

CHAPTER 10

LESSON 1

The Birth of Chinese Civilization

Today, China is one of the world's most powerful countries.

The Land of China

[SS.6.W.2.4](#), [SS.6.E.3.2](#), [SS.6.G.1.7](#), [SS.6.G.2.1](#), [SS.6.G.2.2](#), [SS.6.G.2.3](#), [SS.6.G.2.5](#), [SS.6.G.5.3](#), [LA.6.1.6.1](#)

How have rivers, mountains, and deserts shaped the development of China's civilization?

The ancient civilizations of Egypt, Mesopotamia, and India developed along large rivers. Hundreds of years later in East Asia, another civilization began along the Huang He (HWANG HUH). In Chinese, Huang He means "yellow river." This civilization was China. China has gone through many changes over the centuries, but it is still a strong and growing civilization today.

Powerful Rivers

The Huang He stretches east across China for more than 2,900 miles (4,666 km). It begins in China's western mountains and flows to the Pacific Ocean. On its way, the Huang He cuts through thick layers of rich, yellow soil. This soil is called loess (LEHS). The river carries away large amounts of loess and spreads it farther downstream. The yellow color of the soil in the Huang He gives the river its name.

The rich soil helps farmers grow large amounts of food on small plots of land. As a result, the Huang He valley **emerged** as one of the great wheat-producing areas of the ancient world.

The Huang He has benefited the people of the Huang He valley. The river has also brought great misfortune. The Huang He often overflows its banks, causing enormous floods. Since 600 B.C., the Chinese have recorded more than 1,500 floods of the Huang He. These floods have taken millions of lives. The Chinese call the Huang He "China's Sorrow" in honor of the people killed by the floods.

Over time, the people of China moved south and settled near another great river, the Chang Jiang (CHAHNG JYAHNG), or the Yangtze River. The Chang Jiang flows from west to east across central China. It flows through spectacular canyons and broad plains on its way to the East China Sea. The Chang Jiang is about 3,915 miles (6,300 km) long. Only the Amazon in South America and the Nile in Africa are longer.

Like the Huang He, the Chang Jiang provides rich soil for farming. Early farmers grew rice along the river's shores. The Chang Jiang was also an important waterway for trade and transportation.

Mountains and Desert

China has fertile river valleys, but only about one-tenth of its land can be farmed. Mountains and desert cover much of the country's land. To the southwest, the towering Himalaya separate China from South Asia. The Kunlun Shan and Tian Shan mountain ranges slice through western China. East of the Tian Shan is a vast, rocky desert known as the Gobi.

For centuries, these rugged mountains and the barren desert acted like walls around the country. These barriers limited contacts between China and other civilizations. The Chinese developed a unique culture and a strong sense of independence. They called their land "the Middle Kingdom." To them, it was the center of the world.

Identifying How did rivers help civilization develop in China?



Florida CONNECTION

The Withlacoochee Rivers

An unusual geographic situation exists in Florida. Two of the state's rivers have the same name. The two Withlacoochee Rivers have nothing in common and are in different parts of the state.

The First Chinese Dynasty

[SS.6.W.2.4](#), [SS.6.W.4.8](#), [SS.6.G.2.2](#), [SS.6.G.2.3](#), [LA.6.1.7.1](#), [LA.6.1.7.3](#)

Why did China's Shang rulers become powerful?

What we know about the early people of China comes from the things they left behind. Archaeologists have unearthed clay pots and cups in the Huang He valley that date back thousands of years. These artifacts show that the Huang He valley was the birthplace of Chinese civilization.

Archaeologists think that people settled in the valley because of its rich soil. Early settlers farmed the land. As in other early civilizations, people here also used the river for travel and trade. As the population grew, the Chinese began building towns.

Myths and Legends

Like other early peoples, the ancient Chinese created myths to explain the creation of their world. Many Chinese myths celebrate the deeds of great heroes. Yü the Great was one of these heroes. According to myths, Yü dug the first channels to control the floodwaters of the Huang He. Yü chased away the dragon that caused the floods. Then, he started digging the **channels**. According to the myth, Yü was aided in his task by other dragons. One dragon used its tail to help dig the channels. Still, it took 13 long years to complete the work. After the channels were finished, the flood waters could flow safely away to the sea.

Legend has it that Yü founded China's first dynasty. That dynasty, named the Xia (SHYAH), began about 2000 B.C. Archaeologists, however, have not found any historical evidence of the Xia. Based on written records, China's first dynasty is the Shang. Shang kings ruled China from about 1750 B.C. to 1045 B.C.

