation (4).

Additional notes:

1. Barbarian invasions of the north
   The invaders have sacked many cities in the north, including, in 311, the Jin capital, Louyang.
   Despite the sacking of cities and the widespread destruction by the non-Chinese “barbarians”, ordered government has not altogether disappeared in the region. Though badly disrupted, the Chinese bureaucratic system continues to function in many places.
   In fact, as barbarian tribes move in, the native Chinese look to their officials for leadership and protection, while the barbarians need the co-operation of the same officials if they are to exercise proper control over their new Chinese subjects (who outnumber them many times over).

2. Southern China
   The Jin emperors have been forced to retreat to southern China, where they have made their capital in Nanjing and continued to rule the southern rump of the empire.
   Here, a succession of weak dynasties will follow one another. However, the south will remain unconquered by the northern barbarians and remain under native Chinese rule until China is again reunified.

3. The Stirrup
   The Jin are credited with an innovation of world history significance. At any rate, the first record of this invention is in a stone carving from Jin times.
   Having to face horse-riding steppe nomads, the Jin have equipped their cavalry with metal stirrups.
   Perhaps they were copying an innovation already used by the steppe nomads; or perhaps they came up with the innovation themselves, to enable their horsemen to match the nomads’ cavalry techniques on more equal terms.
   In any case, the stirrup will soon catch on, and within a century will be used throughout China. Further afield it will not take very long for stirrups to cross central Asia and appear in the west. Many scholars think that the stirrup would be key to the rise of the knight as the dominant figure in medieval European warfare.

4. Religion
   The upheavals of the period, and the widespread sufferings these have caused, have led to the continued spread of Buddhism. Confucianism focuses mainly on how to live a good life within this world, and offers no deep hope for the afterlife. Many Chinese, of all ranks, are therefore
turning to Buddhism, with its message of salvation. Buddhism, with its comprehensive theology, tends also to attract people who before had been attracted to Daoism.

*Suggested question:*
So what's going to happen next?
• Will the south fall to the barbarians?
• Will the Chinese empire in the south reconquer the north?
• Will the northern barbarians for stable Chinese-type states?
• Or maybe the situation will just continue like this for a long time?

*Answers on the next map.*
407 CE: China is now divided into two parts: in the non-Chinese dynasties rule several kingdoms, while the south forms a single state ruled by the Jin dynasty.

- The barbarian invasions of the north set in motion a mass flight of peasants southward (1).
- The northern barbarians have struggled, and so far failed, to establish stable regimes in their kingdoms (2).
- The rise of Buddhism has continued at an increasing rate, in both north and south (3).
- A Buddhist monk, Faxian, travels to India to obtain accurate Buddhist texts, becoming one of the most informative travelers of pre-modern times (4).

Additional notes:

1. The flight southwards
   The flight of peasants southward has led to population levels in southern China - up to now a frontier zone - rising sharply. Huge tracts of land are turned into paddy fields through the draining of lakes and swamps, the clearing of forests and the creation of intensive irrigation systems. This is a process which will continue for centuries to come.

2. The northern Barbarian kingdoms
   To retain their distinct ethnic and cultural identity, the tribal conquerors of the northern kingdoms need to maintain their traditional way of life. However, to administer and tax their millions of Chinese subjects, they need the cooperation of Chinese bureaucrats.

   This opens the way for the bureaucrats to increase their influence with the barbarian rulers at the expense of the barbarian tribal aristocracies.

   There has therefore been an almost irresistible tendency for these barbarian regimes to become more and more Sinified (i.e. more Chinese in culture and way of life).

   The tribal aristocrats tend to react violently against this process, and rebel against rulers whom they deem favor the Chinese too much.

   As a result, these northern kingdoms are highly unstable; the royal courts are violently faction-ridden, and the kingdoms themselves tend to split apart or fall to stronger neighbors (which in turn soon split).

3. Buddhism
   The non-Chinese conquerors in the north have been especially open to conversion; but Chinese also adopt Buddhism in increasing numbers. Buddhist monasteries and temples proliferate.

   The spread of Buddhism has a major impact on cultural expressions. Buddhist styles of sculpture, with huge but refined statues of seated Buddha figures, begin to appear in China. Previously, statues had been mostly been rather simple representations of animals, real and imagined. Initially, these Buddha statues are in the flowing Gandhara (northwest India) style, but they soon acquire Chinese characteristics, becoming more formal and stylistic.

