

7 Ancient China

7.1 Overview

7.1.1 LINKS WITH OUR TIMES

China is the world's oldest continuous civilisation. For thousands of years it remained isolated from the western world. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries China suffered invasions, revolutions and civil wars in which many millions of people died. Now, in the early twenty-first century, China is emerging as the world's next great superpower.

China has the biggest population and the fastest growing economy in the world. In recent years, it has experienced a massive building boom, with skyscrapers pushing ever upwards into the already polluted skies over vast cities like Shanghai. Its amazing industrial growth has increased the world's awareness of environmental issues, especially global warming. We know that if each person in China were to cause as much pollution as the average Australian our planet would become uninhabitable.

BIG QUESTIONS

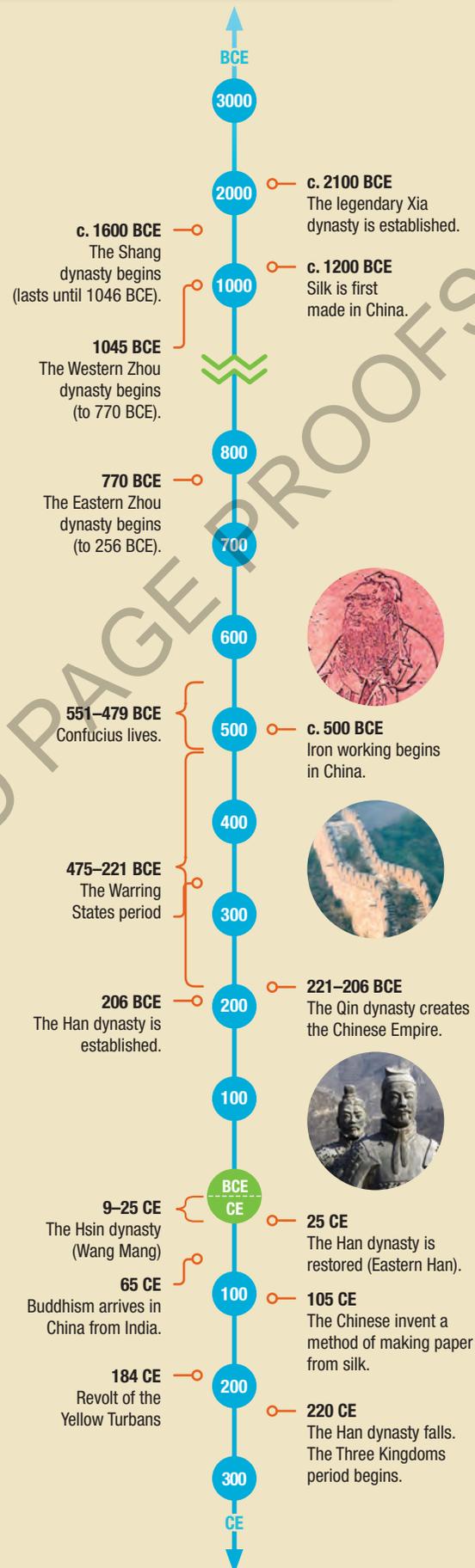
As you work through this topic, look for information that will help you to answer these questions:

- 1 How did ancient China's natural environment influence its civilisation?
- 2 How was ancient Chinese society organised and governed?
- 3 What were the main characteristics of ancient Chinese culture and religion?
- 4 How do written and archaeological sources help us understand ancient China?
- 5 Why did ancient Chinese dynasties rise and fall?
- 6 What is the significance of the heritage of ancient China?

STARTER QUESTIONS

- 1 What things do you own that were made in China?
- 2 What does Australia sell to China?
- 3 Can you think of other ways in which China has influenced life in modern Australia?

A TIMELINE OF ANCIENT CHINA





7.2 Examining the evidence

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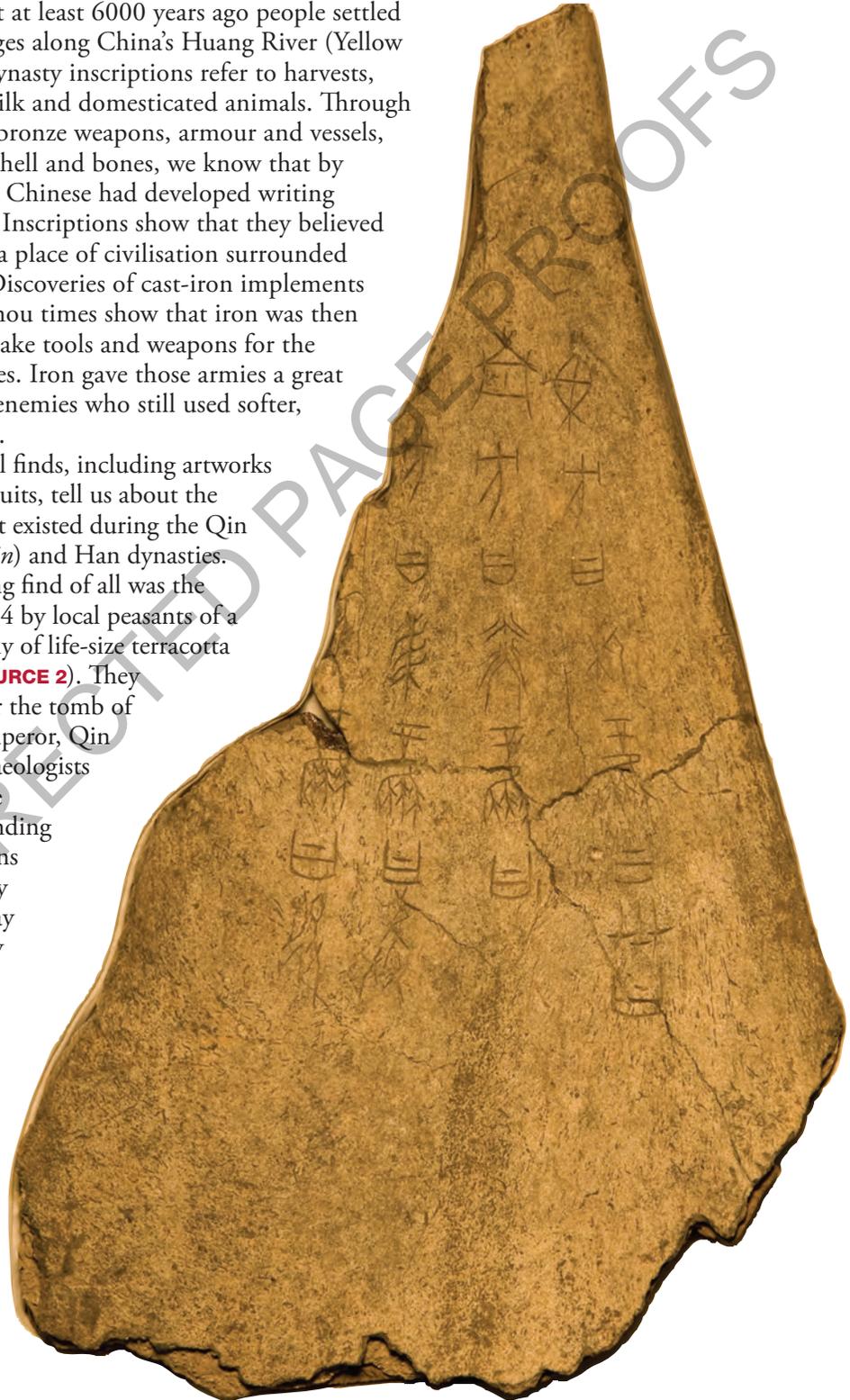
7.2.1 How do we know about ancient China?

From huge structures such as the Great Wall of China to the writings of ancient Chinese poets and historians, there are many primary sources that provide evidence of ancient China.

We know that at least 6000 years ago people settled in farming villages along China's Huang River (Yellow River). Shang dynasty inscriptions refer to harvests, rainfall, crops, silk and domesticated animals. Through inscriptions on bronze weapons, armour and vessels, and on tortoiseshell and bones, we know that by Shang times the Chinese had developed writing (see **SOURCE 1**). Inscriptions show that they believed that China was a place of civilisation surrounded by barbarians. Discoveries of cast-iron implements from Eastern Zhou times show that iron was then being used to make tools and weapons for the expanding armies. Iron gave those armies a great advantage over enemies who still used softer, bronze weapons.

