

Source Analysis: Han China (202 BCE – 220 CE)

Document 1

Source: *The Classic of Filiality* (206 BCE – 8 CE)

As one serves one's father, one serves one's mother, drawing on the same love. As one serves one's father, one serves one's prince, drawing on the same reverence. The mother draws upon one's love, the prince on one's reverence. Therefore, if one serves one's prince with the filiality one shows to one's father, it becomes the virtue of fidelity (loyalty). If one serves one's superiors with brotherly submission it becomes the virtue of obedience. Never failing in fidelity and obedience, this is how one serves superiors. Thus one may preserve one's rank and office and continue one's family sacrifices. This is the filiality of the scholar-official. ...

Document 2

Source: *Admonitions for Women*, written by Ban Zhao who was a female Chinese historian and philosopher (100 CE)

... Let a woman retire late to bed, but rise early to her duties; let her not dread tasks by day or by night. Let her not refuse to perform domestic duties whether easy or difficult. That which must be done, let her finish completely, tidily, and systematically. [When a woman follows such rules as these] then she may be said to be industrious.

Let a woman be composed in demeanor and upright in bearing in the service of her husband. Let her live in purity and quietness [of spirit] and keep watch over herself. Let her not love gossip and silly laughter. Let her cleanse, purify, and arrange in order the wine and the food for the offerings to the ancestors. [Observing such principles as these] is what it means to continue the ancestral rites. ...

Document 3

Source: *The Ballad of Mulan*, a Chinese epic poem (6th century CE)

“Mulan weaves, facing the door.
You only hear daughter's sighs.
They ask daughter who's in her heart,
They ask daughter who's on her mind.
'No one is in daughter's heart,
No one is on daughter's mind.
Last night I saw the draft posters,
The Son of Heaven,* the great Khan,**
 is calling many troops,
The army list is in twelve scrolls,
On every scroll there's father's name.
Father [is too old and] has no grown-up son,
I have no elder brother.
I want to buy a saddle and horse,
And serve in the army in father's place.’

At dawn she takes leave of the Yellow River,
In the evening she arrives at Black Mountain.
She doesn't hear the sound of
 father and mother calling,
She goes ten thousand miles on the business of war. . . .”

Document 4

Source: *Memorial on the Encouragement of Agriculture*, written by Chao Cuo who was a political adviser and government official of the Han Dynasty (178 BCE)

Among the traders and merchants, on the other hand, the larger ones hoard goods and exact 100 percent profit, while the smaller ones sit lined up in the markets selling their wares. Those who deal in luxury goods daily disport themselves in the cities and market towns; taking advantage of the ruler's wants, they are able to sell at double price. Thus though their men neither plow nor weed, though their women neither tend silkworms nor spin, yet their clothes are brightly patterned and colored, and they eat only choice grain and meat. They have none of the hardships of the farmer, yet their grain is ten to one hundredfold. With their wealth they may consort with nobles, and their power exceeds the authority of government officials. They use their profits to overthrow others. Over a thousand miles they wander at ease, their caps and cart covers filling the roads. They ride in fine carriages and drive fat horses, tread in silken shoes and trail white silk behind them. Thus it is that merchants encroach upon the farmers, and the farmers are driven from their homes and become vagrants. At present, although the laws degrade the merchants, the merchants have become wealthy and honored, and although they honor the farmers, the farmers have grown poor and lowly. Thus what common practice honors the ruler degrades, and what the officials scorn the law exalts. With ruler and ruled thus at variance and their desires in conflict, it is impossible to hope that the nation will become rich and the law be upheld.

Document 5

Source: Artifacts found in China dating back to the Han Dynasty



A green Roman glass cup unearthed from an Eastern Han Dynasty tomb in Guangxi, China



Roman Empire coins



The Sampul Tapestry:

Wall hanging tapestry found in Xinjiang, China showing a possible Greek soldier with blue eyes, wielding a spear. Depicted above is a centaur from Greek mythology. Made between 250-125 BCE.

Document 6

Source: *Confucius and the World He Created*, Michael Schuman (2015)

“By offering access to education to the lower classes, Confucius opened up an avenue of social mobility. His influence on education, Fung contended, ‘truly constituted a great step toward emancipation.’ The Confucians thus instilled the ideal that society ought to be a meritocracy, where people’s success should be linked to their knowledge and ability, not, as was common in ancient China and elsewhere, to their family pedigree, social status, wealth, or political connections. By promoting learning, Confucius also shaped how China was governed. His emphasis on public policy as the realm of the most educated contributed to the emergence of the classic scholar-official, the man of letters who possessed the know-how and moral judgment to rule over others. These Confucian ideas became enshrined in China’s famous civil service examination system.”

Document 7

Source: *World Civilizations: The Global Experience*, Peter N. Stearns (2003)

The Ch’in and Han dynasties of Classical China established a distinctive, and remarkably successful, kind of government. The Ch’in stressed central authority, whereas the Han expanded the powers of the bureaucracy. More than any other factor, it was the structure of this government that explained how such a vast territory could be effectively ruled – for the Chinese empire was indeed the largest political system in the classical world.

... (The emperor) appointed governors to each district of his domain, who exercised military and legal powers in the name of the emperor. They, in turn, named officials responsible for smaller regions.... The effectiveness of a central government was further enhanced by the delegation of special areas and decisions to the emperor’s ministers. Some dealt with matters of finance, others with military affairs, and so on.

Able rulers of the Han dynasty resumed the attack on local warrior-warlords. In addition, they realized the importance of creating a large, highly skilled bureaucracy, one capable of carrying out the duties of a complex state. By the end of the Han period, China had about 130,000 bureaucrats, representing 0.2 percent of the population. The emperor Wu Ti (140 - 87 BCE) established examinations for his bureaucrats – the first example of civil service tests of the sort that many governments have instituted in modern times.... Trained and experienced bureaucrats, confident in their own traditions, could often control the whims of a single ruler, even one who, in the Chinese tradition, regarded himself as divinely appointed – the “Son of Heaven.”

Doc #	Main Idea	Social, Political, or Economic
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

Short Answer Question (SAQ) Workshop

- A. Identify and explain ONE specific economic factor that contributed to state-building in China during the Han Dynasty.
- B. Identify and explain ONE specific social or cultural factor that contributed to state-building in China during the Han Dynasty.
- C. Identify and explain ONE specific political factor that contributed to state-building in China during the Han Dynasty.

ACE the SAQ

Answer the Question

Cite Evidence

Explain Evidence