Who Were the Shang?

Archaeologists have unearthed long-buried walls and buildings. These ruins show that the Shang built the first cities in China. Among these cities was the royal capital of Anyang (AHN • YAHNG). A palace and temple stood at the center of the city. Public buildings and the homes of government officials circled this central area. Beyond the city's center stood workshops and other homes.

The king was the most powerful person, serving as the political, religious, and military leader of Shang China. At first, Shang kings controlled only a small area of northern China. In time, the Shang conquered neighboring areas. They ruled over most of the people of the Huang He valley.

As the Shang kingdom grew, kings sent out large armies to defend the kingdom's borders. They appointed people called warlords to govern local territories. **Warlords** are **military** leaders who lead their own armies. Shang kings **relied** on the warlords to stay in power.

Under the king, warlords and other royal officials formed the upper class. They were **aristocrats** (uh • RIHS • tuh • krats), people of noble birth whose wealth came from the land they owned. Aristocrats passed their land and power to their children or to younger family members.

Most people of Shang China were farmers. There were much smaller groups of merchants, artisans, and slaves. The farmers lived in rural villages and worked the land that belonged to the aristocrats. They raised cattle, sheep, and chickens and grew grains, such as millet, wheat, and rice.

People in Shang China worshipped many gods. The god Shang Ti ruled as supreme god over the lesser gods. According to legend, the gods lived in the mountains, rivers, and seas.

The early Chinese both admired and feared the gods. They believed the gods could bring good or bad fortune. They attempted to please the gods by offering gifts of food and other goods.

The Chinese also honored their **ancestors**, or long-dead family members. They made offerings to their ancestors. They hoped that their ancestors would bring good luck and help in difficult times. Today, many Chinese still pay respect to their ancestors by going to temples and burning small paper copies of food, clothing, and other items. These copies represent things that departed relatives need in the afterlife.

Seeking Guidance from Ancestors

Shang kings believed that they received their power to rule from the gods and their wisdom from their ancestors. For this reason, religion and government were closely linked. For the kings, an important duty was to contact the gods and the ancestors before making important decisions.

The kings asked for help by using oracle (AWR • uh • kuhl) bones. They instructed priests to scratch questions on the bones, such as "Will I win the battle?" or "Will there be an abundant harvest?" Priests heated the oracle bones over a fire until they cracked. The pattern of cracks provided answers from the gods and ancestors to the king's questions.

The ancient Chinese wrote in pictographs and ideographs. **Pictographs** (PIKH • tuh • grafs) are characters that represent objects. For example, the Chinese characters for the sun and the moon are pictographs. **Ideographs** (IH • dee • uh • grafs) are another kind of character used in Chinese writing. They link two or more pictographs to express an idea. For example, the ideograph that stands for "forest" combines three pictographs of the word "tree."

Unlike the Chinese language, English and many other languages have writing systems based on an alphabet. An alphabet uses characters that represent sounds. Most characters in the Chinese language represent entire words.

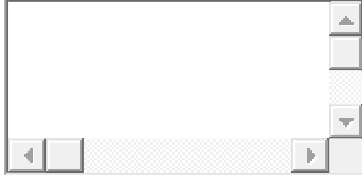
Shang Arts

During the Shang dynasty, the Chinese created objects made of bronze. These works of art are some of the finest bronzes ever made. To make bronze objects, artisans made clay molds in several parts. Then they carved designs into the clay. Finally, they joined the parts of the mold together and poured in melted bronze. When the bronze cooled, the artisans removed the mold. The finished object was a beautifully decorated work of art.

Shang bronze objects included sculptures, daggers, vases, cups, and urns—or large ceremonial containers. The Shang used bronze urns to prepare and serve food for ceremonies to honor their ancestors.

Chinese artists and artisans made many other important advances. Farmers raised silk worms that produced silk. Weavers then made the silk into colorful clothing for wealthy people. Artisans crafted vases and dishes from kaolin (KAY • eh • lehn), a fine, white clay. They also carved statues from ivory and a green stone called jade.

Explaining Why did Shang kings have questions scratched on oracle bones?



Thinking Like a HISTORIAN

Analyzing Sources

Archaeologists study what ancient societies have left behind. Some of what we know about early China and Chinese writing comes from the study of oracle bones. They are a primary source. Suppose you were an archaeologist who dug up a collection of oracle bones. You would want to analyze them. Use the library to find secondary sources about oracle bones. Write a brief report summarizing your findings and present it to the class. For more information about analyzing sources, read the chapter *What Does a Historian Do?*

The Zhou: China's Longest Dynasty

[SS.6.W.2.4](#), [SS.6.W.4.6](#), [SS.6.W.4.8](#), [SS.6.G.1.6](#), [SS.6.G.1.7](#)

How did the Zhou claim the right to rule China?