Archaeological finds, including artworks and jade burial suits, tell us about the rich cultures that existed during the Qin (pronounced *chin*) and Han dynasties. The most exciting find of all was the discovery in 1974 by local peasants of a huge buried army of life-size terracotta warriors (see **SOURCE 2**). They stood guard over the tomb of China's First Emperor, Qin Shihuang. Archaeologists estimate that the complex surrounding the tomb contains at least 7000 clay warriors, 600 clay horses and many weapons. Two bronze chariots, each made up of more than 3000 pieces, were also found.

SOURCE 1 Shang dynasty inscriptions on bone. In 1928 nearly 100 000 engraved bones and turtle shells from the Shang dynasty were found near the modern city of Anyang. They were covered in early Chinese writing.



SOURCE 2 Some of the thousands of terracotta warriors that were buried around the tomb of China's first emperor



SOURCE 3 From Sima Qian's book *Shiji*. Sima Qian was a Chinese historian who lived from about 145 to 86 BCE (during the Han dynasty).

In the ninth moon the First Emperor was buried in Mount Li . . . he employed his soldiery, to the number of 700 000, to bore down . . . and there a foundation of bronze was laid and the sarcophagus placed thereon. Rare objects and costly jewels were collected . . . in vast quantities. **Artificers** were ordered to construct mechanical crossbows, which, if anyone were to enter, would immediately discharge their arrows . . . On the roof were delineated the **constellations** of the sky, on the floor the geographical divisions of the earth . . .

The Second Emperor said, 'It is not fitting that the **concubines** of my late father who are without children should leave him now'; and accordingly he ordered them to accompany the dead monarch to the next world . . . someone suggested that the workmen who had made the machinery and concealed the treasure knew the great value of the latter . . . Therefore, so soon as the ceremony was over . . . the **mausoleum** was closed, so that not one of the workmen escaped.

artificer craftsperson or inventor

constellations groups of stars

concubines women who lived with the emperor in a sexual relationship but were not married to him

mausoleum large tomb structure

7.2 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 1 Examine **SOURCE 1**. What clues about ancient China's civilisation have been provided by inscriptions and implements?
- 2 Explain how **SOURCE 1** provides evidence of a writing system during the Shang dynasty.
- 3 Study **SOURCE 2**.
 - a Describe the terracotta warriors.
 - b How can you tell they were not mass-produced?
 - c What can you tell from them about the emperor's army, his wealth and his power?
- 4 Read **SOURCE 3**. Discuss the following questions in groups and report your findings to the class.
 - a Why were crossbows installed in the tomb?
 - b Why might the constellations of the sky have been represented on the roof of the tomb?
 - c Why were the concubines and workers buried with the emperor?
 - d What does the sacrifice of women and workers suggest about the rights of these two groups in ancient China?
 - e What do you think the Chinese thought about life after death?

7.3 China's civilisation begins

7.3.1 China's physical features and the beginning of civilisation

DID YOU KNOW?

The name 'China' comes from the name of the Chinese state Qin. People in India and Central Asia must have known of Qin's existence by about 300 BCE because by that time the word 'China' appeared in their languages. Modern Chinese call their country *Zhongguo*. In Eastern Zhou times, *Zhongguo* meant the central states of China.

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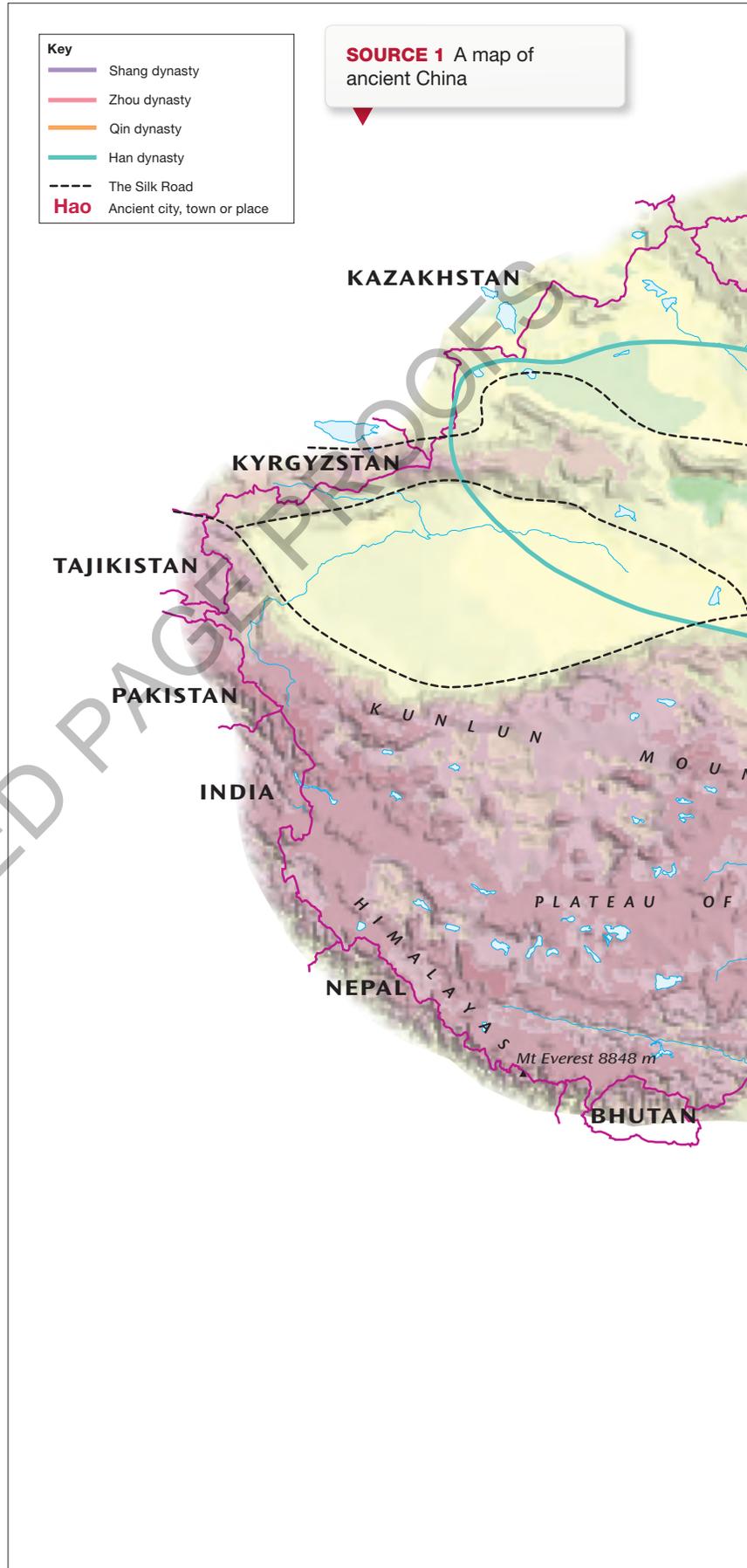
The ancient Chinese saw their country as the centre of the world. Until about 126 BCE they were unaware of the existence of other civilisations. According to legends in the ancient books of China, there was once a 'golden age' in which the arts of civilisation, morals and good government were established. The legends tell of a dynasty called the Xia (pronounced *shar*). It is possible that this dynasty ruled a state in China from about the twenty-first century BCE to the seventeenth century BCE, when its last king was overthrown. However, we have no primary evidence of its existence.

What we do know with certainty is that civilisation could not have developed where it did in China without its river valleys. They provided fertile land for farming. But farming along such river valleys could also be hazardous as the same floods that provided rich soil for crops could also devastate farms and villages. People looked to gods and rulers to protect them.

From earliest times, Chinese rulers based their authority on the **mandate of heaven**. This meant they had been chosen by the gods to rule. However, a ruler who failed to protect the people from floods, famine, wars or other disasters was considered to have lost the mandate of heaven and could be overthrown.

mandate of heaven

Chinese expression meaning that a ruler had been chosen by the gods



SOURCE 1 A map of ancient China

Source: Map drawn by Spatial Vision.



China's earliest dynasties

The first dynasty for which we have evidence is the Shang dynasty (c. 1600–1046 BCE). The Shang rulers were often at war with neighbouring groups. Their dynasty fell when the Zhou (pronounced *jo*) defeated them and set up a new dynasty. Historians divide the Zhou dynasty into two periods: the Western Zhou dynasty (1045–771 BCE) and the Eastern Zhou dynasty (770–256 BCE), under which the capital was moved to the east.

