

Chapter 6

Ancient China >>



Fishermen fishing with cormorants on the Li River as they have done for centuries

HISTORY SKILLS

In this chapter you will learn to apply the following historical skills:

- Sequence historical events, developments and periods
- Use historical terms and concepts
- Identify a range of questions about the past to inform a historical inquiry
- Identify and locate relevant sources, using ICT and other methods
- Identify the origin and purpose of primary and secondary sources
- Locate, compare, select and use information from a range of sources as evidence
- Draw conclusions about the usefulness of sources
- Identify and describe points of view, attitudes and values in primary and secondary sources
- Develop texts, particularly descriptions and explanations that use evidence from a range of sources that are acknowledged
- Use a range of communication forms (oral, graphic, written) and digital technologies.

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Inquiry questions

- 1 What were the physical features of Ancient China?
- 2 What were the beliefs, practices and values of the Ancient Chinese?
- 3 What were the key social groups in Ancient China?
- 4 Who was a key figure in Ancient China?
- 5 What was everyday life like in Ancient China?
- 6 What contacts and conflicts did the Ancient Chinese have within China and with other societies?
- 7 What legacy did Ancient China leave to modern life?

Introduction

Let China sleep, for when she wakes, she will shake the world.

Napoleoeon Bonaparte

CHINA WAS ONE of the most successful of the ancient civilisations. The Chinese today can boast that their civilisation has the longest recorded history. The Chinese dominated the eastern part of the Asian continent and developed their civilisation independently from people in Europe and the Middle East, such as the Greeks, Romans and Egyptians. The Chinese rice-based farming system was highly successful and was located around two major rivers, the Yellow and the Yangtze. As their civilisation grew, the Ancient Chinese came up with many new inventions such as paper, printing, gunpowder and the compass.

KEY TERMS

civil service

the centralised administrative system for running government. In theory everyone could sit an exam to join the civil service and therefore advance in society

Confucius

developed Confucianism, the main philosophy in China throughout most of the ancient period. Both conservative and traditional, it stipulated what role and place people had in society by looking back to a mythical idealised world

The First Emperor

Qin Shi Huang (259–210 BCE), who united previously warring kingdoms and made important reforms, but was considered very power-hungry and cruel

Great Wall

a series of defensive walls built in the north and north-west of Ancient China to keep nomadic warriors from invading

legalism

a philosophy that sought to control people with rules and laws; its starting point was that people were naturally bad

Mandate of Heaven

the idea that kings have the right to rule so long as they treat their subjects fairly and justly. If a king treats his subjects cruelly then he loses Heaven's mandate and a new king replaces him

Middle Kingdom

the belief that Ancient China was at the centre of the universe

Silk Road

a series of trade routes that connected Ancient China with India and the Mediterranean world. It was not only goods such as Chinese silks and Persian rugs that were exchanged but also ideas such as Buddhism that found their way into China via this route

Taoism

a philosophy that sought a more natural and harmonious way for people to live their lives. It took much of its inspiration from observations of the natural world

Warring States Period

covers a period from about 475 BCE to 221 BCE. It was a period during which regional warlords annexed smaller states surrounding their territory

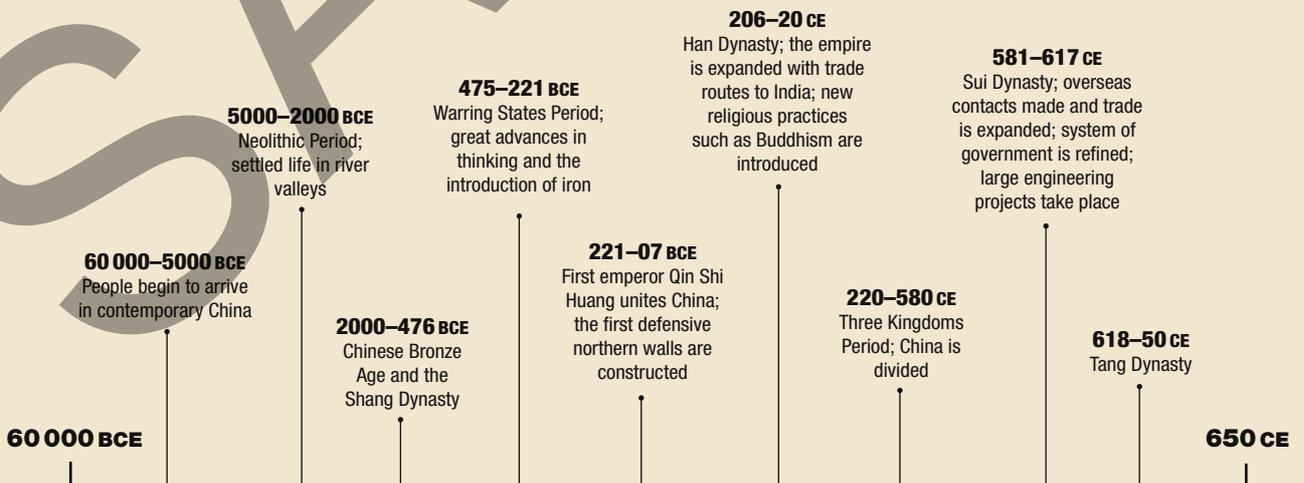
See OneStopDigital for a drag-and-drop exercise using the key terms.



Ancient China



Timeline of key dates



Think, puzzle, explore



- 1 Draw a three-column table in your workbook.
- 2 Entitle the first column 'Think'. In this column write down anything you know about Ancient China.
- 3 Entitle the second column 'Puzzle'. In this column write down any questions you have about Ancient China.
- 4 Entitle the third column 'Explore'. In this column write down how you can find answers to the questions in the 'Puzzle' column. What topics would you like to explore?
- 5 Discuss the answers as a class.

🔍 What were the physical features of Ancient China?

China's geography shaped where people settled in prehistory. The country is framed by mountains to the south, deserts to the west and north and two major river valleys in the centre, extending to the east coast. As was the case elsewhere

in the world, river valleys provided the best opportunities for hunter-gatherers to develop agriculture, farming and settled life. China is dominated by two large rivers, the Yangtze and Yellow rivers. The Yangtze is the larger of the two and is the third-largest river in the world. The Yellow River is the world's sixth-largest river. The first Chinese communities began to



SOURCE 6.1 The Yellow River flowing through grasslands

develop agriculture in and around the basins of these rivers independently from anywhere else in the world.

Two zones

China has two very different geographic zones, which have affected how and where people live. The boundary of these two zones falls roughly along an east to west line between the Yellow and Yangtze rivers. The differences in rainfall, soil and temperature mean that people live very different lifestyles in these two zones.

Famine and drought have occurred regularly in northern China throughout history. Its climate, as well as the weather, has also had an impact on farming. In the north, the winters can be very harsh, limiting the growing season to roughly half the year.

While the north of China is dry, open and cold, the south is almost the opposite. There are mountain ranges covered in jungle, high rainfall and temperatures that allow a longer, more productive growing season than in the north. In the south, crops are grown all year long, and in a good season two or three crops of rice are possible.

Rice became the main crop in China. People began to change the landscape, first in southern China, by creating terraces for growing rice.

For most of the Ancient Period, more people lived in the north but, during this time, there was a movement of people from north to south.

ACTIVITY

Check your understanding

- 1 Make a list of the physical features of Ancient China.
- 2 How has climate influenced where people lived in China?
- 3 Where did the first people who came to China begin to settle?
- 4 Describe the different geographic zones of Ancient China. How did geography and climate impact rice growing?
- 5 On a printout of a map of Ancient China, locate the Yellow and Yangtze rivers. Draw a line on the map showing the two geographic zones.

Apply your knowledge

- 1 Create an illustrated map of Ancient China using a blank outline map of China. Include the following places and add the map to your museum scrapbook.
 - The Yellow River
 - The Yangtze River
 - Himalayan mountains
 - Southern jungles and deserts
- 2 Visit OneStopDigital to complete a puzzle and learn about the regions of China. See if you can put China back together again.



Three geographical elements that gave rise to early civilisation in China

Loess soil

Loess is a silty type of sediment that has been deposited by the wind over a long period of time. It is very fertile, provides good drainage and is also strong enough to be dug out to form caves that people can live in. China has one of the world's largest deposits of loess, known as the Loess Plateau, which covers 640 000 square kilometres. Loess erodes very easily, and the Yellow River, which travels through the Loess Plateau, picks up and carries away a lot of loess with it.



SOURCE 6.2 The Loess Plateau

The Yellow River

The Yellow River takes its name from the colour of the loess that it carries downstream and deposits on a large plain. These deposits also elevate the river in its riverbed above the surrounding plain. The Yellow River has been both a source of wealth, with rich fertile plains on which to plant crops, and a source of danger, when it breaks its banks, flooding and killing many people.