According to legend, the last of the Shang rulers was a wicked tyrant. Many Chinese turned against him. In 1045 B.C., rebels led by an aristocrat named Wu Wang (WOO WAHNG) overthrew the Shang government. When his victory was complete, Wu declared a new dynasty called the Zhou (JOH). The Zhou ruled China for more than 800 years—longer than any other dynasty in Chinese history.

How did the Zhou Rule China?

Zhou kings governed China much as Shang rulers had. The king led the government, ruling with the help of a bureaucracy (byu • RAH • kruh • see). A **bureaucracy** is made up of officials who carry out the tasks of government. The king also put together a strong army to bring weaker kingdoms under Zhou rule.

Soon the Zhou kingdom was larger than that of the Shang. To govern effectively, the king divided the kingdom into territories. He assigned loyal aristocrats to govern each of the territories. The positions the aristocrats held were **hereditary**. This meant that when an aristocrat died, a son or another member of his family governed the territory.

The Chinese believed their king represented them before the gods. The king's chief duty was to carry out religious ceremonies to please the gods. Zhou kings claimed that kings ruled China because they had the Mandate of Heaven.

The Right to Rule

The **Mandate of Heaven** is the belief that the Chinese king's right to rule came from the gods. The Mandate stated the idea that the gods chose a wise and good person to rule. The person chosen by the gods would govern honestly and well.

The Mandate of Heaven changed what the Zhou people expected from their king. The king must rule by the proper "Way," known as the **Dao** (DOW). His duty was to honor and please the gods. If there was a natural disaster or a bad harvest, that meant the king had failed and he could be replaced.

Technology and Trade

For many centuries, Chinese farmers had to depend on rain to water their crops. Under Zhou kings, the Chinese developed new systems to irrigate the land. With a better water supply, farmers were able to grow more crops than ever before.

China's trade also expanded. Archaeologists have found pieces of Chinese silk in central Asia and as far away as Greece.

War Between the States

Over time, the aristocrats who ruled the territories of the Zhou kingdom grew more powerful. They ignored the king's commands and took control of their own territory. The aristocrats began to fight one another for power. These wars began in the 400s B.C. and went on for nearly 200 years. Because each aristocrat formed his own state, this time in China's history is called the "Period of the Warring States."

To fill the ranks of their armies, the aristocrats forced farmers to serve as soldiers. Chinese soldiers were armed with swords, spears, and crossbows. As the fighting continued through the years, warriors began using horses. The Chinese developed the saddle and stirrup. Now soldiers could ride around the battlefield while throwing spears or shooting crossbows. The wars fought at this time would result in a new dynasty.

Identifying What technology was developed in China during the Zhou dynasty?

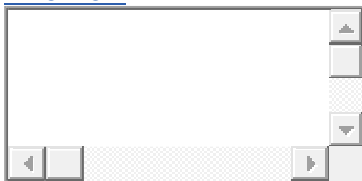


LESSON 1 REVIEW

Review Vocabulary

1. How did a *pictograph* differ from an *ideograph*?

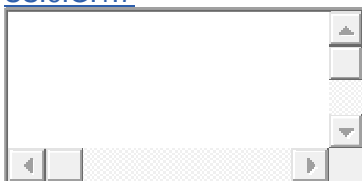
[LA.6.1.6.1](#)



Answer the Guiding Questions

2. **Describing** What geographic features isolated ancient China from other civilizations?

[SS.6.G.1.7](#)



3. Explaining How did Shang rulers gain power?

[LA.6.1.7.1](#)



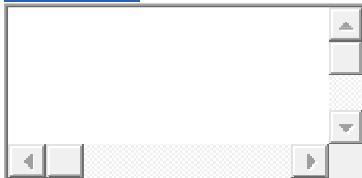
4. Identifying What was the chief duty of Zhou kings?

[LA.6.1.7.1](#)



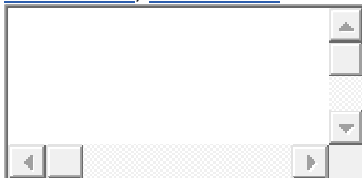
5. Describing Describe the biggest change for the Chinese people during the Zhou dynasty.