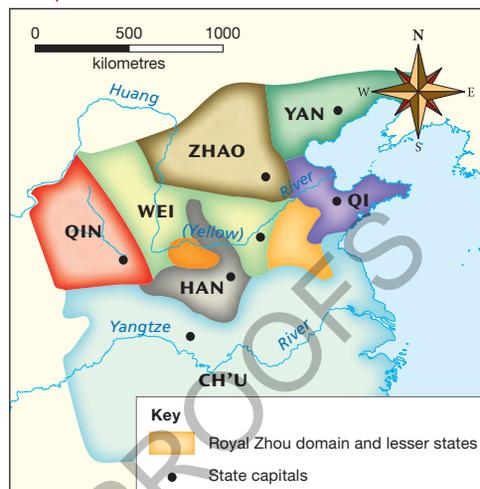
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The Warring States period (475–221 BCE)

Under the Eastern Zhou rulers, royal authority was weak. There were many wars between local lords, who controlled their own states within the Zhou kingdom. The stronger states defeated and took over the weaker states. Finally seven states — Qin, Han, Zhao, Wei, Ch'u, Yan and Qi — remained to fight for control of northern China.

SOURCE 2 Zhou dynasty China during the Warring States period, about 300 BCE



Source: Map drawn by Spatial Vision.

myWorldHistoryAtlas

Deepen and check your understanding of the topic with the following resources and auto-marked questions:

Early Chinese kingdoms

7.3.1 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 Explain the idea of the mandate of heaven.
- 2 How could a ruler lose the mandate of heaven?
- 3 Why do you think the Xia dynasty is often referred to as the 'legendary' Xia dynasty?
- 4 Why do we know more about the Shang and Zhou dynasties?
- 5 What was the Warring States period?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 6 Look closely at **SOURCE 1**.
 - a How big was China in Shang and Zhou times compared with modern China?

- b How many major rivers can you find in the area that was part of China under the Shang and Zhou dynasties?
 - c Find three natural features that would have helped to protect China from invaders.
- 7 Study **SOURCE 2**.
 - a During the Warring States period, which states occupied land surrounding river valleys?
 - b Which states would appear to have had the most advantages in these wars?

7.3 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

IDENTIFYING CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

- 1 Using the sources and information in this subtopic, make a list of ways in which the adoption of farming must have changed ancient Chinese society.

ANALYSING CAUSE AND EFFECT

- 2 Suggest how China's rivers would have contributed to the development of its civilisation.

7.4 The people of ancient China

7.4.1 The ruling classes

Chinese society was headed by rulers who were supported by lords, the landowning gentry (whose position was based on inherited status, wealth and education) and **bureaucrats**. These classes had authority over large populations of peasants, landless labourers, artisans and some slaves.

bureaucrats
government officials

- Ancient Chinese rulers had great power. This is shown by Shang dynasty tombs containing war chariots and the bodies of thousands of followers. These people must have been sacrificed to serve their rulers in the afterlife.
- Below the supreme ruler were the powerful lords. They governed the states, such as Zhao, Qin and Wei, within the kingdom.
- Next came the landowning gentry. The warrior gentry headed the lords' armies. Bureaucrats were also recruited from the gentry, but they had to be scholars to become government officials.

The lords of ancient China were often at war with neighbouring nomadic tribes to China's north and west. They also made war on each other. Warriors fought at first in chariots and later on horseback. The lords and warrior gentry regarded war almost as a sporting contest. When not fighting they spent much of their time hunting, feasting or attending ceremonies and entertainments at court.

Upper-class women had servants and luxuries. However, as girls they were considered inferior to boys. When they married they were treated as the property of their wealthy husbands, who were allowed to have several wives.

SOURCE 1 A late Zhou dynasty bronze musical bell



SOURCE 2 An ox-shaped bronze zun (wine vessel) from the late Zhou dynasty



7.4.1 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 What were the functions of the lords and landowning gentry in ancient China?
- 2 What was the role of the bureaucrats?
- 3 How do we know that ancient Chinese rulers had great power?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 4 Look closely at **SOURCES 1** and **2**. Describe each of these objects and explain why they would almost certainly have belonged to members of the ruling classes.

7.4.2 The common people

The struggling peasants

Most of the people were powerless peasants whose lives changed little over thousands of years. They reared sheep, pigs, poultry, buffalo and oxen, and grew grains such as wheat, millet and barley. Most peasants were tenants who worked fields owned by the lords or gentry. They had to give their landlords about half of everything they produced, as well as paying taxes to the government. Times could be so hard that they were forced to sell their children into slavery.

Peasants had to cope with natural disasters, such as floods and famine, and with the constant threat of war. Most of the **infantry** in the armies were **conscripted** peasants. In hand-to-hand fighting their main weapons were at first **halberds** with bronze blades. Later they used swords made from bronze or iron. Many foot soldiers died in battle. Those who were captured could expect to be executed or condemned to slavery.

The lowest classes

Below the peasants came artisans, merchants and slaves. Artisans were skilled craftsmen such as armourers, metalworkers and carpenters. They were a small class because their products were mostly for the ruling classes. Merchants, who conducted businesses and trade, were an even smaller and lower class. Although some merchants were wealthy, they were not considered to play a useful role and were ranked just above slaves. There were fewer slaves in China than in many other ancient societies. Many slaves had been taken as prisoners of war. Others suffered slavery as punishment for crimes (sometimes committed by their relatives rather than themselves). Still others were peasants who were sold as slaves to pay debts.

infantry foot soldiers

conscripted forced to become a soldier

halberds daggers mounted on axe handles

SOURCE 3 A bronze mao (spearhead) from the late Shang dynasty



SOURCE 4 A yue (battle-axe head) with a dragon design, from the late Shang dynasty



DID YOU KNOW?

In ancient China ornaments and jewellery were worn by women and men as a badge of their social rank. This made it easy to tell at a glance their position in society.

7.4.2 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 Why did peasants suffer in wars no matter which side won?
- 2 How could people become slaves in ancient China?
- 3 Why were merchants regarded as belonging to one of the lowest social classes, even though they might be wealthy?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 4 Identify the objects in **SOURCES 3** and **4** and explain how they could provide evidence of the hardships faced by conscripted peasants.

7.4 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

IDENTIFYING CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

- 1 Draw and label a social pyramid showing the position of the different social classes in ancient China and explain why it would have been very difficult for Chinese society to change.
- 2 In groups, write and perform a role-play of an imaginary discussion between peasants and members of the ruling classes on the topic of war. Suggest what feelings each would have about war and why their feelings would differ greatly.

7.5 Everyday life and death

7.5.1 Everyday life

How different were the everyday lives of people from different the social classes in ancient China and how differently were they treated in death? Life and death were marked by extreme inequality between rulers, lords, gentry and bureaucrats on the one hand and peasants, artisans and slaves on the other. In addition, within all classes there was extreme inequality between men and women.

The vast majority of the Chinese people were peasant farmers for whom life was a constant struggle to survive. Most spent their entire lives in villages of around a hundred families, toiling on small family farms. They worked long hours every day and most of their work was done by hand. The threat of floods and droughts meant that groups of families often worked together on such tasks as maintaining irrigation canals. In towns and cities crafts were usually hereditary, with sons learning from their fathers and taking their places when they died. The lives of craftsmen and merchants were also tough but often better than the lives of peasants. At least craftsmen and merchants got to travel about for work and trade.

Women's hard lives

Regardless of social class, women were considered inferior to men. Fathers ruled in ancient Chinese families. Women were expected to look after the household and children but in peasant families they often worked in the fields as well. Their fathers arranged their marriages and once married a woman had to live with her husband's family in a dwelling that might house three generations. Married women had to obey their husband's family members but they could gain some respect by producing sons. Baby girls were not valued and were sometimes put out to die or sold to be servants. If a woman failed to give birth to boys her husband might take other wives. In a society where people had to respect their elders, another way for a woman to gain respect was to outlive her husband.

Entertainment

The unending work of men and women in common families left almost no time or money for any kind of entertainment, apart from occasional festivals. In contrast, for the ruling classes, and some wealthy merchants, several forms of entertainment were available. During the Zhou dynasty acting, music and dance were combined into Chinese opera, in which famous legends were performed. There was a variety of board games from around 500 BCE. From the time of the Qin dynasty, acrobatics became another popular form of entertainment.