   In architecture, the Buddhist stupa soon evolves into the Chinese pagoda.

   As it spreads in China, a process of syncretism gradually alters Buddhism. It is increasingly influenced by Daoism. Distinctly Chinese forms of Buddhism begin to emerge, such as the Pure Land and, later, Chan Buddhism.
The rise of Buddhism naturally arouses the hostility of some Confucian officials, who at times are able to cause trouble for the Buddhists. Some rulers champion Buddhism, others persecute it.

4. Faxian
The spread of Buddhism causes a widespread hunger for accurate translations of Buddhist texts. One Buddhist monks, Faxian (337-c.422), travelled to India in his desire to obtain original texts, spending 16 years in doing so.

When he came back he spent the rest of his life translating what he had acquired. He also wrote an account of his travels, which offers a highly valuable glimpse of Indian society and religion at this time.

*Suggested question:*
Again, can the situation shown on this map last?
Will the northern states become more Sinified, or less so? - Or perhaps stay just as unstable as now?
And whatever happens, what will be the impact on China as a whole?

*Answers on the next map.*
500 CE: In the north, developments were underway which were preparing the ground for the reunification of China.

In the north, the barbarian tribal aristocracies and the Chinese landowning class are gradually merging to form a single ruling class (1).

This stability has enabled the Northern Wei to carry out some much-needed reforms, which will help prepare the ground for the reunification of China (2).

Southern China’s economy has continued to expand (3).

Sometime around this date the horse collar is developed, a crucial development in agriculture and transport (4).

The rise of a mixed barbarian-Chinese ruling class in northern China has helped the spread of Buddhism in the topmost ranks of society (5).

Additional notes:

1. A merged ruling class in the North
   This process reaches maturity under the Northern Wei state. The leading families of this state are drawn from both “barbarian” and Chinese descent, and intermarry freely amongst themselves.

   They are becoming ever more Chinese in their ways, are educated along Confucian lines, and more and more of them are taking up a government career in the bureaucracy, filling the highest offices of state.

2. The Northern Wei state
   This stability has enabled the Northern Wei to carry out some much-needed reforms, which will help prepare the ground for the reunification of China.

   One of the most important reforms has been the Equal-Fields system. This is a major land redistribution in favor of ordinary peasants. Land is only to be let out for one life-time only - it can not be inherited - and each family is allocated a plot according to its size (including dependents, slaves and animals).

   The reform addresses the very real needs of the peasantry. It also strengthens the authority of the state by bringing the peasantry back under the control of the central administration, instead of the great landowners.

   The peasants can now be taxed, and conscripted for labor and military service, directly by state officials.

3. Southern China
   In the south, the Chinese empire there continues to experience political instability. The Jin dynasty was overthrown in 420, and four weak dynasties follow in quick succession.

   Nevertheless, southern China has seen increased agricultural production, a rising population and reviving trade.

4. The Horse Collar
   The horse collar’s antecedent is the breast-collar harness, invented in China centuries before (see above, map 400 BCE, note 4). This is now improved to make horses more efficient as draught animals in farming and transport.
5. Religion and thought
Under the Northern Wei state **Buddhism** has become almost an official religion. **Confucianism** has retained its hold on the education of future officials, however.

Question:
Looking at the notes for this and previous maps, why did the “barbarian” dynasties in northern China have such difficulty in establishing stable government, and what factors eventually enable one of them to achieve stability?

*In brief, the barbarian kings needed Chinese officials to govern their territories, but this downgraded the influence of tribal aristocracies, and caused factional instability. Only once the two groups had started to intermarry and merge, did stability become a possibility. Once it was achieved the foundations for a new period of unity could be laid.*
After the Presentation:

The questions in the Presentation notes will work just as well if used as a reinforcement exercise at the end of the Presentation, or indeed as student-based tasks.

Here is a quick Quiz:

The answers are given in (Italics).