[SS.6.W.4.6](#)



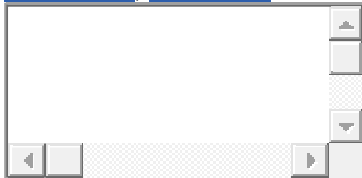
6. EXPOSITORY WRITING China's geographic features separated it from other civilizations. Write a paragraph explaining the advantages and disadvantages of isolation.

[SS.6.G.2.1](#), [SS.6.G.2.5](#)



7. EXPOSITORY WRITING Write a paragraph that explains why "China's Sorrow" is an appropriate description of the Huang He.

[SS.6.G.2.1](#), [LA.6.1.7.1](#)



LESSON 2

Society and Culture in Ancient China

Ideas that started in early China continue to influence today's world.

Chinese Philosophies

[SS.6.W.4.7](#), [SS.6.W.4.8](#), [SS.6.G.2.5](#), [LA.6.1.6.1](#)

How did Chinese thinkers influence society and government?

During the Period of the Warring States, rulers of rival states fought each other. Armies wiped out entire villages of men, women, and children. Many Chinese looked for ways to stop the killing. They wanted to bring order to society.

Between 500 B.C. and 200 B.C., Chinese thinkers developed three major **philosophies**. They were Confucianism, Daoism, and legalism. These philosophies were different from one another. However, the philosophies had the same goal. Each philosophy aimed to create a well-run and peaceful society. After decades of war, Chinese people welcomed these new ideas.

What Ideas Did Confucius Teach?

Confucianism (kuhn • FYOO • shuh • nih • zuhm) was based on the teachings of a man named Confucius (kuhn • FYOO • shuhs). Born about 550 B.C. to a farming family, Confucius lived when rival kings fought each other for power. Confucius criticized the misrule of these kings. He urged the people to follow the beliefs of their ancestors. If people would do that, Confucius believed, it would bring peace and harmony to China.

Duty is a central idea of Confucianism. Duty means that a person places the needs of family and community above his or her own needs. Each **individual** has certain duties to fulfill. It is the duty of parents to love their children, and it is the children's duty to respect their parents. Husbands should support their wives, and wives should obey their husbands. Above all, a ruler had a duty to rule justly and to set an example of right living. In return, subjects should be loyal and obey the law.

Confucius believed that if each individual carried out his or her duties, society would do well. He urged people to be good. This meant behaving moderately, keeping one's promises, honoring traditions, and respecting the elderly. Confucius also advised people to seek knowledge:

"By extensively . . . studying all learning, and keeping himself under the restraint [control] of the rules of propriety [correct behavior], one may thus likewise not err . . . from what is right."

— Confucius, *Analects*, XII, 15

To Confucius, the right way to live was **similar** to the idea known as the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you."

The Influence of Confucius

Confucius believed that government service should be open to all men of ability and merit and not limited to those of noble birth. The aristocrats did not want to open government to more people. They did not want to lose their power. However, over time Chinese emperors developed the practice of choosing government officials through civil service tests.

Many people honored Confucius as a great teacher. His followers wrote down his sayings and collected them in a work called the *Analects*. After Confucius died in 479 B.C. his teachings spread throughout China. Confucianism continued to shape Chinese society and government until the early A.D. 1900s.

The Philosophy of Daoism

Another Chinese philosophy, known as **Daoism** (DOW • ih • zuhm) also promoted a peaceful society. The word *Dao* means "path" and is often translated as "the Way." Daoism began with the ideas of Laozi (LOW • DZUH). Laozi is believed to have lived during the same time as Confucius.

Like Confucianism, Daoism teaches people how to live a good life. Daoists believed that people should free themselves from worldly desires and live simply. They should turn to nature and the Dao—the spiritual force that guides all things. In this way, they would enjoy a happy life.

Daoism is different from Confucianism in some ways. Followers of Confucius taught that people should work hard to make the world better. Daoism taught people to turn away from worldly affairs and live in harmony with nature. Many Chinese followed both Confucianism and Daoism. They believed that the two philosophies supported each other.

Legalism

A third philosophy stressed the importance of a system of laws. This philosophy became known as **legalism** (lee • guh • lih • zuhm), or the "School of Law."

A thinker named Hanfeizi (HAN • fay • DZOO) introduced the ideas of legalism during the 200s B.C. Unlike Confucius or Laozi, Hanfeizi believed that humans are naturally evil. Strict laws and harsh punishments were necessary to force people to do their duty.

Many aristocrats supported legalism because it emphasized force. Legalism did not require rulers to consider the needs or wishes of their people. Its ideas led to cruel punishments for even the smallest crimes.