SOURCE 1 From Michael Lowe, *Everyday Life in Early Imperial China*

... evidence in the form of reliefs [sculptures] that decorated a tomb illustrates the type of entertainment that rich families could afford to stage, right at the end of the Han period. There was dancing and sword-play, juggling and acrobatic feats, accompanied by skilled players with their drums and bells, their wind and stringed instruments; and we know of other forms of amusements ... such as cock-fighting, dog or horse racing and bird hunting.

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7.5.1 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 Describe ways in which women were disadvantaged in Chinese society.
- 2 Why did peasants have little entertainment?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 3 Read **SOURCE 1**.
 - a How do we know about the entertainments of the ruling classes?
 - b What types of entertainments had the ruling classes?
 - c Why would it be more difficult to find evidence for the entertainments of the common people?

7.5.2 Death and burials

We know little about death among the poor but a lot about the funeral customs of rulers and the ruling classes because they could afford elaborate tombs. Chinese ideas about death preceded the organised religions so most people did not restrict funeral rituals to any one religion. A rich family might employ Daoist and Buddhist priests and Confucian scholars to play official roles at a funeral (see 7.7 Confucianism, religion and law).

It was believed that when someone died their soul left the body to dwell in a spirit world. It was also believed that an elaborate funeral would inform the spirit world of the deceased's high rank in society. Another belief was that the living had to help the deceased into the spirit world so that the dead would not become evil spirits that would return to worry them. From about 5000 BCE to the seventeenth century CE, it was the custom of the ruling classes to bury goods, including food and drink, with the dead so that they would have them in the afterlife. Until Han dynasty times it was also common for rulers to have people buried with them to serve them in the spirit world.

The rich had grand funeral feasts and ceremonies and there is evidence of puppets being buried with them that were clothed in fine silk that was worth more than a peasant might earn in a year. Their tombs were painted with scenes of joyful banquets and dances. The poor had no such finery. Most were probably buried in simple pits. In famines, floods and wars, most of the poor may have received no burial at all.

SOURCE 2 Some of the life-sized terracotta warriors that were buried to guard the tomb of China's first emperor Qin Shihuang



SOURCE 3 A jade burial suit of Princess Dou Wan, who lived before 100 BCE. The suit was made of 2150 pieces of jade held together with gold wire. It was believed that jade would stop the body from decaying and ensure immortality.



7.5.2 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 In ancient China, what beliefs were held about life after death?
- 2 What took place at the funeral of a member of the ruling classes?
- 3 How did this compare with the death and burial of a poor person?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 4 Study **SOURCES 2** and **3**.
 - a Describe each source.
 - b Identify its purpose.
 - c Suggest what it can tell us about beliefs associated with death.

7.5 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 1 Using the sources and other information in this subtopic, make a mind map to represent inequality in ancient China in life and death.

ANALYSING CAUSE AND EFFECT

- 2 Explain why the power and wealth of the ruling classes could be described as a cause of the poverty and hardships suffered by the common people of ancient China.

7.6 Ancient China and the natural environment

7.6.1 China's natural environments

In our time China faces enormous environmental problems. Since the late twentieth century China's rapid economic growth has produced thousands of new factories making goods that are exported around the world. This industrial growth has depended on vast numbers of new power stations. Air pollution in many Chinese cities is so bad that when the 2008 Olympics were held in Beijing, many factories had to stop production and thousands of cars had to be taken off the roads. These problems are now huge, but even in ancient times China's population had a serious impact on its environment.

China is a vast country with a wide range of climates and landscapes. It has plateaus and mountains in the west, deserts and grasslands in the north, forests in the north-east, hills and low mountains in the south and plains along the coast. China's climate also varies greatly. Beijing has freezing winters while coastal southern China is subtropical.

SOURCE 1 This section of the Great Wall of China straddles mountains north of Beijing. The wall extends over some 5000 kilometres through many different landscapes.



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DID YOU KNOW?

Over many centuries the mud from soil erosion raised the bed of the Huang River so much that the river flowed above the level of the countryside and had to be contained by man-made dykes.

When these dykes broke, floods drowned many people. According to Chinese records more than a million people died in the river's worst flood in 1117 CE.

In ancient times China at first consisted mainly of the area around the fertile valleys of the Huang and Yangtze rivers. It was not until Han dynasty times that the outer areas were brought under Chinese control (see 7.3 China's civilisation begins). Then, as now, more than 90 per cent of China's people lived in the country's heartland in the east, where the rivers provided water for agriculture. But these rivers often flooded, causing massive damage and loss of life.

7.6.1 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 Name at least five different types of natural environments that exist in China.
- 2 Why have more than 90 per cent of Chinese people lived around the river valleys in the country's east?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 3 Describe the landscape in **SOURCE 1**. Then use your library or the internet to find other images of landscapes along the Great Wall. Explain why few of those regions would have been able to support the levels of population that existed in China's east.

7.6.2 A big population

One in every four people in the modern world is Chinese. Researchers have found that even in ancient times China's population was huge but that it could rise and fall rapidly. They estimate:

- in Qin dynasty times (221–206 BCE) China had about 20 million people
- by 1 CE there were about 60 million people
- by 220 CE the population had fallen to about 40 million
- China's population took almost another thousand years to surpass 60 million.

SOURCE 2 A constant haze of air pollution hangs over modern China's cities. This is a view of Shanghai.



The rapid population growth during the first Han dynasty (206 BCE–9 CE) was made possible by peace, improved farming methods and irrigation. However, these advances involved clearing forests and cultivating grasslands. Farming along the upper reaches of the Huang River caused massive soil erosion, filling the river with the mud that gave it the name ‘Yellow River’. The falling population by 220 CE was probably caused mainly by deaths in rebellions and by soil erosion and famines.

Native animal populations fell as humans took ever more of their habitat. In our time China’s pandas have barely been saved from extinction. In ancient times, elephants and rhinoceroses roamed across much of China. The rhinoceros was driven to extinction and elephants now survive in only a few protected areas of the south-west.

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7.6.2 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 What are the most likely reasons for:
 - a China’s population growth between around 221 BCE and 1 CE
 - b China’s population decline by around 220 CE?

- 2 How did rising populations and land clearance for farming affect China’s rivers and wildlife?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 3 What are the signs of pollution in **SOURCE 2**?

7.6 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

IDENTIFYING CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

- 1 Explain what has changed and what has remained the same in China from ancient to modern times with regard to:
 - a population levels
 - b environmental problems.

ANALYSING CAUSE AND EFFECT

- 2 Explain how population growth could have been both a cause and effect of the clearing of forests and cultivation of grasslands in ancient China.

7.7 Confucianism, religion and law

7.7.1 The ideas and influence of Confucianism

The oldest Chinese religious ideas involved worshipping gods of the sun, rivers and mountains. People worshipped ancestors and believed in good and evil spirits. Ancient China was also influenced by three great and lasting traditions — Daoism, Confucianism and Buddhism. China was tolerant of different beliefs partly because Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism encouraged tolerance. Confucianism also had a strong and lasting influence on law in ancient China.

Confucius (551–479 BCE)

Amid the ongoing wars of the second half of the Zhou dynasty, **philosophers** taught ideas to solve the problems of their age. Confucius (K’ung Fu-tse) is regarded as the greatest of these thinkers. Born into a minor noble family, his education qualified him to become a high official. Instead he became a philosopher who taught about life and government. Some of his disciples gained high positions during the Warring States period, but Confucius himself never held anything more than a low post.

The philosophy of Confucius

What we know of Confucius comes from a book called *Lun-yu* (*The Analects*). It is a collection of his sayings recorded by his followers. Confucius was not concerned with religion, but rather with how personal and governmental good conduct could ensure a just and harmonious society. He taught the ideals of family duty and believed that superior people behaved humanely. He taught that government should exist for the people’s welfare and that people would follow a good ruler who led by example. He tried without success to convince the rulers of each of the states to restore good government.

philosopher one who studies the fundamental principles and causes of things

SOURCE 1 An ancient drawing of Confucius made many centuries after his death



By the time of his death Confucius had many followers. The best known of them was Mencius (372–289 BCE), who did succeed in influencing the rulers of his age. Confucius's ideas survived and influenced Chinese thought right up to modern times, as his ideal of the official as a scholar-gentleman replaced the earlier ideal of the warrior noble.

SOURCE 2 From *The Analects*

The princes of today are greedy in their search after material goods. They indulge themselves in pleasure and neglect their duties and carry themselves with a proud air. They take all they can from the people and invade the territory of good rulers against the will of the people, and they go out to get what they want without regard for what is right. That is the way of the modern rulers . . .