1. What dynasty was nominally on the throne of China in 500 BCE? *(The Zhou dynasty)*
2. Who was the influential philosopher who lived and taught about 500 BCE? *(Confucius)*
3. Which state rose to power to bring all China under its rule by 220 BCE? *(Qin)*
4. Suspicious of members of the old aristocracy, from what class did rulers of this state (and indeed rulers of other states) choose their officials? *(The gentry)*
5. What school of thought did this state’s rulers follow? *(The Legalist school)*
6. What early version of a line of defenses did this dynasty establish? *(The Great Wall of China)*
7. Which long-lasting dynasty came to power after a period of chaos in 202 BCE? *(The Han dynasty)*
8. This dynasty adopted a particular philosophy as its official ideology - what was it? *(Confucianism)*
9. The dynasty built on trends already apparent long before to develop a particular governmental system. Was this a system of elected officials (as in a republic), a system of appointed officials (as in a bureaucracy), or a system of priestly officials (as in a theocracy)? *(Bureaucracy)*
10. The dynasty organized a great trade route across central Asia - what is it called? *(The Silk Road)*
11. What important technological development occurred during the later stages of this dynasty’s time in power? *(Paper-making)*
12. How many kingdoms did this dynasty’s empire divide into when it came to an end in 220 CE? *(Three - hence the period was known as the Time of the Three Kingdoms)*
13. Non-Chinese tribes invaded China in the 4th century CE - which part of China did they occupy, the north or the south? *(North)*
14. A system of belief from outside China became popular during these years - which religion was this? *(Buddhism)*
15. Sometime during this period of disunity a new invention appeared which helped in the riding of horses - what was this invention? *(The stirrup - but if students say the horse collar that’s OK too)*

Recap on map sequence:
what were the key events?
from this, divide history into periods
what changed, what remained the same?
Section 2: Student-based enquiry work

The students can tackle the task either as individuals or in small groups. They will obviously need to have access to this Premium TimeMap unit Classical China.

They can present their answers in essay form or as presentations.

The questions are designed to stimulate enquiry, thought and discussion. We have offered suggested points that students might cover in their answers. These are given in italics just below the questions.

For teachers of AP World History, between them these questions address two of the five thinking skills and three of the four themes.

Activities:

Look at the maps in the unit Classical China, and read the information attached to each. As you do this, take notes, focussing on issues below. Note when and where events happen; why they happen; and what changes as a result of them happening.

The environment: intensification of land use; population growth; migrations; cities and trade networks; ability to master and exploit environment; more sophisticated technologies.

Belief systems: new beliefs.schools of thought; relations between belief systems; their impact on society.

States: developments in government, administration, legal systems, military institutions, diplomatic exchanges; reasons for decline and collapse.

Economy: trade, distinguishing between short- and long-distance trade; trade’s impact on economy, technology, society, states, art, belief systems, spread of crops and diseases etc; industry; technology; integration (roads, canals); intensification of agriculture and/or craft production.

Society: population growth or decline; migration; social classes and labour groups; settlements, especially cities; gender or family relationships.

Then answer one or more of the following question:

1. What were the long-term trends in Chinese history between 500 BCE and 500 CE?
   Give instances of the interaction between them.

Include developments which went into reverse, or which faced challenges in some periods.

The following trends could be included:
- the expansion of the Chinese civilization and people - especially into south China (environment, society)
- the rise of Confucianism, and then its decline in the face of Buddhism (belief systems)
- the rise and fall of a unified state (Qin/Han) covering all China (the state)
- the rise of bureaucratic government in Classical China (the state)
- the rise of trade and industry, and of the urban classes which engaged in it (economy, society)
- the rise of the gentry - and then the rise of the landowning class in late Han times, and its merging with the non-Chinese ruling class (in the North, at least) (society)
Instances of interaction are numerous, but some are:
• the rise of Confucianism under the Han was linked to the rise of bureaucracy, as well as with the rise of the gentry;
• invasions and civil wars led to the rise of Buddhism;
• the merging of the Chinese and non-Chinese ruling class in the North strengthening the state.

(AP world history coverage - Thinking skills 2: Chronological reasoning: causation, continuity and change; All themes)

2. Trace the fortunes of the first true bureaucracy in world history during this millennium of Chinese history.

An answer should include
• its origins in the need for princes of the later Zhou period to have able officials run their states in a more centralized fashion;
• the rise of Qin, with its emphasis on efficient administration;
• the entrenchment and expansion of the bureaucracy under the Han;
• and finally its survival in the chaotic period after the fall of the Han.