Comparing and Contrasting How are the ideas of Confucius and Laozi similar? How are they different?



Connections to TODAY

Confucianism in Asia

Confucianism still has millions of followers today. Most of these followers are in China. Over the centuries, however, the basic teachings of Confucius spread across Asia. The concepts he handed down—a belief in duty and correct behavior and respect for education—are a part of the culture in many Asian countries today.

Chinese Life

[SS.6.W.4.7](#), [SS.6.W.4.8](#), [SS.6.E.1.3](#), [SS.6.G.2.4](#), [SS.6.G.4.1](#), [LA.6.1.7.1](#)

How was early Chinese society organized?

Early Chinese society was made up of four social classes. A **social class** includes people who have the same economic and social position. In ancient China, these social classes were landowning aristocrats, farmers, artisans, and merchants.

Lives of the Aristocrats

China's aristocratic families were wealthy. They owned large estates and lived in tile-roofed houses with courtyards and gardens. Walls surrounded their homes as protection against bandits. Inside, fine furniture and carpets filled the rooms.

Aristocratic families owned large plots of land. After the father died, a family's land was divided equally among all of the male heirs. As a result, sons and grandsons owned much less land than their fathers and grandfathers owned.

Lives of the Farmers

About nine out of ten Chinese farmed for a living. The farmers lived in rural villages surrounded by mud walls. Beyond the village walls were fields owned by the aristocrats. The farmers rented the fields by turning over part of their crops to the owners.

In northern China, farmers grew wheat and a grain called millet. In the south, where the climate was warmer and wetter, they grew rice. Most farmers also owned a small plot of land where they grew food for their own use.

The government required farmers to pay taxes and to work one month each year on projects such as building roads. In wartime, farmers were forced to serve as soldiers. In addition, farmers had to face constant threats from famine and floods.

Lives of the Artisans and Merchants

Artisans are skilled workers who make useful objects. The artisans of Zhou China crafted iron tools and weapons, silk cloth, and vessels made of bronze or jade. Many were architects, artists, and woodworkers. Most artisans learned their skills from their fathers and, in turn, passed them along to their sons.

Shopkeepers, traders, and bankers made up the merchant class. Merchants lived in towns and provided goods and services to the aristocrats.

Some merchants became wealthy, but they were not respected members of society. People believed that merchants worked only for their own gain, not for the good of society. While artisans made useful goods and farmers grew food for all, merchants made money for themselves. Merchants were also barred from government jobs.

What Were Chinese Families Like?

The family was at the center of early Chinese society. Farming in ancient China required many workers, so parents had many children to help them with the work. Even young children worked in the fields. Chinese families took care of those members in need—the aged, the young, and the sick.

Chinese families practiced **filial piety** (FIH • lee • uhl PY • uh • tee). Filial refers to a son or daughter. Piety refers to duty or devotion. Therefore, *filial piety* refers to people's responsibility to respect and obey their parents.

It also requires people to take care of their parents as they grow older. Family members placed the needs of the head of the family before their own. The head of the family was the oldest male, usually the father. Respect for parents and the elderly were central to the teachings of Confucius. Even today, filial piety is an important part of Chinese culture.

Roles of Men and Women

Men and women had very different roles in early China. Men were respected because of the jobs they did—growing crops, attending school, running the government, and fighting wars. The Chinese considered these jobs more important than the work carried out by women. Most women raised children and saw to their education. They also managed the household and family finances.

Explaining Why were merchants not respected in ancient China?



LESSON 2 REVIEW

Review Vocabulary

1. Describe a situation in which you might show *filial piety*.

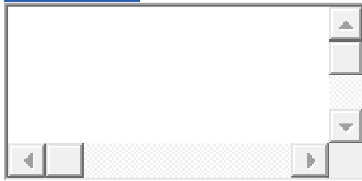
[SS.6.G.4.1](#), [LA.6.1.6.1](#)



Answer the Guiding Questions

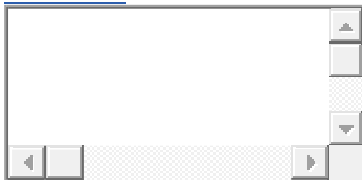
2. **Explaining** Why did many aristocrats support legalism?

[SS.6.W.4.7](#)



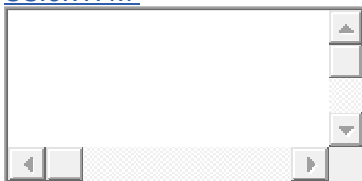
3. **Identifying** What were the main social classes of early China?