SOURCE 3 From *The Analects*

When the ruler himself does what is right, he will have influence over people without giving commands, and when the ruler does not do what is right, all his commands will be of no avail.

7.7.1 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 When did Confucius live?
- 2 When did the ideas of Confucius begin to influence Chinese thought?

4 Read **SOURCES 2** and **3**.

- a Why was Confucius critical of the rulers of his time?
- b What did Confucius regard as qualities of a good ruler?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 3 Look closely at **SOURCE 1**. Identify aspects of this drawing which suggest that Confucius was highly regarded many centuries after his death.

7.7.2 Religions in ancient China

Daoism

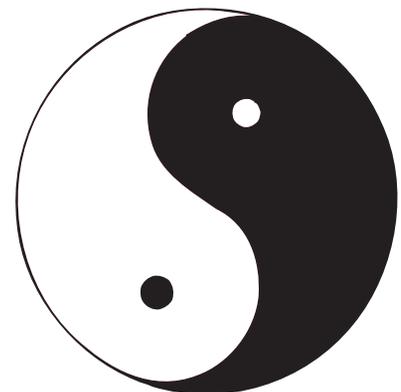
According to legend, **Daoist** ideas were first taught by a man call Laozi, who lived around the same time as Confucius. However, there is no evidence that Laozi existed. The main teaching in ancient Daoist texts is the need to retire from worldly concerns and follow the Dao ('the way'). Daoism holds that nature works in harmony and that people should see themselves as parts of nature in order to find happiness and health. Another Daoist belief was that it was possible to become immortal. Daoists developed the martial art of kung fu and the idea of the yin and yang, complementary opposing forces that together produce harmony and balance.

Daoist a follower of Daoism

SOURCE 4 Kung fu is a Daoist martial art that has been practised for thousands of years.



SOURCE 5 The Daoist symbol for yin and yang



Buddhism

Founded in India in the sixth century BCE, Buddhism expresses the teachings of the Buddha (born Siddhartha Gautama in what is now Nepal, in about 563 BCE), who gave up worldly pleasures and devoted his life to the search for enlightenment. Central ideas of Buddhism are that suffering is caused by desire and that people have many lives. In each of these lives, people should try to live better until they reach nirvana. Then it is unnecessary to be reborn, as nirvana is a state of bliss free from the cares of the world. Buddhism came into China via the Silk Road (see 7.9 The rise and fall of the Han) and became an important influence by the late first century CE.

SOURCE 6 Chinese Buddhism spread to neighbouring countries. This Buddhist statue in Korea reflects Chinese influence.



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7.7.2 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 Describe the main ideas of Daoism.
- 2 How old is Daoism?
- 3 When did Buddhism become an important influence in China?
- 4 What are the central ideas of Buddhism?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 5 Look at **SOURCES 4** and **5** and use the internet to find out what influence Daoist ideas have today.
- 6 Find images of the Buddha from South-East Asia and compare them with **SOURCE 6**. Explain why it is clear that the Buddha figure in **SOURCE 6** has been influenced by Chinese Buddhism.

7.7.3 Laws in ancient China

Confucianism has had an ongoing influence on Chinese traditions and that influence is especially evident in present-day Chinese beliefs about the need to respect elders and to revere ancestors. But Confucius had no real influence on Chinese government and laws during his lifetime. However, he was later to have an important and ongoing influence on both these. Confucius taught that a golden age of good government and good law had existed in early Zhou times. Long after his death, his teachings continued to have many followers. The best known of them was Mencius, who lived during about 372–298 BCE. Mencius taught that the Confucian ‘five relationships’, those between

father and son, husband and wife, elder brother and younger brother, friend and friend and between ruler and subject were the basis of any well-ordered society. He succeeded in presenting Confucian ideas in ways that influenced some rulers during the late Warring States period.

Laws of the First Qin Emperor

When the warring states were united under the rule of China's First Emperor, Qin Shihuang, in 221 BCE, the laws of the state of Qin were adopted throughout the newly created Chinese Empire. Confucianism had very little influence on these laws and Confucian scholars were suppressed by Qin Shihuang. Instead, the emperor's laws followed the tradition of Legalism, a school of thought that held that people were bad by nature. So the laws that prevailed throughout China under the Qin dynasty were very harsh, with cruel punishments (see **SOURCE 7**).

SOURCE 7 An extract from the laws of the state of Qin before 221 BCE. Under the Qin emperors such laws operated throughout China.

When five men jointly rob something worth one cash or more, they should have their left foot amputated, be tattooed, and be made convict labourers. If fewer than five men were involved but what they robbed was worth more than 660 cash, they should be tattooed, their noses cut off, and made convict labourers ...

Suppose the holder of a low rank stole a sheep. Before the case was judged, he falsely accused someone else of stealing a pig ... He should be left intact and made a convict labourer.

Anyone who kills a child without authorisation is to be made a convict labourer. This does not apply to killing a deformed or abnormal newborn.

Suppose A ran away from her husband and married B ... After they are caught, what should the sentence be? They should be tattooed and made convict labourers ... Convict labourers ... are to be manacled and fettered.

Laws change after the fall of the Qin

The Han dynasty, which replaced the Qin in 206 BCE, employed Confucian scholars as its officials. These men used their positions to revise the laws, restoring Confucian ideas. Those ideas continued to influence Chinese thought and Chinese law under a succession of dynasties until the end of the last Chinese Empire in 1911 CE. China's laws in turn influenced the legal systems of countries where China had influence, especially Vietnam and Korea.

7.7.3 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 When did Confucian ideas first come to influence Chinese law?
- 2 What school of thought was the main influence on Chinese law under the Qin dynasty?
- 3 How was Confucianism restored as an influence on Chinese law under the Han dynasty?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 4 Read **SOURCE 7**.
 - a According to the laws of Qin, a robber should have his left foot cut off and be made a convict labourer. How difficult would such a life be with only one foot?
 - b In this source, 'left intact' means not mutilated. Using this source as your evidence, explain which crimes were considered the most serious and punished the most severely under Qin law.
 - c Explain what conclusions you can draw from this source about the rights of women and children under Qin law.
 - d How do you think the ordinary people would have felt about Qin laws?

7.7 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

IDENTIFYING CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

- 1 Using the sources and other information in this subtopic, describe ways in which Confucianism continued to influence Chinese culture over many centuries.

DETERMINING HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

- 2 Discuss why Confucius deserves to be regarded as one of the most significant individuals in Chinese history.

