

# ART, FAITH AND PHILOSOPHY (II)

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## ART IN IMPERIAL CHINA

# Concepts to discuss

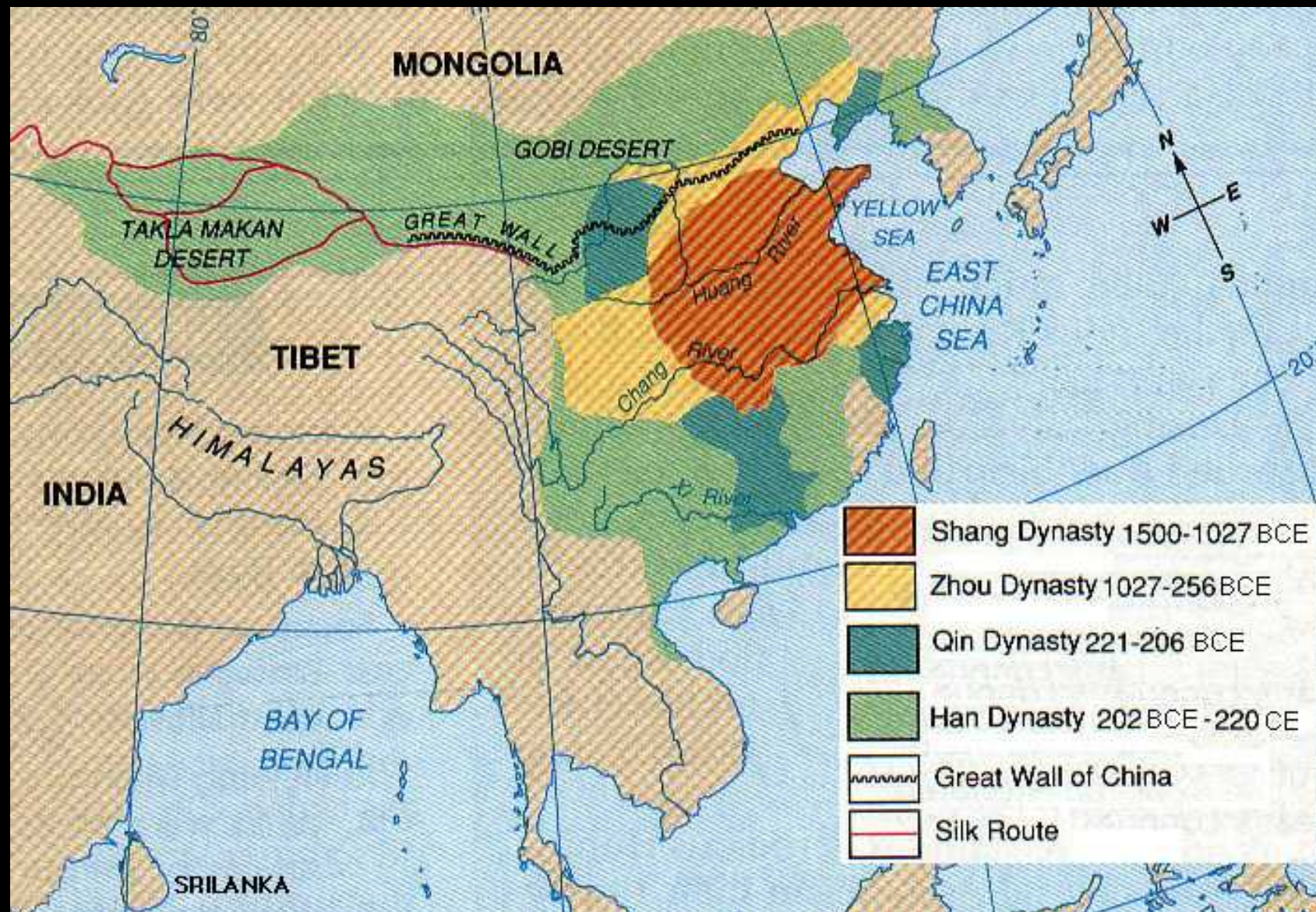
- ▶ Art as an expression of the artists' character and philosophy (not just skill)
- ▶ Overlap between influence of the court and philosophical values on artistic practices
- ▶ The position or value of the artist in society (by extension the role of art)