[LA.6.1.7.1](#)



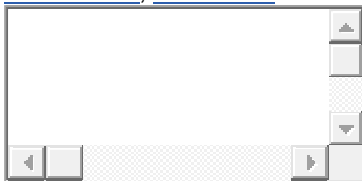
4. **Assessing** Which philosophy do you most strongly agree with—Confucianism, Daoism, or legalism? Why?

[SS.6.W.4.7](#)



5. **Paraphrasing** Read the following quotation by Confucius. Then restate the quotation in your own words: "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."

[SS.6.W.4.7](#), [LA.6.1.7.1](#)



6. PERSUASIVE WRITING Which system of belief—Confucianism, Daoism, or legalism—would lead to the best government? Write a paragraph expressing your opinion in order to convince others.

[SS.6.W.4.7](#), [LA.6.1.7.1](#)



LESSON 3

The Qin and Han Dynasties

Stable government builds solid growth and strength in a civilization.

The Qin Emperor

[SS.6.W.4.6](#), [SS.6.W.4.8](#), [LA.6.1.6.1](#), [LA.6.1.7.1](#)

How did the Qin Emperor unite China?

You have read about the fighting in China from about 400 B.C. to 200B.C. During the Period of the Warring States, the strong rulers of local states fought one another and ignored the weak Zhou kings. One of these states was called Qin (CHIHN). In 221 B.C., the ruler of Qin sent a large cavalry force to defeat the other states and end the Zhou dynasty. The Qin then controlled China from the Huang He to the Chang Jiang.

To mark a new beginning for China, the Qin ruler declared himself Qin Shihuangdi (CHIHN SHEE • hwahng • dee), which means "the First Qin Emperor." Qin brought changes to Chinese government that would last for many centuries.

How Did Qin Change China?

Qin wanted to strengthen and **unify** China. To do that, he took direct control of China's provinces. Under the Zhou rulers, the governors of the provinces had passed on their positions to sons or relatives. Now, only Qin had the power to appoint the governors.

Qin ruled China with absolute control and swift, harsh punishment. Anyone who disagreed with him was punished or killed. Writings that displeased Qin were burned. Qin also increased the power of his government by appointing officers known as **censors**. The censors' job was to make sure government workers did their work.

Qin developed other policies and projects to unify the empire. He created a **currency**, or type of money, that everyone had to use. He hired scholars to simplify and set rules for the Chinese writing system. Qin also undertook building projects, including the construction of his own tomb. Qin's tomb was so large that it housed an army of life-sized clay soldiers and horses. Qin also ordered tens of thousands of farmers to build palaces, roads, dams, and a huge canal. The canal connected the Chang Jiang in central China to what is today the city of Guangzhou (GWAHNG • JOH) in southern China. The government transported supplies on the canal to soldiers in distant territories.

Why Was the Great Wall Built?

Qin united the different parts of China into one empire. He wanted to keep the empire safe from invasion. A vast desert known as the Gobi was on the edge of China's northern border. Nomads, people who move from place to place with herds of animals, lived in the Gobi. The Chinese knew them as the Xiongnu

(SYEHN • NOO). The Xiongnu were skilled warriors who fought on horseback and often attacked Chinese settlements. Earlier Chinese rulers had constructed separate walls in the north to keep out the Xiongnu. Qin planned to have the walls joined and strengthened.

The End of Qin Rule

In 221 B.C., Qin boasted that his dynasty would rule China forever. The Qin dynasty actually ended soon after Qin's death in 210 B.C. Both aristocrats and farmers revolted against the harsh Qin rule. Fighting erupted throughout China. By 206 B.C. the Qin dynasty was over and a new dynasty arose.

Explaining How would you describe Qin as a ruler?



Connections to TODAY

The Great Wall

Many things get built and rebuilt over time. Building the Great Wall in China took several years. Qin forced hundreds of thousands of farmers to leave their fields to work on the wall. Thousands of laborers died before the project was completed. The finished wall, the Great Wall of China, was built mainly on the northern slopes of mountains, using stone, sand, and rubble. However, Qin did not build the wall that stands today. The Great Wall today consists of a series of walls and towers built during the Ming dynasty beginning in the late 1400s.

Han Rulers

[SS.6.W.4.8](#), [SS.6.W.4.10](#)

What improvements did the Chinese make under Han rulers?

In 202 B.C., a new dynasty known as the Han dynasty came to power in China. Its founder was Liu Bang (LYOO BAHNG), a farmer turned soldier. His family began the powerful Han dynasty that would rule China for more than 400 years.