The Central Plain

The Central Plain is sometimes referred to as the 'cradle of Chinese civilisation' as it is where a number of early Ancient Chinese societies were located. The plain's main features are that it is vast, it is flat, and the Yellow River runs through it. Irrigation works allowed these early societies to grow cereal crops such as wheat and millet. The loess soil of the plain is fertile and easy to cultivate with simple tools and is probably the reason the early people chose this area to settle. In the lower parts of the Yellow River, people had found a way to manage the river by building levee

banks to prevent it flooding. Historians think that one of the reasons the early emperors became so powerful was through organising the large numbers of people needed to build these banks.

The early dynasties

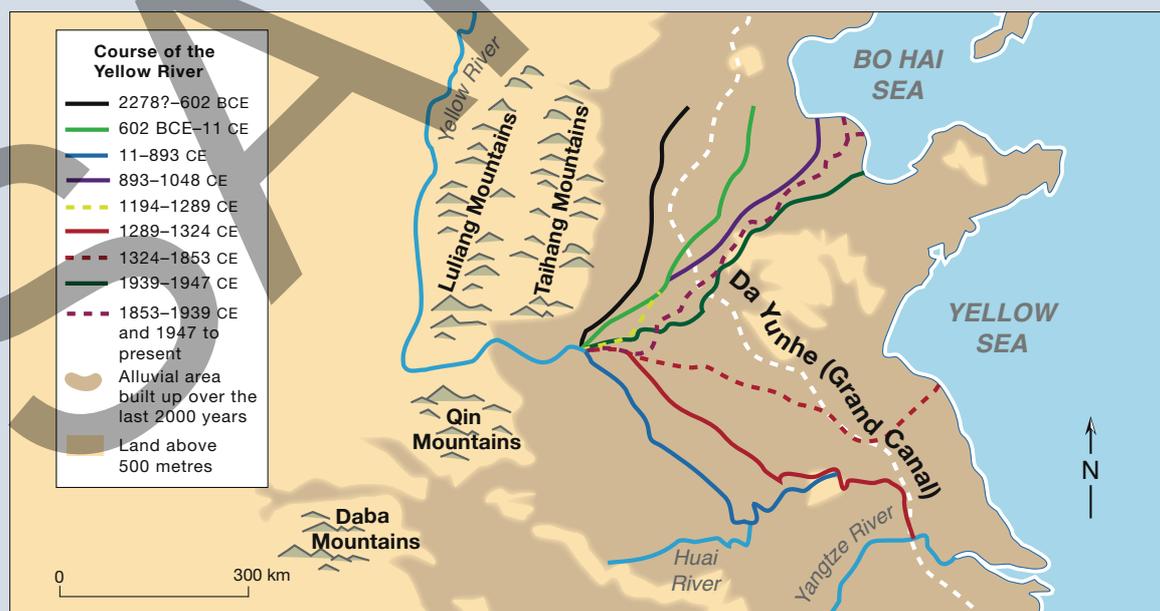
Ancient China's early **dynasties**—the Xia (200–1550 BCE), the Shang (1550–1045 BCE) and the Western Zhou (1045–771 BCE)—established themselves on the banks of the Yellow River. These dynasties are known as the 'central kingdoms' but they were split by another geographic feature. Just slightly east of this area is the Taihang mountain range. Therefore, for much of the period of Ancient China there was also an east–west divide. Most of the major dynasties were split along these lines so there was the Western Zhou and the Eastern Zhou, and later, the Western Han and the Eastern Han.

Go to OneStopDigital for a detailed overview of the dynasties of Ancient China mentioned throughout this chapter.



Spotlight

The Yellow River has flooded over 1500 times and has had nine major course changes in the last 3000 years.



SOURCE 6.3 How the Yellow River has changed its course over time

ACTIVITY**Check your understanding**

- 1 What geographical elements helped the early kingdoms?
- 2 Describe three features of the Yellow River.

Source questions

- 1 Source 6.4 is around 4000 years old.
 - a What do you think it tells us about the level of craftsmanship of the people who made it?

**SOURCE 6.4** Jade face from around 2000 BCE

- b What do you think this object might tell us about the skill and technology level of the society as a whole? Explain your answer.
- 2 Look at Sources 6.1 and 6.5 and answer the following questions.
 - a Describe the landscape in both sources.
 - b What are the main differences?
 - c From what you can see, what do you think the climate might be like in each area?
 - d What type of agricultural activity do you think is best suited to each area? Why?

Apply your knowledge

- 1 What challenges do you think the natural features of northern China would have presented for the early kingdoms?
- 2 What advantages do you think the Yellow River and the central plains would have provided to the early kingdoms?

**SOURCE 6.5** Rice terraces in southern China

- 3 Look at Source 6.3 (the Yellow River). How many times has the Yellow River changed its course? Why do you think this is?
- 4 Create an exhibit in your museum scrapbook on the geographic features of China for somebody who cannot see. How can you communicate the geography of Ancient China?

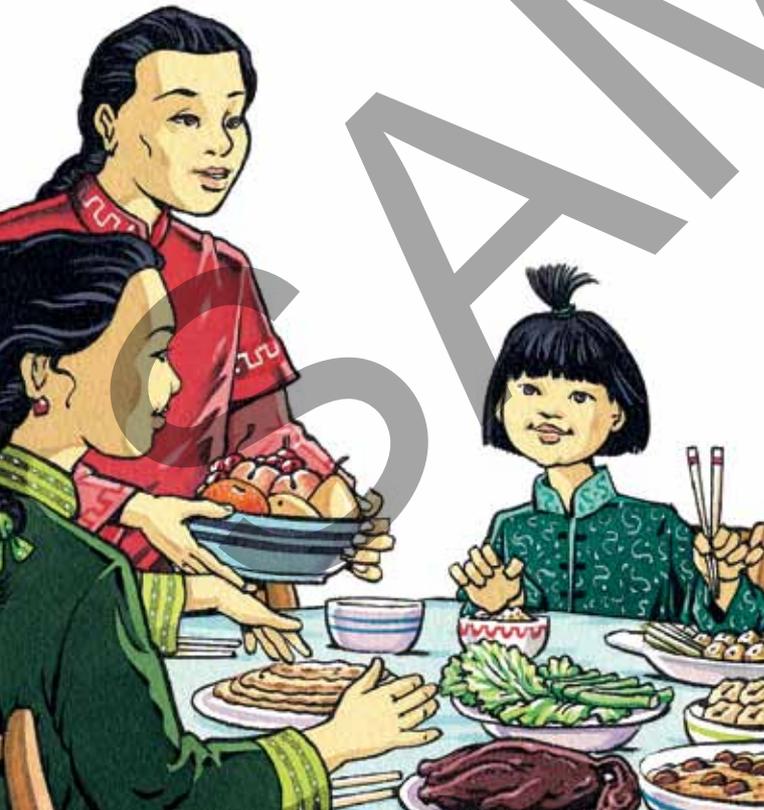


The impact of geography on what people ate

Depending on where people lived in China, their diets could be very different as Source 6.7 shows. During the Shang dynasty (c. 1700 BCE to 1046 BCE), craftsmen perfected the art of bronze casting and produced many different items for the preparation, storing and serving of food. Often special items would be created for the offering of food to ancestors. Good seasons could provide good crops, whilst poor seasons might result in famine. The Ancient Chinese commemorated their agricultural fortunes in poems.

| Plant | North China | South China |
|------------------|---|---|
| Cereals | millet | rice |
| Roots and tubers | Chinese artichoke | Chinese yam |
| Legumes | soybean | adzuki bean |
| Vegetables | garlic, celery, Chinese cabbage, cabbage, Welsh onion | Chinese kale, water mustard, water dropwort, water spinach, chrysanthemum |
| Fruit | peach, Chinese plum, apricot, Chinese cherry, sand pear | orange, kumquat, loquat, longan, Chinese strawberry |

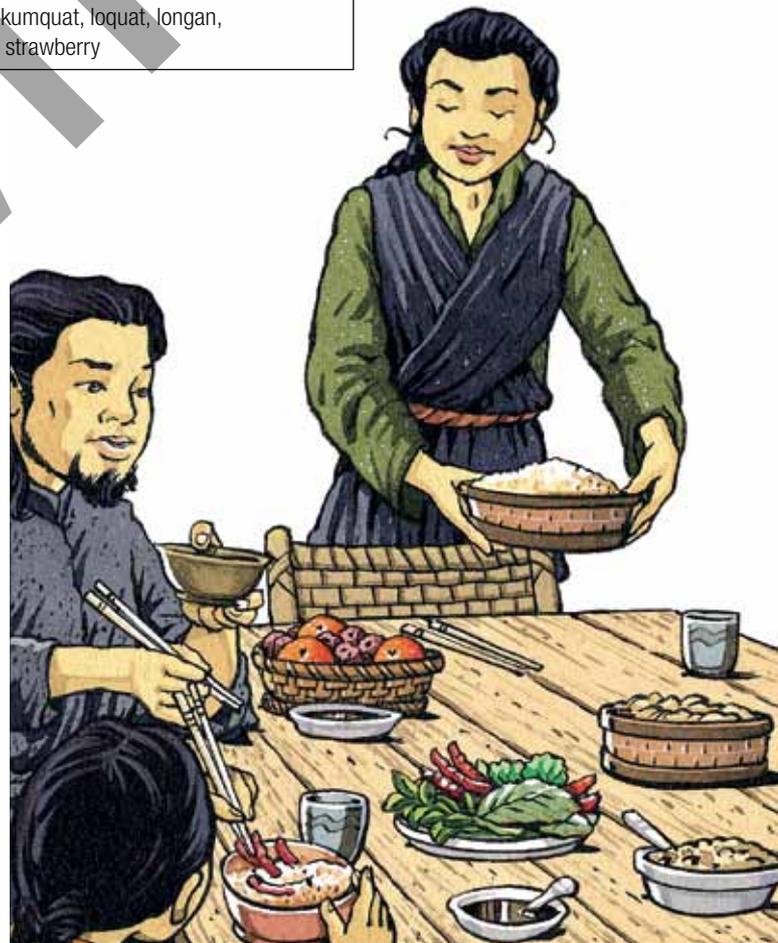
SOURCE 6.6 Food that people in Ancient China ate



SOURCE 6.7 The different food of North and South China

Rich is the year with much millet and rice,
and we have tall granaries
with hundreds and thousands and millions of sheaves.
We make wine and sweet spirits
to offer to ancestor and ancestress,
thus to fulfill the hundred rites
and bring down blessings in abundance.