7.8 Qin Shihuang, the First Emperor of China

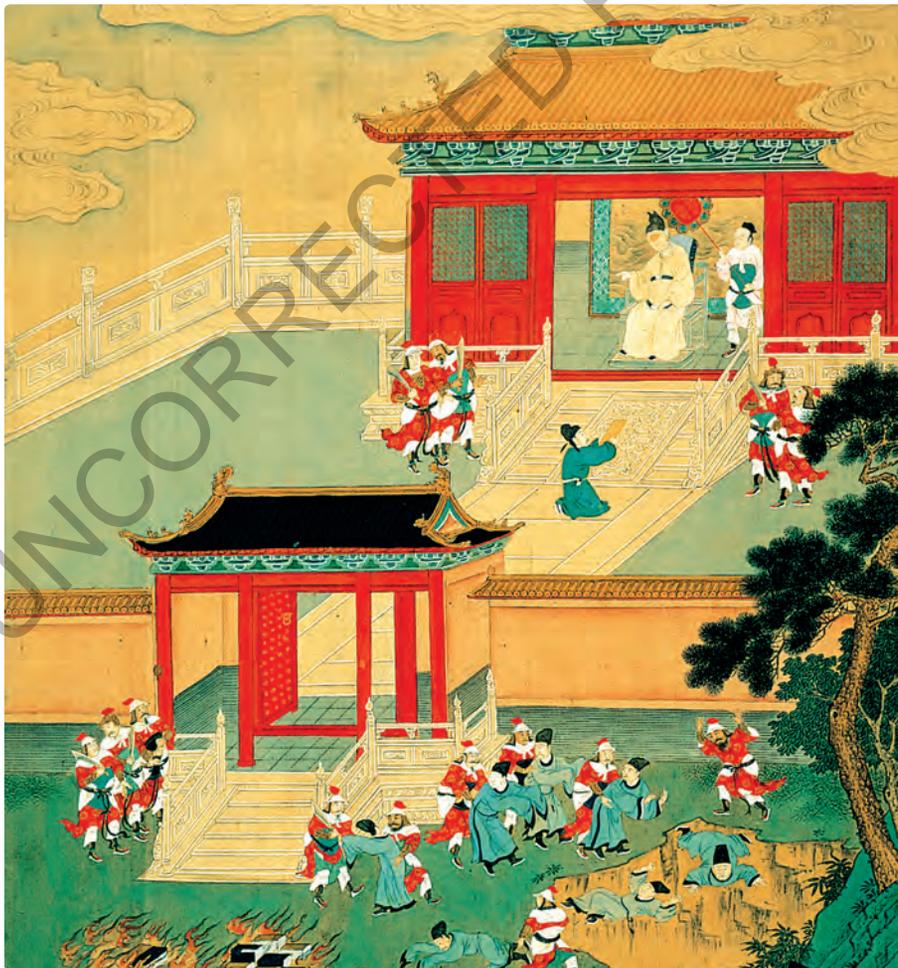
7.8.1 Qin rule

Ying Zheng, the ruler of Qin, ended the Warring States period by completing his conquest of the other states of China. He founded the Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE) and gave himself the title Shihuangdi. In modern Chinese he is called Qin Shihuang (pronounced *chin shir hwang*), which means ‘First Emperor of the Qin’. The Qin dynasty was the shortest in Chinese history but it was also one of the most important. It was China’s first centralised empire and its legacies include the Great Wall.

From 221 BCE, the harsh laws of the Qin state were imposed throughout China. Qin Shihuang sent armies south, conquering much of what is now southern China. To remove threats to his power, the emperor confiscated all weapons held by his people. He banished many nobles of the conquered states and forced others to live in his capital, where they could be watched. In 213 BCE, to stamp out rebellious ideas, he ordered a public burning of books, including those of Confucian scholars (see **SOURCE 1**). He had scholars who kept their books executed by being buried alive.

Previously in China the nobles had held huge areas of the land in return for services to the king. Beneath them, millions of peasants toiled for the nobles in return for the right to use land. This is what we call a feudal system. The emperor changed this by dividing the country into local government areas administered by officials. He also allowed farming land to be bought and sold freely.

SOURCE 1 A Chinese painting illustrating Qin Shihuang’s burning of the books and the execution of scholars



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7.8.1 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 How did the king of Qin become the ruler of China's first centralised empire?
- 2 What area did Qin Shihuang conquer?
- 3 How and why did Qin Shihuang weaken the power of the nobles?
- 4 How did he reduce the influence of Confucian scholars?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

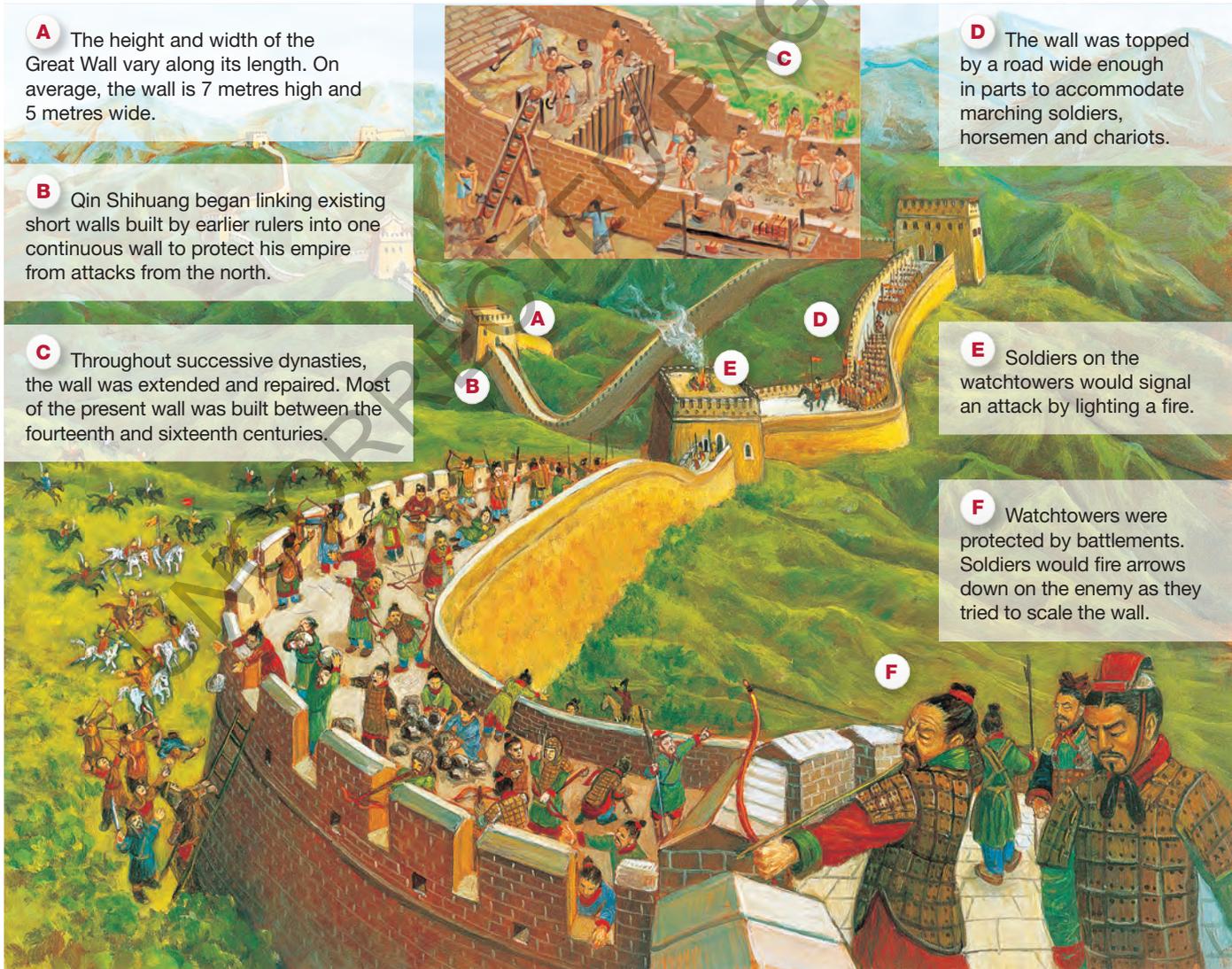
- 5 Describe what is happening in **SOURCE 1**.
- 6 Working in pairs, role-play a situation in which a Confucian scholar is appealing to the First Emperor to change his mind about burning Confucian books. One of you should represent the perspective of the scholar and the other that of the emperor.

7.8.2 The Great Wall and other achievements of Qin Shihuang

From as early as the seventh century BCE, the Chinese states had built walls to protect themselves from invasion by the northern nomadic **Xiongnu** tribes. During the Warring States period, states had also built walls between themselves and neighbouring states. To unify China, Qin Shihuang ordered the destruction of the walls between former states. To prevent invasion he ordered his people to link the walls that defended China from the Xiongnu. About half of the present length of the Great Wall was first linked into one continuous barrier under the Qin (see **SOURCES 2** and **3**).

Xiongnu the ancient Chinese name for the nomadic Turkic tribes of Central Asia

SOURCE 2 The Great Wall of China is the world's biggest single construction project. It is more than 5000 kilometres long and has 20 000 watchtowers and 10 000 beacon towers. The present wall is much longer and stronger than that completed under the Qin. It took many more centuries to complete, and over time its construction may have cost a million lives.



Reforms of the Qin

To strengthen central rule and make China more efficient, Qin Shihuang introduced many reforms.

- Separate states were replaced with central rule and one set of laws.
- The calendar and people's dress were made the same throughout the empire.
- A single form of writing, a single system of weights and measures and a single currency (money) were to be used throughout the empire. This made trade and taxation more efficient.
- His new capital was Xianyang. Highways were built from it to unite the country, and new trading cities were founded.
- He ordered that all carts were to have the same axle width. This made it possible for carts to move more easily along the dirt roads as the wheels of all carts could travel in the same wheel ruts.

DID YOU KNOW?

About 5800 kilometres of roads were built in China by the time the Qin dynasty fell — more than the Romans had built almost four centuries later.