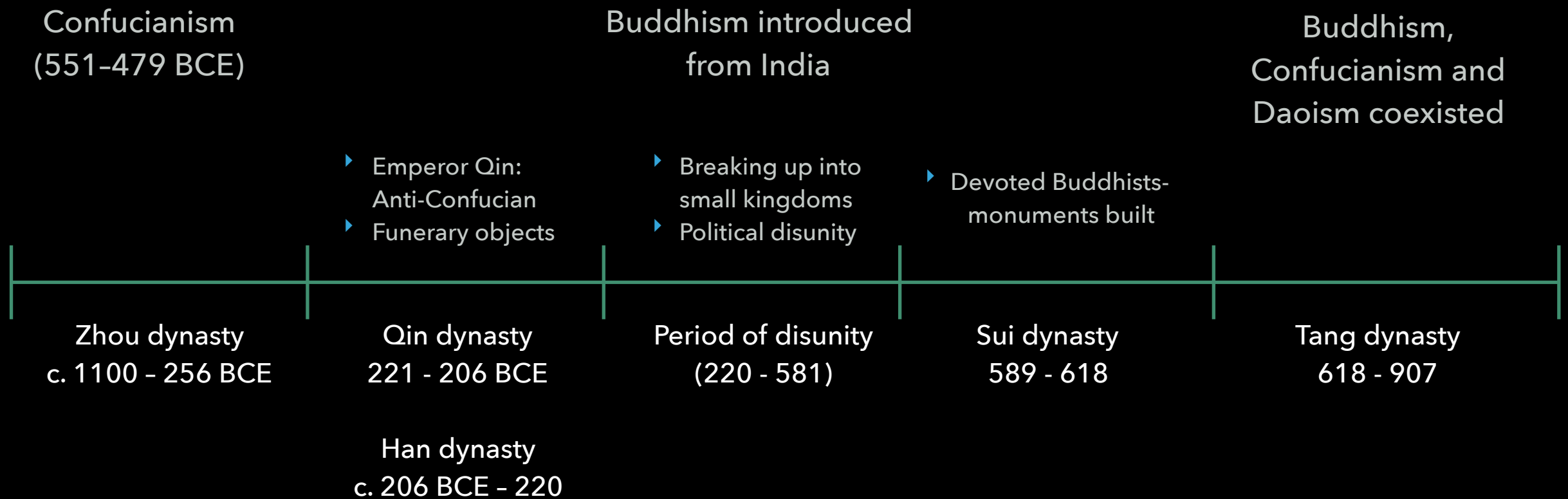
# INTRODUCTION TO IMPERIAL CHINA

- ▶ Imperial Chinese history is marked by the rise and fall of many dynasties and occasional periods of disunity, but was marked by a sophisticated governing system
- ▶ Each dynasty had its own distinct characteristics
- ▶ Highly literate society that greatly valued poetry and brush-written calligraphy along with painting
- ▶ Produced many technological advancements that have enriched the world, including paper and porcelain



# A TIMELINE OF IMPERIAL CHINA AND ITS RELIGIONS

Note: we are only studying a part of a much longer history of Imperial China. The dynasties continued until the establishment of the Republic of China in 1912





# The Purpose of Art Making in Imperial China

Belief in the moral and educational power of art

Love of nature

Means to capture philosophies and values of life



*The Eighteen Scholars*  
Ming dynasty (1368-1644)



*Fa Ruozhen*  
*Cloudy Mountains*  
1684



*Li Gonglin*  
*The Classic of Filial Piety*  
ca. 1085



# Confucianism ~ Daoism ~ Buddhism

- ▶ **100 Schools of Thought:**

- ▶ period of turmoil, chaos and war between 6th century BCE to 221 CE
- ▶ many philosophical schools and religions begin to emerge
- ▶ the thoughts and ideas discussed during this time have an influence on the lifestyles and practices of the present day

- ▶ **Three main religions:**

- ▶ Confucianism founded by philosopher Confucius (c. 551-479 BCE)
- ▶ Daoism (also called Taoism) attributed to the sage Lao Zi (Lao Tzu) "Old Master" (born c. 500)
- ▶ Buddhism started by Prince Siddhartha (the Buddha) (c. 563 BCE-483BCE)  
[introduced to China later]



# CONFUCIANISM

## THE SCHOOL OF THE SCHOLARS

- ▶ Focused on morality, ethics and the establishment of a harmonious and well ordered society
- ▶ Believed that humans were social beings and therefore emphasised
  - ▶ service to the state
  - ▶ filial piety (respect)
  - ▶ humanity and kindness
  - ▶ state and family rituals for preserving the social order

