

Middle Kingdom to Communist Power



8.01 Describe the role of key historical figures and evaluate their impact on past and present societies in Africa, Asia, and Australia.

8.03 Identify major discoveries, innovations, and inventions and assess their influence on societies past and present.

Connecting to Your World

In democracies like the United States, people elect leaders, but that isn't the only way that rulers come to power. **Shi Huangdi** (shee hwahng•dee) became king of the state of Qin (chihn) when he was only 13 because he was the son of a king. Older people actually ran the government until 238 B.C., when Shi Huangdi became the sole ruler at the age of 21. He employed smart generals and advisers, who helped him conquer other Chinese kingdoms. By 221 B.C., Shi Huangdi became China's first **emperor**, or ruler of many states.



Shi Huangdi Shi Huangdi ruled as emperor from 221 to 210 B.C.

Emperors and Dynasties

KEY QUESTION What was the dynastic cycle?

Shi Huangdi ruled harshly. To keep control, he killed hundreds of people who criticized him. He took away the nobles' power and forced peasants to build roads, forts, and canals. Many died from overwork.

Historians divide Chinese history into dynasties. A **dynasty** (DY•nuh•stee) is a line of rulers from one family. Shi Huangdi began the Qin Dynasty, but Chinese history began long before Qin rule.

Terra Cotta Army Shi Huangdi had an army of 7,500 life-size terra cotta (clay) soldiers created to guard his tomb. **What do you think he wanted this army to convey about him?**



Early Culture A major Chinese civilization developed on the **North China Plain**, which lies between the Huang He and Chang Jiang. As you have learned, the rivers deposit silt, so the land is fertile. Chinese farming started there, and around 2000 B.C., cities began to grow.

Some traits of that early culture have been part of Chinese culture ever since. For example, the Chinese had invented a writing system by 1000 B.C. Those characters evolved into the ones that are still used today. Also, the ancient Chinese placed great value on the family. Respect for the family is still central to Chinese life.

Uniting and Ruling China Other dynasties ruled northern China before the Qin, but Shi Huangdi was the first ruler to unite the kingdoms into one empire. Wars between the separate kingdoms ended. In the peace that followed, farming and trade grew.

A united China could better protect itself from attacks. Nomads from the north often invaded China. The Chinese saw the nomads as uncivilized, and in contrast, thought their own culture was very advanced. In fact, the Chinese called their country the **Middle Kingdom** because they thought they were the center of the world.

The Chinese believed that their rulers needed the Mandate of Heaven, or the gods' approval. A dynasty had the mandate as long as it ruled well. When a dynasty ruled badly, it lost the mandate. The people then rebelled, and a new dynasty took power. This pattern, called the **dynastic cycle**, was repeated many times.

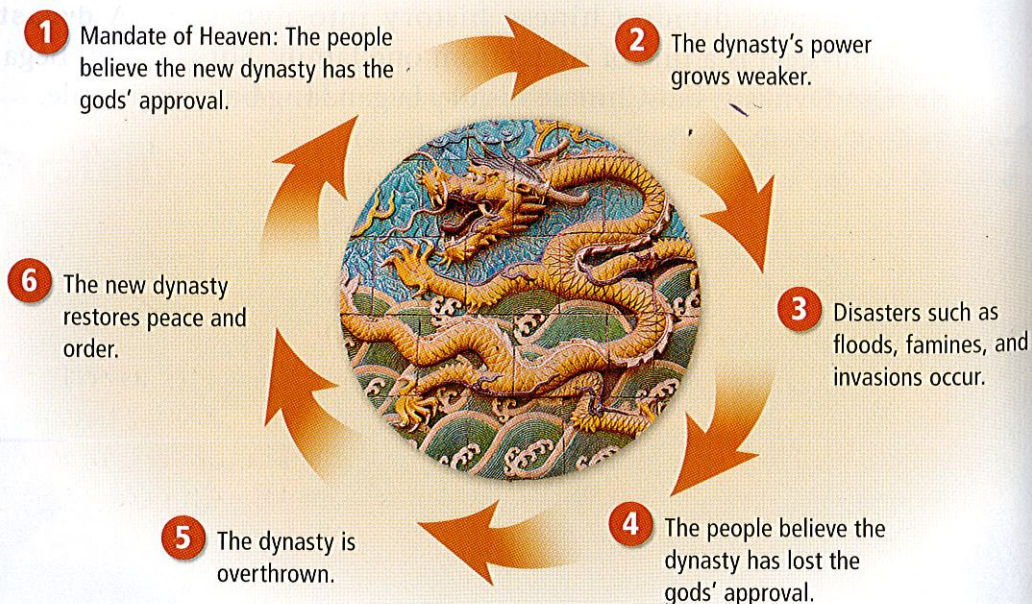
For example, after Shi Huangdi died, his son ruled badly. War broke out, and the Han Dynasty took power in 202 B.C. At first, the Han ruled well, and people believed they had the mandate. After 400 years, however, rebellions and other problems brought Han rule to an end.