SOURCE 6.8 'Rich is the Year with Much Millet and Rice',
in B Watson (ed.), *The Columbia Book of Chinese Poetry*





SOURCE 6.9 A wine vessel from the time of the Shang dynasty (6th century BCE)

ACTIVITY

Check your understanding

- 1 What were the main grains, vegetables and fruit for northern and southern China?
- 2 Make a list of the foods you are not familiar with.

Source questions

- 1 In Source 6.8, what was wine used for?
- 2 What do you think wine was made from?
- 3 Look at Source 6.9. Why was this vessel used for wine? Give a reason.
- 4 What do elaborate artefacts like the one shown in Source 6.9 tell us about the people who owned and used them in the ancient world?

Apply your knowledge

- 1 Use the internet to look up the foods listed in Source 6.6 that you are unfamiliar with and find out what they are used for and what they look like?

2 A popular saying in China is 'East is sweet, south is salty, west is sour, north is spicy'. Use the internet to find one Chinese dish for each point of the compass and to your museum scrapbook.



3 Create a display for your museum, using a map of China and images of food, showing where the different foods come from. Save your display in your museum scrapbook.



Great plains and great walls

Although the Yellow River and its surrounding plain provided a good place to develop agriculture and settled life, it was a region that was hard to defend. To the north and north-west there are no natural barriers such as mountains. Instead there are grasslands (known as the 'steppe') and deserts that stretch out for thousands of kilometres. Nomadic horse-riding animal herders occupied these lands and frequently raided and attacked the settlements on the Yellow River, so they were often a threat to the early Chinese people.

The first solution that the early Chinese rulers came up with was to build rammed earth walls around their cities and forts. **The First Emperor**, Qin Shi Huang, who was the first ruler to unite all the Ancient Chinese kingdoms, ordered that a massive wall be constructed along the empire's northern frontier. This was no small task. The wall he ordered built was more than 6000 kilometres from the Bay of Bohai in the east to Gansu in the western desert. Known as Wanli Changcheng (The Wall of Ten Thousand Li), it was constructed by 300 000 soldiers and labourers. Many of the dynasties that came after the Qin constructed, maintained and even built over the Qin wall so that after a while the Chinese became used to the idea of a '**Great Wall**' separating China from the northern peoples.

It was *possibly* the harsh climate in the north, compared with the more fertile south, that kept prompting the northern nomadic herders from central Asia to keep invading, and this hastened the end of the Han dynasty in 220 CE.

Spotlight

How long was an Ancient Chinese piece of string?

Today in China a *li* is exactly 500 metres, but this has not always been the case. Over the last 5000 years it could have meant anywhere from as little as 77 metres or as long as 576 metres. The First Emperor attempted to standardise both measures and weights and historians think that in his time a *li* was 576 metres.

All-Under-Heaven

To the Chinese of the 1st millennium BCE, China was the entire world where people acted out their lives. As they were ringed by oceans to the east, mountains to the south and west and deserts to the north, it is perhaps easy to see why they saw the world in this way. Because of this

isolation, China developed a long, unique and uninterrupted civilisation that had few links with the rest of the world.

ACTIVITY

Check your understanding

- 1 Who built the first wall in China? Why?
- 2 How long was it?
- 3 How many men were needed to build it?

Apply your knowledge

- 1 Why did Ancient China's rulers believe it necessary to build defensive walls?
- 2 Who were the defensive walls built to keep out?
- 3 Use a range of sources to research a great warrior who invaded China from the north. Design and draw a swap card about your individual that will be sold in the museum gift shop. Add the card to your museum scrapbook.



SOURCE 6.10 Part of the Great Wall built by Qin the 3rd century BCE

❖ What were the beliefs, values and practices of the Ancient Chinese?

The spread of philosophies and beliefs

As Ancient Chinese society became more complex, rulers and thinkers developed new ways to organise or administer it. Although there was much warfare during the **Warring States Period**, it was also a very creative period in Ancient China's history—so much so that, in this period, the 'Hundred Schools of Thought' occurred when many of Ancient China's great thinkers came up with their theories. Many of these thinkers and philosophers wandered from place to place and advised rulers on different ways to govern, to conduct war and to deal with neighbouring rulers. This period in Ancient China coincided with a high point in human wisdom and thinking. Some of the other thinkers active in the world at this time included Buddha, Pythagoras, Herodotus, Sophocles, Aristotle and Plato. **Confucius** and Sun Tzu were two of the greatest Chinese philosophers of this time, and the ideas of **legalism** and **Taoism** were two that had the greatest impact.

Confucius

Confucius (551–479 BCE) looked back to the Zhou dynasty as the perfect system of government and society. From this, he developed a philosophy that set out rules for every relationship in society. Under this system, everyone understood what their role and place in society was. He also stated that kings must act with virtue in order to rule effectively.

Legalism

This philosophy said that humans were selfish and needed to be controlled. Under legalism, the state imposed rigid discipline on people for the common good of all. Legalism also put in place a system where a person's advancement in society, government or the military should be based on that person's individual skills. Under this system, it became harder for powerful families to pass power on to their sons and friends.



SOURCE 6.11 Confucius

Taoism

Taoism, or 'the way', was a set of ideals developed by the philosopher Laozi that suggested that life should be lived in harmony with nature. Instead of the focus being on the individual in society (Confucius), Taoism says the purpose of life is to adapt to the rhythm of the universe.

Sun Tzu and *The Art of War*

The Art of War was a book written by the military leader Sun Tzu. It is one of the oldest and most influential books on military strategy, outlining how military leaders should plan war. It highlighted the importance of planning, positioning of forces and discipline in order to succeed in battle. But Sun Tzu advocated more than this. Here is some of Sun Tzu's advice to leaders.

The general who wins a battle makes many calculations in his temple before the battle is fought. The general who loses a battle makes only a few calculations ...

In war, then, let your objective be victory, not lengthy campaigns ...

He will win who knows when to fight and when not to fight ...

Let your plans be dark and impenetrable as night, and when you move, fall like a thunderbolt ...

The art of war teaches us to rely not on the likelihood of the enemy's not coming, but on our own readiness to receive him; not on the chance of his not attacking, but rather on the fact that we have made our position unassailable.

If soldiers are punished before they have grown attached to you, they will not prove submissive; and, unless submissive, they will be practically useless. If, when the soldiers have become attached to you, punishments are not enforced, the soldiers will still be useless.

Move not unless you see an advantage. Use not your troops unless there is something to be gained. Fight not unless the position is critical.

SOURCE 6.12 Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*

The victory of the Qin and the rise of the First Emperor ended the Warring States Period and consolidated all of the developments of the previous kingdoms and dynasties. It also saw the end of the Hundred Schools of Thought; the First Emperor imposed a very strict rule, killing or punishing anyone who held different opinions. This strictness and continual warfare with southern neighbours saw a quick end to the Qin Empire and the beginning of one of Ancient China's greatest empires, the Han (206 BCE–220 CE).

The Han rulers continued with the innovations that had been developed by the Qin, mostly in administration. They expanded the role of emperor, making him more powerful

and important. They also did away with the annual drafting and training of peasants into the army. The Han turned away from the continual warfare that had characterised Ancient China for hundreds of years and instead focused on ordering life and society. Emperor Wudi (141–87 BCE) set up an Imperial Academy based on the Confucian texts.

ACTIVITY

Check your understanding

- 1 Describe one feature of Confucianism.
- 2 Describe one feature of Taoism.
- 3 Who was Sun Tzu?
- 4 What was the Hundred Schools of Thought?

