S4 Chinese History Practice Paper: Zhou Feudalism and Clan Law, Spring and Autumn and Warring States Social Change, Qin-Han Unification, Wei-Jin Aristocracy and Ethnic Fusion, Sui-Tang Three Departments and Examinations, Song-Yuan Maritime Trade and Provinces (100 marks)

S4 Chinese History | 100 marks | 75 minutes

Question 1: Western Zhou Enfeoffment and Clan Law

Study the following and answer the questions.

List three obligations that feudal lords owed to the Zhou king under Western Zhou enfeoffment. *(4 marks)*

Answer: Regular attendance at court to report on administration, payment of tribute at fixed times, and supplying troops for royal campaigns and guarding the royal domain.

Clan law centred on inheritance by the principal wife's eldest son. Explain its function. *(4 marks)*

Answer: Status and property passed to the eldest son of the principal wife, preventing rivalry among brothers; the ranking of major and minor lineages was fixed, so clan hierarchy and political order stayed stable.

Under the well-field system one plot in every nine was a public plot. What percentage of all farmland was public? (one decimal place) *(4 marks)*

Answer: $1 \div 9 \times 100 \approx 11.1\%$, so the public plot was about 11.1% of all farmland and its produce went to the lord.

Explain how enfeoffment and clan law worked together to maintain Western Zhou order. *(5 marks)*

Answer: Enfeoffment created layered lord-vassal ties by granting land to kinsmen and meritorious followers, while clan law fixed status by blood descent; political rank matched kinship ethics, so a lord was both vassal and kinsman, curbing internal strife and consolidating rule.

Question 2: Social Change in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods

Study the following and answer the questions.

What effects did the spread of iron tools and ox ploughing have on Spring and Autumn and Warring States agriculture? *(4 marks)*

Answer: Farming became more efficient, more land was brought under cultivation and harvests grew, encouraging population growth and private ownership of land and gradually dissolving the well-field system.

Analyse the reasons for the rise of the shi (scholar-adviser) class. *(4 marks)*

Answer: The feudal order weakened as some nobles declined and commoners rose; rival states needed talent and patronised scholars; private teaching spread learning downward, so shi became a professional class of advisers and office-holders.

What was the significance of Shang Yang's abolition of the well-field system and opening of field boundaries? *(4 marks)*

Answer: It recognised private ownership and sale of land, taxed land by area, rewarded reclamation and military service, gave the state direct control of peasants and eroded the old nobility's economic base.

Compare the Confucian, Legalist and Daoist views on government. *(5 marks)*

Answer: Confucians stressed moral rule, rites and education through benevolence; Legalists stressed law, rewards and punishments and strength through farming and war; Daoists advocated governing by non-action, following nature and disturbing the people as little as possible.

Question 3: Qin and Han Unification

Study the following and answer the questions.

Compare the Qin commandery-and-county system with Zhou enfeoffment. *(4 marks)*

Answer: Commanderies and counties were run by officials appointed, transferable and non-hereditary, with land and people under the state; enfeoffment granted land by descent, made office hereditary and gave lords considerable autonomy.

What was the purpose of Qin's unification of currency, weights and measures? *(4 marks)*

Answer: To make tax collection, trade and construction measurement uniform throughout the empire, remove differences among the former states and strengthen central economic control and integration.

Qin first set up 36 commanderies and later expanded to 40. How many were added? *(4 marks)*

Answer: 40 − 36 = 4 commanderies, reflecting Qin's territorial expansion and deeper local control.

What was the effect of Emperor Wu of Han making Confucianism the sole orthodox teaching? *(5 marks)*

Answer: Confucianism became the official ideology; chairs of the Five Classics and the Imperial Academy trained officials, so office required classical learning, unifying thought and strengthening imperial power, and Confucianism remained orthodox thereafter.

Question 4: Wei-Jin Aristocracy and Ethnic Fusion

Study the following and answer the questions.

How did the nine-grade zhongzheng system produce aristocratic clan rule? *(4 marks)*

Answer: Assessors were mostly members of great families and graded pedigree above merit, so the top grades held no poor households and the lower grades no great clans, and offices were monopolised by a few families.

List three Sinicisation measures of Emperor Xiaowen of Northern Wei. *(4 marks)*

Answer: Moving the capital to Luoyang; changing Xianbei surnames to Han surnames (Tuoba to Yuan); banning Xianbei dress and court speech and adopting Han marriage, mourning and official systems (any three).

If 90% of top-grade posts went to five great clans and only 10% to poor households, how many times more likely were clan members to hold them? *(4 marks)*

Answer: 90 ÷ 10 = 9 times as likely, showing extreme inequality of access to office.

Explain the influence of ethnic fusion on the Sui-Tang golden age. *(5 marks)*

Answer: Han and northern peoples blended in institutions, bloodlines, culture and military organisation, producing complementary vitality such as the militia system, music and dress, which underpinned Sui-Tang unity and openness.

Question 5: Sui-Tang Departments, Examinations and Land-Tax Systems

Study the following and answer the questions.

Name the three departments of the Tang and state each one's function. *(4 marks)*

Answer: The Secretariat drafted edicts, the Chancellery reviewed and could return them, and the Department of State Affairs executed them and supervised the six ministries.

How did the examination system differ from the nine-grade system in selection criteria? *(4 marks)*

Answer: The examinations selected by test results in principle regardless of pedigree, while the nine-grade system selected mainly by family background with merit secondary.

Under the equal-field system each adult male received 100 mu, of which 20 mu was hereditary. What percentage was hereditary? *(4 marks)*

Answer: 20 ÷ 100 × 100 = 20%, and the hereditary plot could be passed to heirs while the personal share reverted to the state at death.

Each adult owed 20 days of labour a year; at 3 chi of silk per day, how much silk (in chi and zhang) was commuted, and what was the purpose of the yong? *(5 marks)*

Answer: 20 × 3 = 60 chi = 6 zhang; commuting labour into silk protected the farming season, raised revenue and lightened corvee.

Question 6: Song-Yuan Maritime Trade and the Provincial System

Study the following and answer the questions.

List three reasons for the prosperity of Song maritime trade. *(3 marks)*

Answer: Land routes were blocked by the Tangut Western Xia and the Jin; shipbuilding and the compass improved; the government encouraged trade and taxed it through maritime offices; the economic centre shifted south (any three).

What were the functions of the maritime trade office? *(4 marks)*

Answer: It regulated incoming and outgoing ships, inspected cargo, collected duties, purchased monopoly goods and issued trade licences.

In one year maritime trade revenue was 2 million guan against total revenue of 60 million guan. What percentage was maritime revenue? (two decimal places) *(4 marks)*

Answer: 200 ÷ 6000 × 100 ≈ 3.33%, showing overseas trade had become an important revenue source.

Explain the function and influence of the Yuan provincial system. *(4 marks)*

Answer: Branch secretariats acted as agencies of the Central Secretariat over the provinces, combining civil and military authority while power stayed at the centre; they made governing a vast territory workable and were continued under Ming and Qing provincial administration.