3. Trace the social developments in China, focussing on the peasantry, the merchants and the ruling classes.

An answer should include
• the decline of the aristocracy in the late Zhou period, and the rise of the gentry as the princes turned to officials of this class to help them administer their states;
• linked to this, the changing of the peasants’ status from serfs under the control of local lords to free farmers under the direct control of the states;
• and at the same time, the rise of a merchant class in China;
• the consolidation of all these trends under the Qin and early Han dynasties;
• in the late Han and after, the rise of a new landowning class and its transformation into a quasi-feudal aristocracy (with private armies, fortified manor houses, etc);
• linked to this, the renewed enserfment of the peasantry; the flight of peasants to the south;
• and the creation of a new Chinese-barbarian aristocracy in northern China.

4. From the fortunes of the Qin and early Han empires, can you identify the challenges which had to be overcome in establishing a durable, unified state covering all of China?

How did the Qin and Han empires deal with these challenges? Compare and contrast their approaches. Distinguish between short-term measures and long-term policies.

Challenges: initially: local loyalties and practices (eg in weights and measures), rival centers of power, (different states, rebel leaders)
More long-term: effective administration; provincial power centers; rebellious generals, popular revolts, centrifugal forces, rival centers of power (rival leaders)

Short-term measures: standardizing weights and measures etc, concentrating forces under personal direction; tempering severity of Qin policies
Long-term measures: Confucianism (legitimacy); suppression of client kings
Appendix 1: TimeMaps articles for further reading

A list of all TimeMaps articles for Period 2 can be found on the Encyclopedia home page. Here is a selected list of the key articles which students should find most helpful for China:

**Ancient China** - an overview of Chinese civilization in ancient times

**The Zhou dynasty** - a survey of the history of China from c. 1100 BCE to 220 BCE, including the period of Confucius, and the rise of the Qin empire

**The Qin dynasty** - the rise and fall of the Qin dynasty, and the policies which caused both its success and downfall

**The Han dynasty** - the rise and fall of probably the most influential dynasty in Chinese imperial history, and the social, political and ideological trends which occurred

**Divided China** - the period of division which followed the fall of the Han dynasty, along with the social, political and religious developments which occurred.
Appendix 2: Using the Classical China unit with AP World History

The teachers notes and student activities which accompany this TimeMap presentation offer challenges which cover one of the four Thinking Skills and all five Themes.

The Key Concepts covered in this unit are as follows:

2. I. Belief systems and artistic expression

II. A: Buddhism changed over time as it spread throughout Asia

B: Confucianism's core beliefs and writings originated in the writings and lessons of Confucius and were elaborated by key disciples who sought to promote social harmony by outlining proper rituals and social relationships for all people in China, including the rulers.

C: In the major Daoist writings, the core belief of balance between humans and nature assumed that the Chinese political system would be altered indirectly. Daoism also influenced the development of Chinese culture.

III: Belief systems affected gender roles. Buddhism encouraged monastic life and Confucianism emphasized filial piety.

IV. B: Ancestor veneration

V. B: Buddhist influence on architecture - the pagoda

C: Buddhist influence on sculpture - seated Buddha figures, initially in Gandhara (Indian) style

2.2. The Development of States and Empires

I: Qin and Han Empire

II. A: Centralized governments; Elaborate bureaucracies

B: Diplomacy; supply lines; fortifications, defensive walls, and roads

C: Roads

III. A: Chang'an, the Han capital, the largest city on the world at that time

B: Peasants, artisans, merchants, elites: gentry, officials, landowners

C: Corvée, serfdom

D: Confucian patriarchal teaching on family relations
IV: The Han empire created political, cultural, and administrative difficulties that it could not manage, which eventually led to its decline, collapse, and transformation into successor states.

A: Through excessive mobilization of resources, the later Han government generated social tensions and economic difficulties by concentrating too much wealth in the hands of elites.

B. Problems between Han China and the Xiongnu

2.3. Emergence of Transregional Networks of Communication and Exchange

I. A: Under the Han - the Eurasian Silk Roads; Indian Ocean sea lanes

II. A: The horse harness; stirrups

III. A: large-scale irrigation projects and colonization of southern China

[B: The spread of diseases - none of the literature on China at this time seems to mention this factor]

C: Buddhism