Apply your knowledge

- 1 How do you think Confucius' thinking could strengthen the power of leaders?
- 2 Read the quotes in Source 6.12. What does Sun Tzu say about the following topics?
 - planning
 - discipline
 - knowledge and information
- 3 Write a paragraph about how the new ideas from the Hundred Schools of Thought period helped to strengthen the power of Ancient China's emperors in increasing the areas under their control and their power over people.
- 4 Create a display for your museum called 'One Hundred Schools of Thought'. The display will be a poster that describes the teachings of Confucius, Taoism and *The Art of War*. Use the internet to find some interesting quotes for each philosophy. Save your work in your museum scrapbook. 
- 5 Prepare slips of paper with some of the sayings of Confucius on them. Cook them in fortune cookies that you cook either at home or school. Hand out your cookies in class and read each other's fortunes. Keep a note of the sayings and recipe in your museum scrapbook, so that you will be able to make sure that the cookies are available to visitors to your museum. 

Myths

Like all civilisations, the Ancient Chinese developed myths describing how the world came into being. One myth begins with an empty universe where identifiable parts slowly begin to appear. First water appears, then heaven, followed by Earth, wind, spirits and so on. The parts are created from either a man or a woman. One story tells of Pan Gu, who exploded before he died. His breath became the wind, his eyes became the Sun and the Moon, his body fluids the rivers and the oceans. From his skin, the wind blew lice, which then became humans.

The Ancient Chinese also developed myths and legends to explain the natural world. In one myth, a minister called Gong Gong tried to overthrow a ruler but was unsuccessful. In frustration he destroyed one of the four mountains that separated Heaven and Earth. As a result, Heaven sloped down in the north-west and the Earth sloped down in the south-east. This, according to the myth, is why the Sun, the Moon and the stars travel across the sky from west to east and why the Yellow and Yangtze rivers flow from west to east.

Chinese astronomy

From early times the Ancient Chinese tried to interpret the movement of stars and planets. They developed complex frameworks for mapping the night sky and dividing it up into segments. They believed in a divine power (Heaven) that expressed itself with changes on its face (the night sky). The Ancient Chinese therefore believed it was possible to read and understand heaven by observing the changes that occurred in the night sky.

The Ancient Chinese would make links with special events in the sky with the affairs of humans. They believed that Heaven, Earth and humankind were all connected; what happened in one realm could affect the other. So when multiple planets lined up, it was linked with the end of dynasties. This occurred twice, once in 1059 BCE at the end of the Shang dynasty, and again in 205 BCE, an event that was linked with the fall of the Qin dynasty and the rise of the Han.

Spirits and ghosts

The Ancient Chinese believed in an afterlife. In this afterlife, spirits went to Heaven for the rest of eternity and ghosts roamed the Earth for a short period of time. It was thought that ghosts did not have a place to go and they would cause trouble until they found their rightful place. The Ancient Chinese believed that people were made up of two elements, the *po*, which was the physical body, and *hun*, which was the spirit. It was thought if a person died a violent death, their *po* and the *hun* would be split and they would become a ghost. The more important a person had been while alive, the more trouble they could cause as a ghost. But the Ancient Chinese also believed that, with the correct funeral rituals, the escaped souls could rejoin the body, which was then sealed with a jade plug placed in the mouth.

Dragons

Dragons were one of Ancient China's most dramatic and important symbols. They represented strength and power, particularly that of the emperor. Unlike the dragons of other cultures, which are fire-breathing monsters, the Chinese dragon is generous and kindly. Throughout Chinese history, the dragon has been represented in art.

ACTIVITY

Check your understanding

- 1 Describe one myth that the Ancient Chinese had for explaining how the world was created.
- 2 How did the Ancient Chinese attempt to tell the future?
- 3 What two elements did the Ancient Chinese believe the body was made up of?
- 4 What did dragons represent?

Apply your knowledge

- 1 What other creation myths are you familiar with? Write a paragraph comparing two of them.

- 2 Read Source 6.13. What offerings are made to the ancestors?
- 3 What is it hoped that these offerings will result in?

Majestic, O ancestors majestic
 ablaze shaping blessing this
 bounty on and on stretching
 boundless across your lands:
 we bring you crystalline wine
 and you answer our prayers.
 We bring well-seasoned soup,
 approach mindful and tranquil
 and hushed in silent homage,
 and you ease our pained brows,
 letting old age grow boundless.
 Hubs veiled and harness inlaid,
 eight phoenix-bells clattering,
 we offer sacrifice and homage.

The Mandate we received is vast and mighty.

It's from Heaven—this rich ease,
 this life abounding in harvests.
 We offer homage, and you accept,
 sending boundless good fortune,
 honoring autumn and winter
 offerings from T'ang's children.

SOURCE 6.13 'Ancestors Majestic',
 in David Hinton (ed.), *Classical
 Chinese Poetry*

Telling the future

Chinese history has a long tradition of attempts to tell the future, or divination. Like many ancient societies, methods were developed to help see the future. During the Shang dynasty, the bones of animals were heated up until they cracked from the heat. These cracks were then 'read' to tell the future. After this, the bones were inscribed with a bronze pin, and contained important information about things such as the succession of kings. In fact, these oracle bones provide historians with the earliest proof of the existence of the Shang dynasty. Certain bones were highly sought after for this practice. A flat surface was best as it provided the best surface for writing. The belly plate of turtle, known as a plastron, was the most favoured and many of these have been discovered. Chinese farmers began digging these bones up in the 19th century; they became known as dragon bones and were ground down and used as medicine. It is not known how much of Ancient Chinese history ended up in people's stomachs!



SOURCE 6.14 Chinese dragon



SOURCE 6.15 Turtle plastron with oracular inscriptions from the time of the Shang dynasty

Preparing for the afterlife

The Ancient Chinese developed a practice of providing for the next life through building elaborate tombs and graves. A lot of what archaeologists have found out about Ancient China's history comes from artefacts that have been taken from tombs. Many artefacts have also been lost through plunder and grave-robbing over the centuries.

The early Shang kings were buried in little more than vertical shafts dug into the ground. By the early Warring States Period (475 BCE onwards) tombs grew to include additional chambers that were stocked with items that the departed could use in their next life.

By the time of the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), the tombs of rulers and nobles became mini versions of the universe. They were made from brick and stone, which were painted with pictures of the heavens. The tombs held many valuable items, including hundreds of bronze and jade sculptures and works of art.

The tomb of the First Emperor

Of all the tombs of Ancient China, that of the First Emperor is by far the most spectacular. His tomb is a complex of underground chambers that contain more than 7000 life-sized terracotta soldiers with chariots and horses. The full

extent of the tombs has not been revealed as the Chinese authorities are waiting for new technologies before excavating further to ensure the preservation of tombs. So far only about 2000 of the soldiers have been unearthed. The emperor's burial chamber has yet to be opened. China's grand historian of the Han dynasty, Sima Qian (who lived from 135 BCE to 86 BCE), gives a tantalising account of the contents and construction of the tomb.

The location of the Emperor's chamber is now known, but is still unopened, and testing has determined that it has not collapsed and it has not been submerged by water. Mercury has also been detected and has been plotted to replicate a map of China. It may well be that crossbows are still armed and ready to fire at any intruder.

SOURCE 6.16 An account by Sima Qian

Everything about the tomb is enormous. The site was chosen when the emperor first came to the throne as a child. By the time of his death the site had been built up like a small mountain. Human sacrifices were still a part of burial practice and the emperor's wives and mistresses were killed and buried with him. Not only that, but the thousands of people who had helped construct the tomb were also put to death and buried as well.

Spotlight

Replicas of palaces, scenic towers, and the hundreds of officials, as well as rare utensils and wondrous objects, were brought to fill the tomb. Craftsmen were ordered to set up cross-bows and arrows, rigged so that they would immediately shoot down anyone attempting to break in. Mercury was used to fashion imitations of the hundred rivers, the Yellow River and the Yangzi, and the seas, constructed in such a way that they seemed to flow. Above were representations of all the heavenly bodies, below, the features of the earth.

John Keay, *A History of China*

Spotlight

UNDERGROUND TERRACOTTA ARMY IN A BATTLE FOR SURVIVAL

6 July 2005

They may have guarded the tomb of China's first emperor for thousands of years, but the terracotta warriors are facing their toughest battle yet.

The life-sized clay figures unearthed three decades ago in Shaanxi province are starting to fall apart and Chinese and US scientists have launched a two-year research project to study the impact that indoor air pollutants are having on the Emperor Qin Terracotta Warriors and Horses Museum in Xi'an.

Cao Junji, executive director of the aerosol and environment division at the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Institute of Earth Environment and head of the research team, said it was time to take action to save the relics.

If nothing is done now, in 100 years the warriors may have corroded to such an extent that the pits will look just like a coal mine and not have any aesthetic value, he said.

If a leg or a shoulder falls off, the whole figure is damaged. There are only a few

hundred of them—how many more can we afford to have damaged?

The richly coloured terracotta figures with individual facial expressions lay underground for about 2,000 years, but began to lose their luster and turn an oxidized grey once they were exposed to air.

Acidic particles in the air have eaten into the surfaces of the statues, leaving a fine powder. These particles are also weakening the gypsum that holds the joints together.

Dr Cao said the damage caused by corrosion was often minor at first, but larger features of the statues—their noses, for instance—could shrink as the surface was worn away.

He said the individual features of the warriors—such as a moustache or certain hairstyle which indicate age or rank—might become less noticeable over time, eroding the figures' cultural value.

