7-2 Notes

* Chinese society had three main social classes. A social class incudes people who share a similar position in society.
* Early Chinese social classes:
  + Landowning aristocrats
  + Peasant farmers
  + Merchants
* Aristocrats relied on farmers to grow the crops that made them rich.
* The family was the basic building block of Chinese society.
* Chinese families practiced filial piety – meant children had to respect their parents and older relatives. The oldest male headed the family.
* Chinese farmers learned to cut terraces – flat areas, like a series of deep steps – into the mountain slopes in order to create more farmland.
* Chinese farmers used ants, frogs and birds to protect their crops from other insects.
* In order to create a peaceful society, Chinese thinkers developed three major theories: Confucianism, Daoism, and Legalism.
* Confucius was China’s first great thinker and teacher. He believed that people needed to have a sense of duty, that a person must put the need of family and community before his or her own needs.
* Confucius believed to have a just society people should follow the golden rule and that all men with a talent for governing should take part in government – these beliefs formed the basis of the philosophy called Confucianism.
* Another Chinese philosophy that promoted a peaceful society was Daoism based on the teachings of Laozi, the “Old Master”.
* Daoists believed that people should give up worldly desires.
* A third Chinese philosophy was Legalism (or the School of Law) developed by Hanfeizi. He taught that humans were naturally evil and needed harsh laws and stiff punishments to force them to do their duty.