Han Wudi

The first strong emperor of the Han dynasty was Han Wudi (HAHN WOO • DEE), who ruled from 141 B.C. to 87 B.C. Han Wudi took important steps to improve China's government. Earlier emperors chose family members and loyal aristocrats to help them run the government. Han Wudi wanted to end this practice. He recruited dedicated and talented people for **civil service**, government workers who were chosen on the basis of competitive tests.

First, scholars and officials recommended qualified candidates. Then, the candidates took long, difficult written examinations. Finally, officials graded the tests, and the emperor reviewed the results. The candidates with the highest scores got the jobs.

Although this system of selecting government officials raised the quality of government, the system also had its faults. Supposedly, government work was open to anyone with talent and ability. Realistically, the system actually favored the rich. Only wealthy families could afford to educate their sons for the difficult civil service tests.

Education

The Han government created schools to prepare students for civil service. Students prepared for the exams by studying law, history, and the ideas of Confucius. After many years of schooling, the students

took the civil service examinations. If they passed, they earned jobs as government workers or teachers. They also won great respect in society because they were well educated.

The Empire Expands

During the years of Han rule, China's population rose to about 60 million. To meet the needs of China's growing population, farmers needed to produce more food. However, China's farmers faced special challenges in doing so.

When farmers died, their land was divided among their sons. Gradually, over several **generations**, the amount of land farmed by a family became smaller and smaller. By the middle of the Han dynasty, the average farmer owned only about one acre of land.

Farmers could not raise enough food to feed their families on such small plots of land. They had no choice but to sell their land and work as tenant farmers. **Tenant farmers** work land owned by someone else. Eventually, wealthy landlords owned thousands of acres. The tenant farmers remained very poor.

As China's population grew, the Han Empire took in new territory. Han armies conquered lands to the north, including Korea. They moved south into Southeast Asia and west as far as northern India. After Han Wudi's armies pushed back the Xiongnu—the nomads to the north—the Chinese lived in peace for almost 150 years.

Han Culture

During this era of peace, literature and the arts blossomed. Writers wrote about current events. They made copies of old historical works. In the arts, painters and sculptors reached out to new audiences.

In earlier times, artists had created religious works for rulers and aristocrats. Now, under Han rule, artists created beautiful works of art for less prominent families.

Under the Han, the ideas of Confucius gained influence. The idea of filial piety became very strong. The stability of the government also helped strengthen family ties. The new class of scholarly civil servants greatly influenced government, but other social classes in China remained the same. Daily life also was very similar to what it had been before.

Chinese Inventions

During the Han dynasty, new technology helped Chinese farmers and workers produce more than ever before. One major development was the cast-iron plow, which could break up the soil more easily than wooden plows could. New iron tools and techniques were used to drain swamps and direct water to parched fields. As a result, land that was once unfit for farming now produced food and other crops.

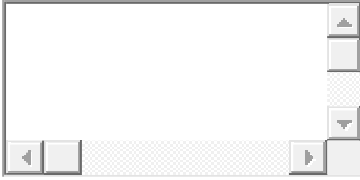
Improvements took place in areas besides farming. Millers invented **waterwheels** to grind more grain, and miners fashioned iron drill bits to mine more salt. Another Chinese invention, the wheelbarrow, was first used to carry heavy material on building sites. Artisans developed silk manufacturing and invented paper. Used first for wrapping, paper became an ideal writing material. Like Egyptian papyrus, paper provided a way to keep written records.

Two remarkable achievements of Han inventors were the rudder and a new way to move the sails of ships. With these inventions, ships could sail against the wind for the first time. They could also travel farther than ever before. As a result, China's merchants shipped their goods to areas as far away as India and the Red Sea.

Medical Advances

Chinese medicine advanced under the Han. Doctors discovered that certain foods prevented disease. They used a variety of herbs to treat illnesses. Doctors also relieved pain by piercing patients' skin at vital points with thin needles. This treatment is known as **acupuncture** (A • kyuh • puhngk • chuhr). Acupuncture renews the body by increasing the flow of energy.

Explaining Why did Han rulers create civil service examinations?



On the Silk Road

[SS.6.G.2.2](#), [SS.6.E.3.2](#), [SS.6.E.3.4](#), [SS.6.W.4.8](#), [SS.6.W.4.10](#)

How did the Silk Road benefit China and the rest of the world?

During the Han period, Chinese traders grew rich by sending expensive goods to other parts of the world. Over time, both sea and land trade routes led to an exchange of many different goods and ideas between China and other areas.