Temperature, humidity, pollutants and solar radiation all pose threats to the statues.

Dr Cao said the team could only delay the ageing process by targeting the main pollutants and finding ways to reduce them.

Even then, he could not say how many more years the warriors would last.

'Air pollution is a disease affecting cultural relics. [We cannot] wipe out air pollution, but we can alleviate and minimize it.

'It's very hard to restore the original colour of the statues that have already been exposed to air', Dr Cao said. But as the museum is still excavating new ones, we need to conduct more research to avoid a repeat of old problems. It is estimated that the museum's three underground pits house 8,000 life-size pottery warriors and horses. About 2,000 have been unearthed so far, of which 1,172 are on display, said Rong Bo, the museum's conservation scientist.

SOURCE 6.17 The Terracotta Warriors



ACTIVITY**Check your understanding**

- 1 What were oracle bones?
- 2 Who was Sima Qian?
- 3 What is said to be inside the First Emperor's tomb?
- 4 How many soldiers are thought to be in the Terracotta Army?
- 5 Why might authorities be reluctant to open the rest of the tomb?
- 6 According to Dr Cao, what problems do the Terracotta Warriors face?

Go to OneStopDigital to download, cut out and assemble an entombed warrior and then write a description of the terracotta figure.

**SOURCE 6.18**

A terracotta soldier from the Tomb of the First Emperor

**Apply your knowledge**

- 1 In the past, some people thought Sima Qian's description of the contents of the First Emperor's tomb in Source 6.16 was an exaggeration. What evidence now exists to support his claims?
- 2 Create a display for your museum called 'These old bones'. Go to OneStopDigital to find images of oracle bones. Create a display explaining their use. Save your work in your museum scrapbook.



What were the key social groups in Ancient China?

The role of women

One of the guiding principles in Ancient China was the superiority of elders over the younger, and the superiority of men over women. For women, this meant they were obedient to their parents, followed by being obedient to their husbands and his parents. In Ancient China, women mainly lived domestic lives at home. Women did not have jobs outside the family house. As women were not allowed to take the state exam to enter the government, their families did not 'waste' education on them.

Confucius' teachings of the time were that a woman's role was to look after her husband and families, to have babies (hopefully boys) and not to have her own ambitions outside the home. At all times women had to obey their husbands. Mostly women were seen as inferior, but mothers and mothers-in-law were respected, as were grandmothers. All marriages were arranged—for young people to fall in love was seen as defiance of one's parents and a reason why they should not marry!

These ideas and practices applied to all women, even those from noble families.

Despite the generally harsh attitude towards women in Ancient China, there were a number of women who were active in public life. The excavation of the tomb of Fu Hao from the Shang dynasty, who died in 1195 BCE, contained 1600 relics including 755 jade pieces. From oracle bone inscriptions, we

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Character | 妻 | 女 | 安 | 男 |
| Translation | Woman | Man | Wife | Peace |
| Symbols in the character | Position of deference and respect | Strength; rice field | Woman with a broom | Woman under a roof |

SOURCE 6.19 Chinese characters

know that she was the mistress of King Wu Ding. She had her own estates, led armies into battle and oversaw important religious ceremonies.

Empress Dou, who died in 135 BCE, is remembered for being a strong positive influence on both her husband, Emperor Wen, and her son, Emperor Jing. She was a strong believer in Taoist teachings, which sought harmony with nature. Both her husband and son also shared her views and Taoist teachings became the official belief of government.

ACTIVITY

Check your understanding

- 1 What was the main role of women in Ancient China?
- 2 What was an important source for the ideas of how women should be treated in Ancient China?
- 3 Who was Fu Hao, and what was she buried with?

Source questions

- 1 Look at Source 6.19. What do the symbols for a woman and a man represent?
- 2 According to Source 6.20, how did a man meet his wife?

What does one do when he splits firewood?
Without an ax he cannot succeed.
What does one do when he takes a wife?
Without a matchmaker he cannot get her.
But once he has succeeded and had her,
How can you touch her anymore?

SOURCE 6.20 'South Mount Soaring High' (trans. CH Wang), in Wu-chi Liu and Iving Yucheng Lo (eds.), *Sunflower Splendor: Three Thousand Years of Chinese Poetry*

- 3 Read Source 6.21, the 'Lessons for Women'. What were the main messages about how women should behave?

I, the unworthy writer, am unsophisticated, unenlightened, and by nature unintelligent, but I am fortunate both to have received not a little favor from my scholarly Father, and to have had a cultured mother and teachers upon whom to rely for a literary education as well as for training in good manners. More than forty years have passed since at the age of fourteen I took up the dustpan and broom in the Cao family [her husband's family]. During this time with trembling heart I feared constantly that I might disgrace my parents, and that I might multiply difficulties for the women and the men of my husband's family. Day and night I was distressed in heart, but I labored without confessing the weariness. Now and hereafter, however, I know how to escape from such fears.

Being careless, and by nature stupid, I taught and trained my children without system. Consequently I fear that my son Gu may bring disgrace upon the Imperial Dynasty by whose Holy Grace he had unprecedentedly received the extraordinary privilege of wearing the Gold and the Purple, a privilege for the attainment of which by my son, I a humble subject never even hoped.

Nevertheless, now that he is a man and able to plan his own life, I need not again have concern for him. But I do grieve that you, my daughters, just now at the age for marriage, have not at this time had gradual training and advice: that you still have not learned the proper customs for married women.

SOURCE 6.21 Ban Zhao, 'Lessons for Women', from Nancy Lee Swann (trans.), *Pan Chao: Foremost Woman Scholar of China*

Apply your knowledge

- Using the knowledge you have about women in Ancient China, write a paragraph describing what life was like for women. Use primary sources to support your ideas.
- Research about Empress Dou and create a timeline of her life. Add your timeline to your museum scrapbook.



The role of kings and emperors

Emperors were very important in Ancient China and were at the centre of government and society. Emperors formed dynasties, a family of rulers where power was generally passed from father to son. The official title of emperor was ‘Son of Heaven’; this title gave emperors god-like authority that no other person possessed. The Ancient Chinese believed that an emperor’s right to rule was given to him by Heaven. This was known as **‘the Mandate of Heaven’**. The people thought that as long as emperors ruled in a fair and just way, Heaven would allow them to keep ruling. If emperors became lazy and selfish, Heaven would withdraw its mandate and another person would overthrow the emperor and begin a fresh dynasty. This system allowed some people to feel that they were morally right in seeking to overthrow an emperor when they believed he was not ruling for the people.

Emperors had enormous power. They were the highest of priests and performed important rituals that made sure there were good crops and life ran smoothly. They also maintained important ancestral rites, honouring those who came before them. The emperor’s word was law and he could make life-and-death decisions about the ordinary people. The emperor was treated with great respect and could only be approached by his closest advisors.

The Ancient Chinese also believed that Heaven’s displeasure could be read in the stars. When, in 1059 BCE, five planets lined up in the night sky, many people saw this as a sign that the Shang dynasty was about to end. The last rulers of the Shang dynasty, King Jie and King Zhou, are remembered as being two of the most evil of all Ancient Chinese rulers. Some of the terrible things they did included the practice of ‘roasting’, which involved forcing people to walk across a

beam above a fire until they fell in, while one noble was pickled and others were then forced to eat him. King Zhou apparently filled ponds with wine and hung meat from trees in his gardens and forced the men and women of his court to chase each other naked through them. (These accounts were written by those who replaced these kings and were perhaps exaggerated.)

ACTIVITY

Check your understanding

- What is a dynasty?
- How much power did emperors have?
- What was the source of their power?
- What were some of the bad things that King Zhou and King Jie are supposed to have done?

SOURCE 6.22

Statue of Ancient China’s First Emperor



Apply your knowledge

- 1 Explain the concept of the Mandate of Heaven.
- 2 Can we believe the accounts of King Zhou and King Jie? Why might they be exaggerated?

The case of King You

King You (781–771 BCE) tried very hard to please his rather sad and unsmiling wife, Bao Si. However, on one occasion she did smile when she saw that the beacon fires were burning, which were lit when an enemy was about to attack. The king's forces rushed to defend the kingdom, but it was a false alarm. This seemed to amuse Bao Si, so King You kept lighting the fires until his own soldiers stopped coming (because they thought that there was no attack). When a real attack came and the fires were lit, the soldiers, no doubt sick of false alarms, did not respond and the king was killed and his dynasty came to an end.

The First Emperor of Qin

Qin Shi Huang (259–210 BCE) was the king of the state of Qin. He was also the first ruler to defeat all the other kingdoms and declare himself the First Emperor of China. The name 'China' comes from Qin, which is pronounced 'Chin'. The First Emperor was a very powerful ruler who achieved many great things in his life, often at the cost of many people's lives. Among his achievements were the building of the first great northern wall, the building of the Lingqu canal that connected the Liang River in the north and the Xiang River in the south, the building of a national system of roads, and the standardising of weights, measures, currency, and the Chinese script. Many of these achievements were undertaken in order to make it easier for him to conquer other kingdoms and to defend his growing empire against his enemies. Other things he did were also done so as to ensure he stayed in power, but they were viewed negatively by his critics who claim he was a cruel leader. Some of these included the burning of unofficial books, harsh punishments for those that did not obey the very strict laws he introduced, and the killing of hundreds of scholars who criticised him.