SOURCE 3 A section of the Great Wall of China



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Deepen and check your understanding of the topic with the following resources and auto-marked questions:
Unification of China

7.8.2 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 Why had the Chinese states built walls before the time of the First Emperor?
- 2 What walls did Qin Shihuang have destroyed and which walls did he have linked? Why?
- 3 How would standard calendars, laws, weights and measures, standardised money and a standard system of writing have made trade, taxation and government more efficient?
- 4 Why would the emperor have wanted to also standardise people's dress and the width of axles on carts?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 5 **SOURCE 2** is a secondary source and **SOURCE 3** is a primary source. Compare them to judge the accuracy of **SOURCE 2**.
- 6 Describe features of the Great Wall that could have made it an effective barrier to invasion.
- 7 Look at the landscape in **SOURCE 3** and read the **SOURCE 2** caption. Why do you think so many people could have died building the Great Wall?

DID YOU KNOW?

In ancient China dragons were sometimes depicted with their mouths open, roaring as if to frighten away evil spirits. The dragon is a symbol of wisdom, strength and goodness. It was under Qin Shihuang that the dragon was first used as a symbol for Chinese emperors.

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7.8.3 The fall of the Qin

Qin Shihuang wanted to live forever. He sent hundreds of men and women to sea on rafts in search of the secret of everlasting life, but none ever returned. He surrounded himself with fortune-tellers and others who promised to find him immortality. Despite these efforts he died at the age of 49 in 210 BCE, while on a journey. His chief minister, Li Si (pronounced *lee shir*), and others pretended for a while that the emperor was still alive. This gave them time to forge a decree that would place their choice of successor on the throne. It was summer, however, and the body of the emperor soon began to smell, so Li Si ordered a cart filled with rotting fish to follow the imperial carriage to disguise the smell. Only later did they announce the emperor's death, which was possibly due to poisoning by mercury, commonly used in 'immortality' drugs.

His successor, the Second Emperor, lasted only a few years. Higher taxes and forced labour had made the lives of the peasants unbearable. Hundreds of thousands of peasants had been conscripted to build palaces, roads and the emperor's tomb and to link the Great Wall and serve in the army. A peasant rebellion from 209 to 206 BCE destroyed the Qin dynasty. Liu Bang, a leader of the rebellion, became the new emperor and founded the Han Dynasty. Qin Shihuang thought he had founded a dynasty that would last for thousands of emperors. He failed in this. He had, however, turned a group of rival states into an empire and created a central system of government that lasted until the twentieth century.

SOURCE 4 An extract from Thomas Bartlett, *Qin Dynasty: China's Ancient Revolution*

The overall image of the Qin state and its imperial phase [the period of the Qin dynasty], as transmitted through history by surviving records, is a grimly harsh one . . . These charges [against the Qin rulers] reflect early Han writers' self-interested writing of Qin history . . . Overall, the Qin reflects in concentrated form the inhumane aspects of the Warring States period . . . But, from the perspective of nation building, some modern Chinese . . . emphasise his achievements, typically saying that 'he sacrificed one generation to benefit 10,000 future generations'.

7.8.3 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 How might the First Emperor's attempts to live forever have contributed to his early death?
- 2 How did Li Si try to disguise the smell of the emperor's rotting body?
- 3 When did the Qin dynasty fall?
- 4 Why was the Second Emperor unable to hold onto power?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 5 Read **SOURCE 4**.
 - a Why would writers in the early Han dynasty have wanted to portray the Qin dynasty as a harsh one?
 - b Why have some modern Chinese taken a more favourable view of the Qin dynasty?

7.8 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

IDENTIFYING CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

- 1 Using the sources and information in this subtopic answer the following questions.
 - a How was Chinese society changed under the First Emperor?
 - b How would groups such as the nobles, the peasants and Confucian scholars have regarded these changes?

ANALYSING CAUSE AND EFFECT

- 2 Identify reasons why the Qin dynasty was able to rise and why it fell after such a short time.

DETERMINING HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

- 3 Hold a debate on whether or not Qin Shihuang should be regarded as possibly the most significant ruler of ancient China. In your arguments, consider Qin Shihuang's achievements as well as his methods.

7.9 The rise and fall of the Han

7.9.1 Reforms, expansion and trade

The fall of the Qin dynasty was followed by four years of bloody civil war before Liu Bang defeated his rivals and became the first ruler of the Han dynasty. This dynasty lasted, except for a brief interruption, for four centuries and made important achievements in education, science and trade. The Han dynasty had such influence on later dynasties that Chinese people in our time call themselves 'Han' people.

Han reforms

Liu Bang did not want to share the same fate as the Qin dynasty so he took steps to restore prosperity. The size of the army was reduced. He also reduced taxes on the peasants and encouraged farming to ensure plentiful supplies of food. As a result, China's population reached 60 million by the end of the first century BCE. However, landlords continued to exploit the peasants.

SOURCE 1 Chinese life under the Han

A The marketplace

As in Xianyang, large and lively marketplaces were usually just inside the city gates. This allowed access by travelling merchants. Merchants were looked down on by society even if they were rich. They were not seen as contributing in the way farmers did. Goods from all over China and the known world were sold and traded in the market.

B People you might see

In the noisy markets, people bought and sold food and animals. There were musicians, acrobats, jugglers, letter writers, dentists and craftworkers.

C Livestock available

Owl, panther, deer, dog, pig, ant eggs, snails and turtles were mostly bought by the rich.

D City walls

Ancient Chinese cities were circled by two walls. City walls were built to protect the people. If you visit China today, you will still be able to see the remains of these walls in many cities. The inner wall was called *cheng* and the outer wall was called *guo*. Often moats, called *chi*, surrounded these walls. The inner city was called *geng*, and together they were known as *cheng chi*.

E Family values

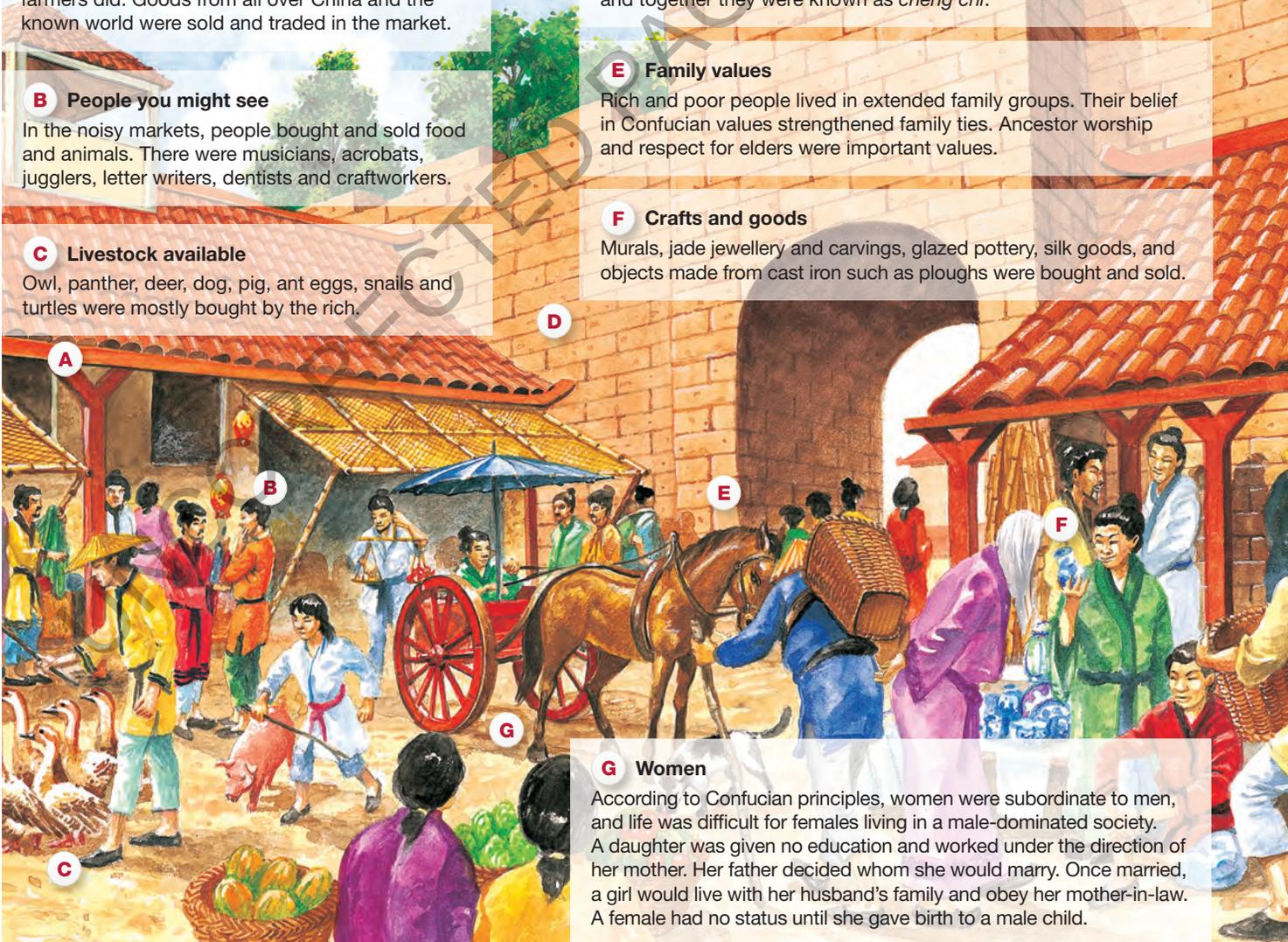
Rich and poor people lived in extended family groups. Their belief in Confucian values strengthened family ties. Ancestor worship and respect for elders were important values.