Dynastic Cycle

Chinese Dragon The Chinese consider dragons to be powerful but helpful creatures that bring good luck. This dragon decorates the wall of a palace.

CRITICAL THINKING

Make Inferences Why do you suppose dragons came to symbolize the emperor?



The Great Wall China's history caused the Chinese to erect a unique structure. In ancient times when small kingdoms often fought each other, many of them built defensive walls. After Shi Huangdi united China, he decided to connect existing walls to stop invading nomads. Hundreds of thousands of peasants were forced to work on this **Great Wall**. Some later dynasties added to and rebuilt the wall. You will learn more about the Great Wall at the end of this section.

FIND MAIN IDEAS Describe the dynastic cycle.

Scholars and Inventors

KEY QUESTION How did scholars and inventions influence life in China?

China's rulers faced two difficult problems. First, they had to keep order in a huge country. Second, China had a large population to feed. Scholars and inventions helped Chinese emperors solve these two problems.

Confucius To help produce order, a teacher named Confucius (kuhn•FYOO•shuhs) created a code of behavior that was based on traditional values. Confucius taught that people must do what is right. However, he stressed different virtues for people in different social roles. For instance, rulers should be kind and set a good example. People who work in the government should be polite, honest, and fair. All subjects should be obedient and loyal to the ruler. Confucius also urged all men to get an education.

Starting with the Han Dynasty, China's rulers adopted Confucius' ideas. The rulers wanted well-trained people to help them run the country. They also wanted people who were virtuous and loyal. A state exam based on **Confucianism** (kuhn•FYOO•shuh•nihz•uhm), or the teachings of Confucius, was used to test men for government work. The exam was very difficult.

It tested people's knowledge of history, law, and poetry as well as Confucianism. Most people failed the test. Those who passed became **scholar-officials**, or educated people who worked in the government. This orderly approach to choosing officials helped the Chinese emperors rule their large country.



HISTORY MAKERS

Confucius 551–479 B.C.

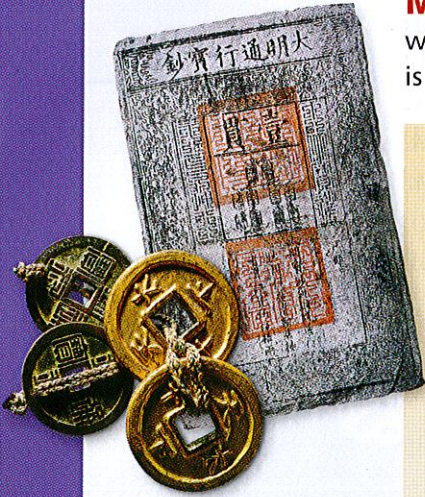
Confucius was the most important teacher in Chinese history. As a boy, he worked hard to learn all subjects. In his 30s, Confucius became a popular teacher. Later, he became a minor court official and tried to put his ideas about duty and social order into practice. Other officials resented Confucius' talk of virtue, so he did not keep his job for long. As a result, he felt like a failure. Little did he know that his ideas would guide rulers for centuries after his death.



ONLINE BIOGRAPHY

For more on the life of Confucius, go to the Research & Writing Center @ ClassZone.com

ANALYZING Primary Sources



Marco Polo (1254–1324) was an Italian merchant who lived in China for 17 years during the 1200s. Here is a description he wrote about one Chinese invention.

[The emperor] has money made . . . out of the bark of trees. . . . [The money is] cut up into rectangles of various sizes, longer than they are broad [and worth different amounts]. . . . With this currency [money] he orders all payments to be made throughout every province and kingdom and region of his empire.


Source: *The Travels of Marco Polo*, translated by Ronald Latham



Marco Polo

DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTION

Why do you think paper money was adopted by other cultures?