SOURCE 6.23 The murder of Confucian scholars by guards of the First Emperor

How kings and emperors were portrayed in history

The histories of the dynasties were often written by official historians. There are 26 'Standard Histories' that were composed in this way. These histories follow a similar pattern of a dynasty being founded by a great and noble leader who is replaced by ever-weaker and more wicked rulers. The reason for this was that the new dynasty often needed to justify the overthrow of the previous one. The new ruler would acknowledge that the first rulers of the previous dynasty were noble and gallant and that he had overthrown a later bad ruler to uphold what the first ruler stood for.

ACTIVITY**Check your understanding**

- 1 What made Bao Si smile?
- 2 Who was the first emperor?
- 3 What were some of his positive achievements?
- 4 What negative things did he do?

Source questions

- 1 Read Source 6.24. Is this a positive or negative view of the First Emperor? Explain your answer.

In the twenty-eighth year of his reign
 A new age inaugurated by the Emperor
 Rules and measures are rectified ...
 He set forth to pacify the east,
 To inspect officers and men;
 This great task accomplished
 He visited the coast ...
 Tools and measure are made uniform,
 The written script is standardized ...
 Great is the virtue of our Emperor
 Who pacifies all four corners of the earth,
 Who punished traitors, roots out evil men,
 And with profitable measures brings prosperity ...
 Wherever human life is found,
 All acknowledge his suzerainty,
 His achievements surpass those of the Five Emperors,
 His kindness reaches even the beasts of the field;
 All creatures benefit from his virtue;
 All live in peace at home.

SOURCE 6.24 An inscription on the tower at Mount Langya, in Yang Hsien-yi and G Yang (trans.), *Selections from the Records of the Historian*

- 2 Read Source 6.25. How do the Han see the First Emperor? Account for this.

The resources of the empire were exhausted in supplying [Shih-huang's] government, and yet were insufficient to satisfy his desires.

SOURCE 6.25 Han view of the First Emperor, from Derk Bodde, *China's First Unifier*

Apply your knowledge

- 1 Go to One StopDigital to make a postcard from the year 221 BCE in Ancient China. Report what significant events have been taking place.



Who was a key figure in Ancient China?

The Duke of Zhou

The Duke of Zhou is remembered in Chinese history as being one of the fairest and most just rulers. At the end of the Shang dynasty and following the turmoil and disorder that were created, the Duke of Zhou emerged as someone who could rule in a just manner. He also established the principle of the Mandate of Heaven that remained at the heart of Chinese imperial rule for hundreds of years. Thinkers such as Confucius looked back on the Duke of Zhou as an ideal ruling figure whom all rulers should try to emulate.



SOURCE 6.26 An Ancient Chinese imperial procession

King Wu defeated the last Shang king in 1045 BCE. King Wu died two years later. The normal practice should have seen Wu's eldest son Song, the later King Cheng, become king. But Wu's younger brother Zhou Gong Dan, later known as the Duke of Zhou, stepped in and declared that Song was too young and appointed himself regent (a ruler in place of someone too young to rule) until such time as Song was old enough to rule. The Duke of Zhou then fought a civil war with his other brothers who objected to him becoming regent. He defeated them and then set about crushing and defeating the rest of the Shang kingdom. The result was the new Zhou kingdom

that many view as a golden age in Chinese history for the cultural achievement of the time.

The Duke of Zhou has been associated with the formulation of what became known as the principle of the Mandate of Heaven. At the heart of this principle were the concepts of virtue and acting in a moral way. The last Shang kings were seen by many Ancient Chinese as corrupt and immoral rulers.

As regent, the Duke of Zhou was responsible for not only establishing the Zhou dynasty, which was one of China's greatest and longest, but also putting in place the process for determining the right of kings to rule.



SOURCE 6.27 Historical scenes of the Duke of Zhou becoming regent

After seven years, the Duke of Zhou stood down from the regency and handed over power to King Cheng. By this time the new Zhou state had completely defeated the Shang rulers and had established very strong rule. It was this act of handing over power that has been seen throughout Chinese history as one of the most noble and virtuous acts by a ruler.

ACTIVITY

Check your understanding

- 1 Which dynasty was the Duke of Zhou part of?
- 2 Who was king before the Duke of Zhou took over power?
- 3 For how long did the Duke of Zhou rule?
- 4 What was the Duke of Zhou's virtuous act?
- 5 Why was Confucius so impressed with the Duke of Zhou?
- 6 What was the Duke of Zhou's role in creating the concept of 'Heaven's Mandate'?

What was everyday life like in Ancient China?

The legal code and the influence of law

Ancient China had a very strong system of laws based on a highly detailed legal code. The legal code centred on the moral principles that great thinkers such as Confucius took from the everyday experiences of life. Instead of claiming to be inspired by God, Ancient Chinese law reflected the way people lived their lives. This included different penalties and punishments depending on one's social or family status.

The law was enforced by district magistrates who were highly respected and had enormous power, authority and status. Magistrates decided cases and they also administered the law, including heading investigations, collecting evidence, catching criminals and summoning witnesses. One way people were found guilty was if they confessed: if someone confessed, the case was closed. This led to torture being used from time to time to make people confess.

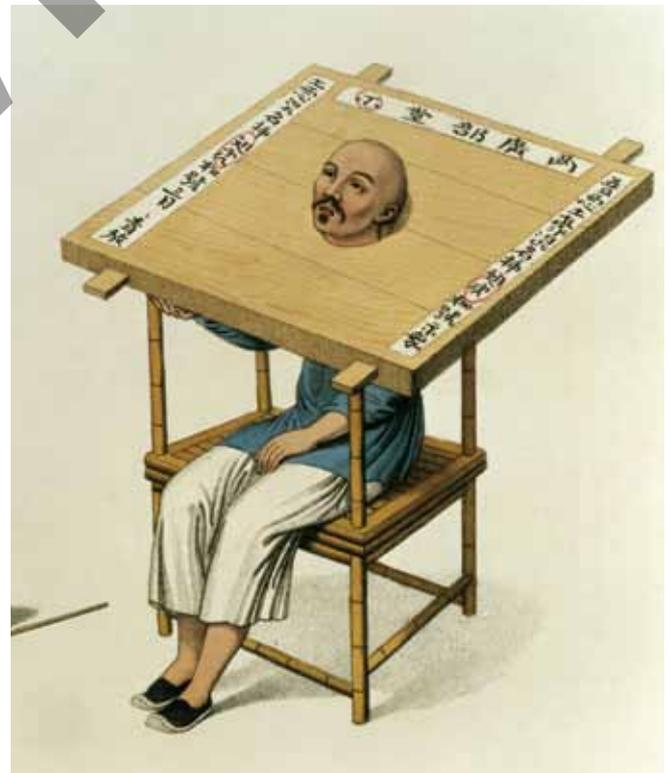
All decisions by magistrates were reported and appeals could be made, but these were

rare because peasants often feared the power of magistrates. Ultimately, the emperor was the highest authority, and only the emperor could give the death penalty. Unlike the Australian legal system today, the law in Ancient China did not operate independently of the government. Instead, it was seen as an aid to the government—not as a way of challenging its authority. As a result, there was no independent legal profession of lawyers. In fact, if you were in trouble with the law in Ancient China, you would probably be very suspicious of anyone you did not know who tried to give you advice.

Punishments

There were five levels of official punishment that could be handed out in Ancient China:

- beating with light bamboo (the number of blows was decided by the magistrate)
- beating with heavy bamboo (the number of blows was decided by the magistrate)
- time in prison (the amount of time was decided by the magistrate)
- exile or being sent away, outside the empire
- death (decided by the emperor)



SOURCE 6.28 Punishment of the wooden collar



SOURCE 6.29 Capital punishment of the cord

But there were also many other more gruesome punishments that were inflicted on law-breakers.

There were three different ways those sentenced to death could be executed. They were strangulation, decapitation, and death by slow slicing (this was reserved for the worst of crimes such as treason). The last of these involved the criminal being cut with up to 120 cuts; the first was to the eyes so the offender could not see the ones that followed.

ACTIVITY

Check your understanding

- 1 What was the Ancient Chinese legal code based on?
- 2 Who administered the law?
- 3 What were some of the punishments in Ancient China?
- 4 Who could hand down the death penalty?

Apply your knowledge

- 1 In groups choose a topic from the following points and discuss your opinion. Present your thoughts to the class.