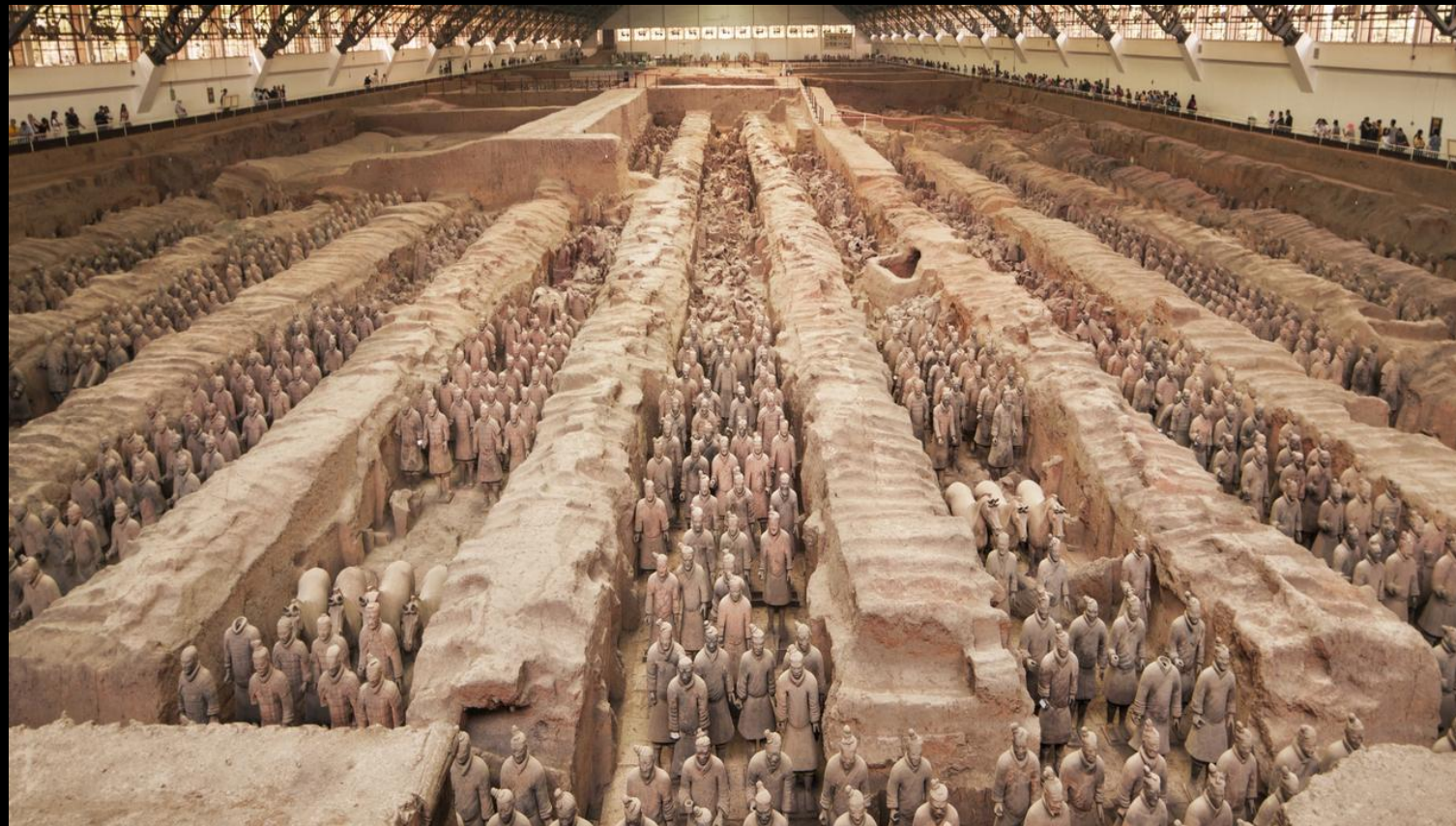


# The Scholar Officials



Elegant Gathering in the Apricot Garden  
ca. 1437 (Met Museum)





# Terracotta Warriors

Qin dynasty (221 - 206 BCE)

Terracotta Army: The greatest archaeological find of the 20th century - BBC News

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4c\\_ADqshdSA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4c_ADqshdSA)



- ▶ Warring period ends with victory of Qin dynasty
- ▶ Emperor Qin Shi Huang- ruled for a very short time but laid the foundation for China's imperial structure- begins construction of the Great Wall
- ▶ Adopted philosophy of **legalism** hence banned others- prohibited Confucianism
- ▶ Confucianism returns with the Han dynasty (after the Qin) which made it the state philosophy



# DAOISM

## THE WAY



- ▶ Adopted ideas from rural folk religion (hence both a philosophy and religion)
- ▶ Believe in “going with the flow” of the Dao (cosmic force which flows through all things)
- ▶ Emphasis on the natural world
- ▶ Believed to have been founded by the philosopher Lao-Zi who wrote the *Tao Te Ching* (*Book of the Way*)



# Landscape Painting



元陸天游丹臺春曉圖真蹟



(Left)  
Lu Guang  
*Spring Dawn Over the Elixir Terrace*  
ca. 1369

(Right)  
Wu Boli  
*Dragon Pine*  
late 14th- early 15th century





Scholar viewing a waterfall  
late 12th-early 13th century  
Ma Yuan Chinese





- ▶ Pensive
- ▶ Sublime
- ▶ Serene
- ▶ Meditative
- ▶ Scenic Vista
- ▶ Cascading waterfall
- ▶ Muted tone

Scholar viewing a waterfall  
late 12th-early 13th century  
Ma Yuan Chinese





# BUDDHISM

- ▶ Originates in India between 6th century and 4th century BCE
- ▶ Prince Siddhartha- named the Buddha (The Enlightened One)
- ▶ Introduced to China (and other parts of Asia) in the 1st century through trade routes
- ▶ Dominant during Tang dynasty
- ▶ Teachings include Middle Path and Nirvana



# The Buddhist Cave Temples

**Bodhisattva:** a person on the path towards Buddhahood (enlightenment)



Longmen Caves, Henan Province, China, c. 493 AD to 1127 AD





# The Buddhist Cave Temples

Dancer Holding A Pipa Behind Her Back  
Cave No. 112  
Middle Tang Dynasty (781-847)  
Mogao caves at Dunhuang



Mogao Cave 275  
Northern Liang period



# Xu Bing, Book from the Sky

<https://youtu.be/DseIYQdjzgE>