 **ONLINE PRIMARY SOURCE** To read more of Marco Polo's writing, go to the Research & Writing Center @ClassZone.com

Chinese Inventions The Chinese people invented many things that solved problems or created prosperity. Some inventions helped the Chinese to feed their large population. The iron plow loosened soil to prepare it for planting crops. The horse collar enabled farmers to use horses to pull plows and carts. The wheelbarrow made it easier to move heavy loads. Water mills used the power of rivers to grind grain.

Some inventions aided government and education. For example, the invention of paper helped officials to keep records. More books became available after the invention of block printing—printing from large wooden blocks on which a whole page of information has been carved. Later, printing became easier with the invention of movable type—small blocks carved with a single character. The blocks can be rearranged to print new pages. The inventions of paper and printing allowed the Chinese to make records that exist to this day.

China and the World Other cultures adopted some of China's inventions such as paper money, the compass, and gunpowder. For centuries, however, the Chinese kept the secret of how to make silk, a luxurious fabric, and porcelain, a hard white ceramic also called china. Silk and porcelain were rare and beautiful, so the Chinese could trade them in foreign lands to gain wealth.

In contrast, the Chinese had little interest in obtaining foreign goods or technology because they thought their culture was more advanced. For centuries, the Chinese engaged in trade but adopted few foreign ideas.

During the 1200s and 1300s, a foreign people called the Mongols ruled China and encouraged the trade of ideas. They also allowed merchants, such as Marco Polo, to come to China. In the early 1400s, the Ming Dynasty ruled China and sponsored great voyages of exploration to Arabia and Africa. These were led by an admiral named Zheng He (juhng huh).

After the 1430s, scholar-officials urged the emperor to cut off contact with foreigners. As a result, China turned inward and was not interested in developments in other lands. By the 1800s, the West had developed more advanced technology and weapons than China had.

ANALYZE EFFECTS Discuss how scholars and inventions influenced life in China.

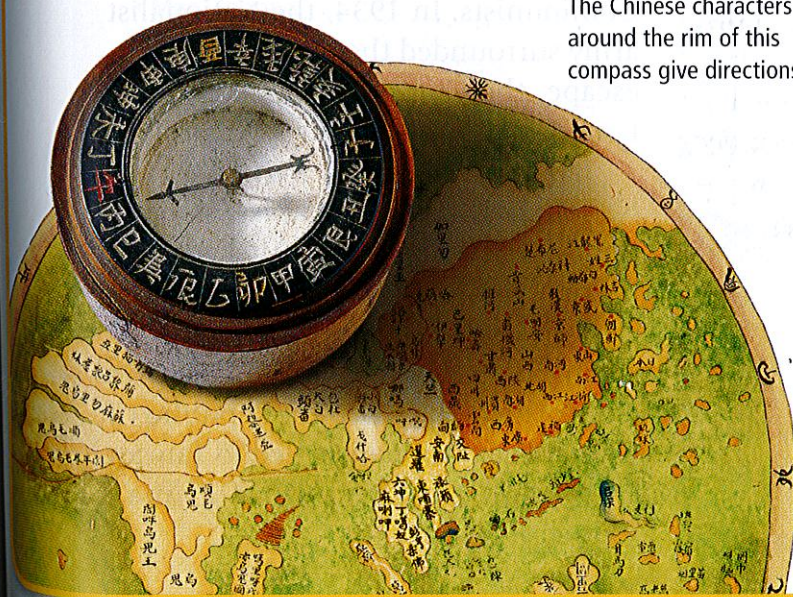
CONNECT to Science

Some time in the 1100s, sailors in China discovered how to make a magnetic compass. Earth is like a gigantic magnet. Lodestone, a magnetic rock, will point north if it is placed on a stick floating in water. After identifying where north is, sailors can find any other direction. So the invention of the compass greatly helped sailors and other travelers to plan their routes.

People in other countries also began to use the magnetic compass. This new technology helped to bring about an increase in trade. It also helped European explorers to go on voyages around the world.

Magnetic Compass

The Chinese characters around the rim of this compass give directions.



Activity

Make a Compass

Materials

- paper clip
- magnet
- piece of cork
- marker
- water
- bowl

1. Unfold a paper clip and rub one end on magnet.



2. Stick the paper clip through a piece of cork or foam and mark magnetized end with marker.



3. Pour water in bowl and float cork with paper clip on top.



4. Magnetized end of paper clip will point north.