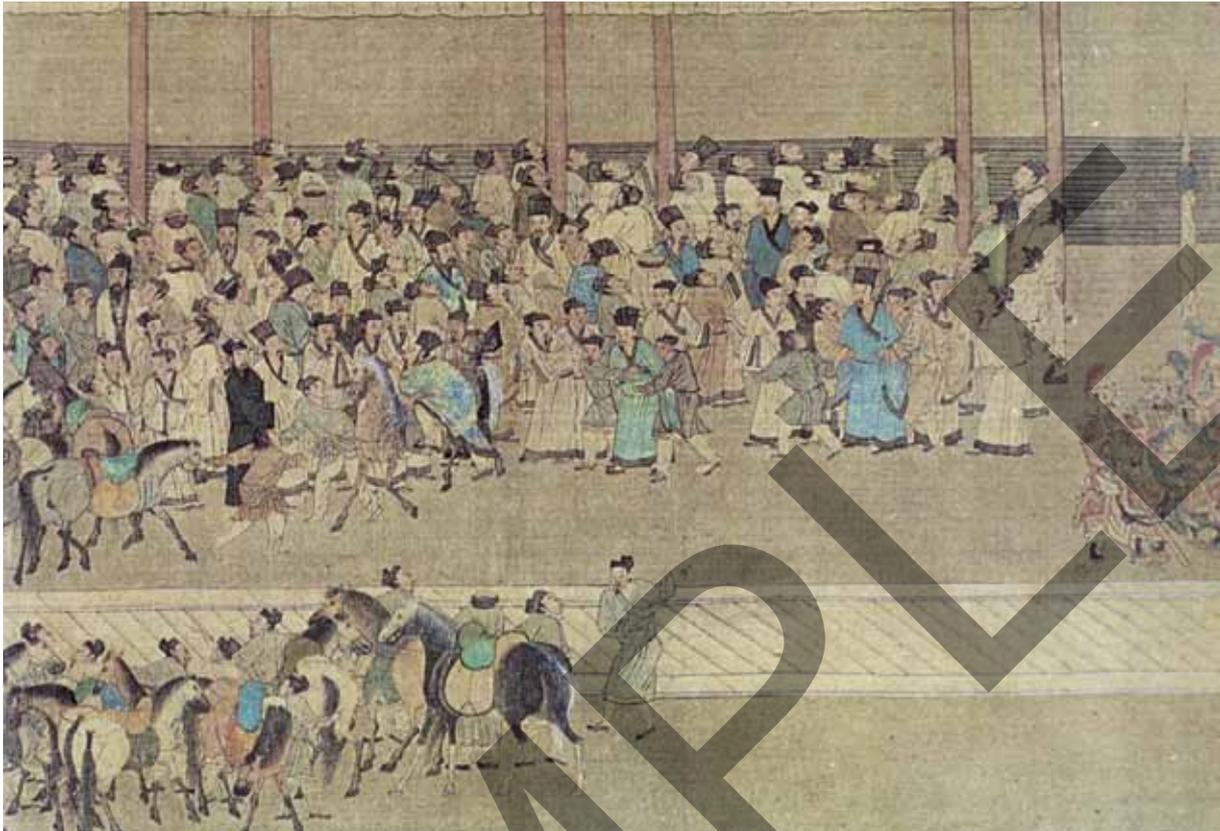
- a Do you think that life in Ancient China was fair? Why or why not?
- b In Ancient China the law was applied differently based on a person's place in society. How is this different from the legal system in Australia? Are famous people today ever treated differently by the law?
- c In Australia many young people would like to become lawyers one day. Lawyers hardly existed in Ancient China. Why was this?
- d What does the legal system in Ancient China tell us about the values of that society?

The influence of scholars

Scholars in Ancient China were highly respected and drawn from China's most powerful and wealthiest families. In the late Ancient Period, the emperor set up an imperial examination, which gave those who passed it access to jobs of authority and influence in the **civil service**.



SOURCE 6.30 The civil service exam under Emperor Jen Tsung



SOURCE 6.31 Waiting for exam results

Before this, exams based on the Confucian texts were given in upper schools and the imperial university. In principle, anyone could sit the exams (except women) but in practice it was only those from wealthy families who could afford the education that would give their sons any hope of passing the exams. Those who were educated formed a very powerful and influential group in society.

The educated scholar class who lived in the towns had a close relationship with magistrates who often sought their advice on local matters. Magistrates were responsible for providing labour and money for irrigation projects and other public works. Magistrates might also allow scholars to collect money on their behalf.

If laws were passed that went against the interests of the scholars, they would meet and draft petitions to the emperor to have the laws changed. Another role they played was acting as referee in disputes that were seen as too minor to be taken before a magistrate.

The contribution of craftsmen

Unlike the Ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Romans, the Ancient Chinese did not create any huge monuments. There are no pyramids, Parthenons or Colosseums in China. Where some of Ancient China's most important ancient cities, such as Luoyang, once were, very little of their splendour is left today. This was because most buildings were made of timber, which the Ancient Chinese were experts in using. (Stone was mainly kept for tombs, which had a far more pressing need for permanent materials.) As a result, nearly all Chinese wooden structures of the Ancient Period have disappeared. But the tombs of Ancient China have preserved an extraordinary assortment of artefacts. These range from full-sized armies made out of terracotta to finely crafted pieces of jewellery made out of jade and gold.

Can sticky rice be used to build houses? To find out how the Chinese used sticky rice in their construction, listen to this podcast on OneStopDigital.





SOURCE 6.32 Han artisans at work

ACTIVITY

Check your understanding

- 1 How did someone become a scholar?
- 2 Who was most likely to become a scholar?
- 3 What were most buildings made of in Ancient China?
- 4 What materials were precious objects made from?

Apply your knowledge

- 1 A hierarchy is a system based on different levels, and each level might have different rights, power or privileges. For example, you might be familiar with a school hierarchy of principal, teachers and students. Go to OneStopDigital for a list of the main social classes in Ancient China. Use an ICT program such as Microsoft Word or One Note to create (or draw by hand) a visual hierarchy of Ancient Chinese society. At the top is Heaven; who is at the bottom? Save your work in your museum scrapbook as the basis for an interactive screen in your museum.



What contacts and conflicts did the Ancient Chinese have within China and with other societies?

Conflicts within China

The creation of imperial China was a long process of warfare and conquest in which different kings defeated less powerful ones and took over their kingdoms. In the north and north-west of the country, there were no natural barriers to keep enemies out. Ancient Chinese rulers attempted to solve this problem by building large defensive walls, resulting in what we know today as the Great Wall of China.

Spotlight

In 1938 a theory developed that the Great Wall of China could be seen from the Moon. When astronauts arrived there in 1969 they were unable to see it. But photographs taken from the International Space Station have confirmed that the Great Wall can be seen. Despite this, it is questionable whether the Wall can actually be detected with the naked eye from space.



SOURCE 6.33 The Great Wall of China

There were many periods in Ancient China's history when many different kingdoms saw themselves as the rightful inheritors of the Mandate of Heaven. As a result, many wars took place and there was even a time called the 'Warring States Period' (475–221 BCE). This ended when the king of Qin declared himself the First Emperor.

This process of small kingdoms defeating and taking over their rivals helped Chinese culture and civilisation to develop. For example the first state, the Shang (1600–1000 BCE), developed a system of writing, a political structure of kings, nobles and peasants, and a form of settled life centred in villages and cities. The Zhou kings who conquered the Shang carried on these practices and added further innovations such as the granting of lands to the nobility in newly defeated areas and increasing the size of armies by granting land to soldiers. Armies were also further strengthened with the invention of the crossbow and introduction of cavalry. The size of armies increased to more than 100 000 men. But through this process the central authority of kings was reduced and the Warring States Period occurred.

Stone Cattle Road

One of the more inventive and dramatic contacts that was made in Ancient China is the story of the 'Stone Cattle Road'. During the Warring States Period, King Hui of Qin came up with an ingenious plan to invade the southern state of Shu (modern-day Sichuan province). Shu was a state that was very wealthy, so much so that it has been referred to as 'the land of milk and money'. The problem was Shu's remoteness. There were numerous hills and mountains without roads that lay in between Qin and Shu, such as the Switchback Mountains of Qinling Ranges.

In 330 BCE King Hui had five life-sized stone cows, with globs of pure gold smattered on their tails and back legs, constructed and placed where the Shu officials could see them 'grazing'. The king of Shu, excited by the opportunity to own cows that produced gold cowpats, asked that the cows be 'given' to him as a 'gift'. King Hui agreed but said that, in order to deliver them, he would have to build a road.

The King of Shu agreed and let King Hui build his road. King Hui then used his road for what he had always intended—he stormed along

it with chariots and armies to take over the whole of the province. Shu was rich in minerals, cereals and silk. It transformed the kingdom of Qin from a warring state into a 'super warring state' that built the foundations for the first emperor's unification of China.

ACTIVITY

Check your understanding

- 1 What were some of the achievements of the Shang?
- 2 What did the Zhou kings add to this?
- 3 How big did the armies become?
- 4 What weapons were introduced in Ancient China?

Apply your knowledge

- 1 The story of the 'Stone Cattle Road' might have a familiar ring to it. Can you recall a similar story from ancient history? What was it? What are the similarities and differences between the two stories?
- 2 Ancient Chinese military technology, such as crossbows and chariots, as well as increasing the size of armies, changed warfare dramatically. Use the internet to research the 'Battle of Red Cliffs'. Prepare a report that summarises the battle for your museum scrapbook.
- 3 Go to OneStopDigital to create a museum box showing the history of the Great Wall of China.