New Contacts With the West

China's trade increased in part as a result of Chinese exploration. In 139 B.C., the emperor Han Wudi sent out a general named Zhang Qian (JAHNG CHYEHN) to explore areas west of China. Zhang's mission was to recruit allies to help China fight against its enemies, especially the Xiongnu to the north.

Thirteen years later, Zhang returned to China. He had failed to find allies. He had learned, however, about the people, geography, and culture of the areas west of China. He also visited a kingdom far to the west, probably in the area of present-day Kazakhstan. There, he saw horses of great strength and size.

Emperor Han Wudi was delighted to hear this report. He wanted horses for his soldiers, so he encouraged trade between China and western regions.

In exchange for the horses, Chinese merchants traded silk, spices, and other luxury goods. The trade route to the west was later called the Silk Road in honor of China's most famous export.

Trade Expands

The Silk Road was not just one road. It was a **network** of trade routes. When the road was completed in the A.D. 100s, it was 4,000 miles (6,436 km) long and stretched from western China to the Mediterranean. The distance, rough terrain, and bandits along the road made travel difficult and dangerous.

Over the years, merchants traded many items in addition to luxury goods. These included fruits, vegetables, flowers, and grains. For example, China sent peaches and pears to India, while India sent cotton and spinach to China. In time, Chinese inventions, such as paper, would also travel to other regions along the Silk Road.

Through trade, China encountered other civilizations. A huge variety of items awaited the ancient traders. Chinese writers described a mighty empire to the far west:

"It has more than four hundred walled towns. . . . The walls of the towns are made of stone. . . . The common people are farmers. . . . The country produces plenty of gold, silver, and precious jewels. . . . They make gold and silver coins. . . ."

—from *Hou Hanshu* 88, Second Edition

The Chinese writers were describing the Roman Empire. For more than 1,000 years, the Silk Road was the main trade **link** between Asia and Europe.

Identifying Cause and Effect What developments led to the creation of the Silk Road?



Buddhism Reaches China

[SS.6.G.4.4](#), [SS.6.W.4.10](#)

Why did Buddhism become a popular religion in China?

The Silk Road served as a way to spread knowledge, culture, and religions. Buddhism, in particular, spread across the Silk Road from India to China. Buddhism won few followers in China at first. The fall of the Han dynasty and the long period of unrest that followed, however, spurred the spread of Buddhism.

Why Did the Han Dynasty Collapse?

Many of the emperors who succeeded Han Wudi were weak and dishonest. Corrupt officials and greedy aristocrats took over more of the land, forcing many farmers to give up their property. People began to rise up and rebel against the Han rulers.

Rebel armies destroyed the Han capital, Luoyang (LWAW • YAHNG) in A.D. 190. By A.D. 220, civil war divided China. For the next 400 years, China remained divided into many small kingdoms.

Buddhism Wins Followers

The fall of the Han dynasty and the long years of civil war frightened many Chinese. Feeling anxious, fearful, and unsafe, many people turned to Buddhist ideas. Followers of Confucius and Daoists also admired Buddhist ideas, which influenced their own religious rituals and moral ideas. By the A.D.400s, Buddhism had become one of China's major religions.

Determining Cause and Effect Why did the fall of the Han dynasty help Buddhism spread in China?

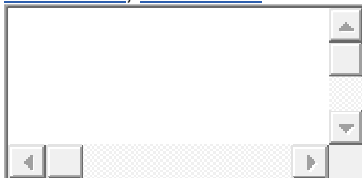


LESSON 3 REVIEW

Review Vocabulary

1. What are the advantages of having a *civil service* system to select government workers?

[LA.6.1.6.1](#), [LA.6.1.7.1](#)



Answer the Guiding Questions

2. **Describing** How did Qin rulers unite China?

[SS.6.W.4.6](#), [LA.6.1.7.1](#)

3. Explaining How did the civil service system change China's government?

[SS.6.W.4.8](#), [LA.6.1.7.1](#)

4. Determining Cause and Effect What was one result of the building of the Great Wall?

[SS.6.W.4.8](#), [LA.6.1.7.1](#)

5. Explaining What caused the downfall of the Han dynasty?

[SS.6.W.4.10](#), [LA.6.1.7.1](#)

6. Analyzing Visuals What was one fact that you put in the “Both” part of the Venn Diagram comparing the Qin and Han?

[LA.6.1.7.1](#)

7. EXPOSITORY WRITING How do you think early China's history would be different if the Silk Road had never developed? Write a paragraph expressing your view.

[SS.6.W.4.10](#)