Conflicts outside China

The process of the unification of China under the first emperor did not stop at China's borders. In 207 BCE, Qin forces moved into what is now Vietnam, beginning an unhappy on-and-off relationship between China and Vietnam that lasted for centuries. Although there were many rebellions against Chinese rule over the coming centuries—finally resulting in Vietnamese independence—Chinese rulers have had a lasting cultural impact. Vietnam today is culturally more similar to China than to its Southeast Asian neighbours to the west (Cambodia, Laos and Thailand), which all share an Indian-based culture. Vietnamese society has been heavily influenced by Confucius and Taoist thinking and social practices.

The expansion of trade

The Ancient Chinese successfully developed the art of extracting and processing the thread spun by silkworms into silk fabric. Silk was the greatest of fabrics in ancient times. It is incredibly strong and flexible, is easier to dye than any other fabric, is lightweight and keeps one warm in winter and cool in summer. The Chinese had a monopoly on silk and traded it throughout ancient times to great advantage.

From prehistoric times, there had been a transfer of ideas, people and goods across what became known as the **Silk Road**. This was a route between a series of oasis towns across the central Asian grasslands and deserts that connected China with Persia, Rome and India. During Ancient China's most successful and stable periods—the Han and Tang dynasties—trade boomed. There was a huge demand for Chinese silk from the west, especially from Ancient Rome. Later, the Ancient Chinese used silk to buy peace in central Asia. The Han leaders sent thousands of rolls of silk to the central Asian states that had previously been hostile towards them and who had been the reason for the construction of the northern walls. At times, the trade became so large that the caravans of merchants who moved across the Silk Road were like small cities. The road was not always very secure and one raid netted thieves 1000 cartloads of booty.

The trade was not just one way, and it did not only involve money and goods. Ideas also travelled along the Silk Road and, from India, the Buddhist religion swept into Ancient China in the 3rd to 6th centuries CE. Overland trade and Buddhism were natural partners. In Ancient India, traders were able to escape the rigid Hindu caste system and in Ancient China Buddhism provided an alternative to the Confucian view that held merchants in such poor regard.

Go to OneStopDigital and list the major civilisations that were linked by the Silk Road. Find out what each of these had to trade.



Buddhism became very popular in China, with more Buddhists than even in India. All over the Silk Road can be found the archeological remains of the journey Buddhism took to China, with Buddhist sites, inscriptions, sculptures, statues and paintings.

ACTIVITY

Check your understanding

- 1 Describe some of the characteristics of silk.
- 2 What was the Silk Road?
- 3 How were goods transported on the Silk Road?
- 4 Apart from goods, what else came along the Silk Road?

Apply your knowledge

- 1 Why did Buddhism become popular very quickly in Ancient China?
- 2 What dangers and challenges confronted traders and merchants along the Silk Road?

What legacy did Ancient China leave to modern life?

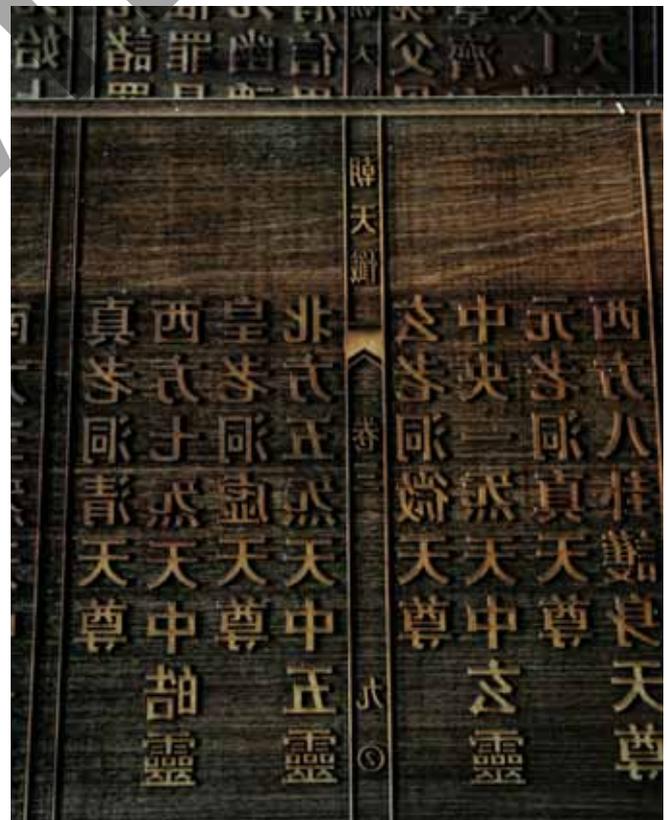
It is hard to imagine modern life without thinking about the contribution that Ancient China has made. Perhaps without the Chinese invention of gunpowder the history of warfare over the last 500 years may have been very different. It is hard to imagine how Europeans would have spread out over the globe from the 1500s onwards and ruled over so many without gunpowder. In fact, they would not have spread out across the world, at least by sea anyway, if it had not been for the Chinese invention of the compass. Without the use of the compass, navigation around the world's oceans would not have been possible.

The Chinese also made other contributions that the rest of the world has benefited from. Paper was invented by the Ancient Chinese and was in use from the Han dynasty onwards (206–220 CE). To this achievement they also added the invention of printing. Both woodblock and moveable-type printing were in use in China long before their use in other parts of the world.

Other contributions the Ancient Chinese made to the modern world include the production of silk and the cultivation of rice. It is hard to imagine a world without rice, let alone the wonderful world of Chinese cuisine we are all familiar with.

In later periods, Chinese people spread out around the world. Most of the major cities of South-East Asia have a Chinese section, and in Australia we are all familiar with the 'Chinatowns' we have in our cities. This is because the discovery of gold attracted many people from China from the 1850s onwards. The same process occurred in the United States when gold was discovered there.

In more recent times, Ancient Chinese beliefs, philosophies and religion have been of great interest to the rest of the world. Many business courses at universities have even re-examined *The Art of War* and applied its thinking to the business world. The contributions that Ancient China has made to the world show it to have been one of the world's great civilisations.



SOURCE 6.34 Traditional woodblock printing is still used in some Taoist temples in modern-day China

History challenges

Creating an exhibit

Create five exhibits for the Asian World gallery on the following themes for Ancient China:

- 1 Physical features
- 2 Daily life
- 3 Contact and conflict with other countries
- 4 A significant individual
- 5 The legacy of your society



Archaeology

- 1 Create an exhibition about archaeologists working on the Qin, Han and Tang dynasty tombs
 - a Go to OneStopDigital for a digital gallery of objects from these tombs.
 - b Download and install Microsoft Photo Story.
 - c Download the images and prepare a photo story of the differences in tomb art and treasures across the three dynasties.
 - d Present your photo story to the class on a digital projector or electronic whiteboard.



Trade

- 1 You are a merchant travelling along the Silk Road between India and Ancient China. Prepare a diary in which you describe some of the highlights of your journey. Add your diary to your museum scrapbook.
- 2 As you continue on your journey as a merchant on the Silk Road, you stop to trade in Samarkand, Kashgar and Turfan. Use a range of sources to research these stops on your journey. Use Postcard Creator to make and send postcards from these places, describing them to your family. Add the postcards to your museum scrapbook.
- 3 You are a captain of a Chinese junk (boat) sailing to Southeast Asia to trade with the kingdom of Funan in the Mekong Delta. Find out what the people there have to trade and what you might be able to exchange. Prepare a ship's log (diary) of your experiences.
- 4 You are the leader of a nomadic tribe of horsemen along the Silk Road. You have just raided a caravan of merchants. What bounty did you acquire? Prepare a list and describe what happened.



Education

- 1 The Imperial Exam was based on the Confucian texts and students had to remember and recall long passages from them. Create your own imperial exam using the word-find creator on OneStopDigital. Your exam should be based on the new terms, ideas and information you have learned in this chapter.
- 2 Refer back to Source 6.31, 'Waiting for exam results'. Describe what is happening in the picture. Explain why it is happening and finally consider why the exam was so important.



Being a king or emperor

- 1 You are either a king or emperor in any dynasty in Ancient China. Describe briefly what you see as the major challenges you face as leader.
- 2 Kings had to quite often make important decisions resolving disputes. Use the resource on OneStopDigital to have your classmates tell you what their disputes are and come up with solutions. Be imaginative and creative with your responses.
- 3 In order to make your subjects loyal you decide to implement an official philosophy that supports your rule. Review the section about beliefs, values and practices. Can you come up with three laws that will make your rule stronger based on Ancient Chinese philosophies?
- 4 The First Emperor spent much of his later years seeking immortality. Use the internet to find out some of the things he did in this failed pursuit.



Essay

Write an essay entitled 'Was the First Emperor a great emperor or a bad one?' Support your argument with factual examples of his actions. Use the Historical skills on page 42 in Chapter 1 to help you write your essay.

Go to OneStopDigital for multiple-choice questions for this chapter and an interactive crossword.