F Crafts and goods

Murals, jade jewellery and carvings, glazed pottery, silk goods, and objects made from cast iron such as ploughs were bought and sold.

G Women

According to Confucian principles, women were subordinate to men, and life was difficult for females living in a male-dominated society. A daughter was given no education and worked under the direction of her mother. Her father decided whom she would marry. Once married, a girl would live with her husband's family and obey her mother-in-law. A female had no status until she gave birth to a male child.



DID YOU KNOW?

The Han dynasty is usually regarded as more tolerant than the Qin dynasty. However, when the great historian Sima Qian dared to speak in defence of an officer who was unfairly blamed for a Chinese defeat by the Xiongnu, Emperor Wudi had Sima Qian **castrated** and thrown into prison.

castrated having the testicles cut off

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A system of state education was founded. It included a Great Academy, in which boys studied the classic books of Confucianism. No girls were enrolled. The boys were expected to memorise what they studied and were not allowed to criticise or challenge ideas. Through examinations they were selected for positions as bureaucrats in the civil service.

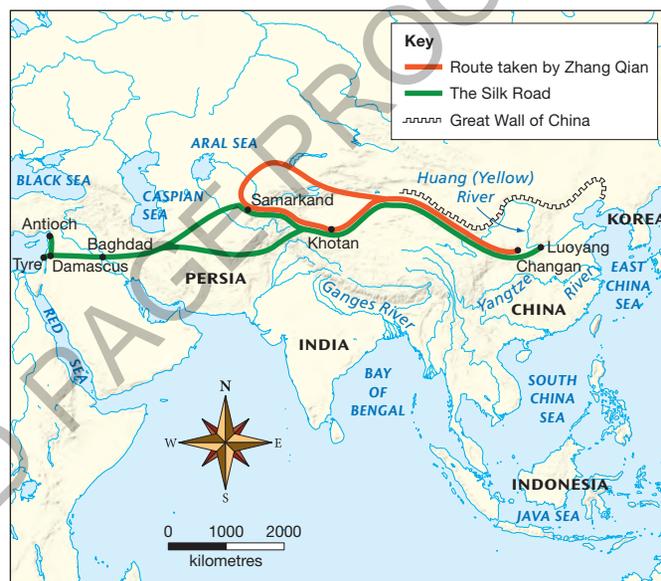
China expands

China expanded under the Han. In 138 BCE Emperor Wudi (140–87 BCE) sent Zhang Qian and 99 others on a mission to establish relations with people in the remote west. After twice being captured and enslaved by the Xiongnu and twice escaping, Zhang returned in 125 BCE with stories of civilisations that China had never heard of before. Zhang Qian was sent on two further missions to find a trade route to Central Asia and India. In the following years, Chinese rule was extended into the north of Korea in 109 BCE, and from Korea the influence of Chinese culture spread to Japan. Much of what is now south-eastern China and western China was brought under Han control by about 102 BCE.

The Silk Road

By the early first century BCE further Chinese missions led to the founding of the famous Silk Road. From this time onward, camel trains loaded with valuable silk were able to make the hazardous journey from China through the deserts and mountains of Central Asia to India, Persia and the Roman Empire. Traders from other lands used the Silk Road to bring products including jade, silver and Roman glassware to China.

SOURCE 2 The Silk Road, the world's longest trade route in continuous use



Source: Map drawn by Spatial Vision.

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Deepen and check your understanding of the topic with the following resources and auto-marked questions:
The Silk Roads

7.9.1 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 How did Liu Bang become the founder of the Han dynasty?
- 2 Why do modern Chinese people call themselves 'Han'?
- 3 How did the Han try to win support for their rule?
- 4 In what ways did the Chinese education system suppress critical thinking?
- 5 How were China's trade, territory and influence expanded under the Han?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 6 Look at **SOURCE 1** and analyse it using these questions.
 - a Why were cities enclosed by walls?
 - b What role did marketplaces play in expanding trade?
 - c What can you discover from this source about activities, clothing and hairstyles in a Han era town?
- 7 Study **SOURCE 2**.
 - a Use the scale to work out approximately how far Zhang Qian travelled.
 - b Explain how China would have benefited from the contacts established through the Silk Road.

7.9.2 Growing discontent, rebellion and the fall of the Han

The rich get richer and the poor get poorer

To control newly conquered territories, the Han rulers **deported** many local people and settled their lands with Chinese. The ruling classes and merchants benefited from this growth of the empire, but the ordinary people of China paid a terrible price. The Han rulers paid for wars of conquest through increased taxes on the peasants. Many peasants had to sell their land to pay taxes. Others were so desperate that they were forced to sell their children or themselves into slavery.

deported forced to leave the country

SOURCE 3 Terracotta figures representing Han dynasty cavalry. Cavalry became a major part of the Han army because of the mobility it gave Chinese armies fighting mounted nomads.



Wang Mang

The peasants became more desperate while powerful landlords became richer. Even among the privileged there were people who saw this as unjust. Wang Mang was an official who had support from many Confucian scholars. In 9 CE he seized control of China from the infant Han emperor and set up the Hsin dynasty. In his first year as ruler, Wang Mang proclaimed many reforms.

- All land was to become the property of the emperor so that the estates of big landlords could be given to the peasants.
- The slave trade was to be banned.
- Government loans were to be given to peasants at low interest rates. This would have helped peasants who had to borrow from moneylenders at high interest to pay taxes but lost everything when their debts became too big to repay.

SOURCE 4 From a Chinese scholar of the early second century BCE, in the *Han-shu Han History*

These days a family of five peasants will have at least two persons who are liable for labour-services and conscription. What with their ploughing in the spring and hoeing in the summer, harvesting in the autumn and storing in the winter, with felling firewood, repairing government offices and rendering labour-service . . . in none of the four seasons will they have a day of rest. And, in spite of all this painful toil, they will still have to endure such natural disasters as flood and drought and also the cruelty of an impatient government which imposes taxes . . . those who own something sell it off at half its price; and those who own nothing borrow at doubled rates of interest. It is for this reason that some dispose of their lands and houses, and sell their children and grandchildren to redeem their debts.

SOURCE 5 From the statement of a Han dynasty official in 81 BCE

Those who live in . . . spreading mansions . . . know nothing of the discomforts of one-room huts and narrow hovels, of roofs that leak and floors that sweat.

Those with a hundred teams of horses . . . and wealth heaped in their storehouses . . . do not know the anxiety of facing days that have a beginning but no end . . .

The fall of the Hsin dynasty

The privileged classes forced Wang Mang to abandon these reforms and so peasant revolts began in 14 CE. Four years later, led by a secret society called the Red Eyebrows, the rebels attacked towns, killing officials and landlords. When powerful members of the old ruling family joined the fight against Wang Mang, his armies were defeated. Wang Mang was killed and beheaded in 23 CE. This was the end of the Hsin dynasty. The armies of the old ruling family crushed the Red Eyebrows and in 25 CE a new Han emperor took the throne.

The Eastern Han dynasty

The second period of Han rule is called the Eastern Han dynasty because the capital was moved to the east. So many people had died in the rebellion that there was now enough land for the peasants. Large areas of state land were given to them and taxes were reduced. But the big landowners benefited most from these reforms. They paid the lower taxes but continued to take at least half the harvest of their tenant farmers. Increasingly, the great landowning families were becoming more powerful than the Han government.

The Yellow Turbans and the fall of the Eastern Han

By the middle of the second century CE more local peasant uprisings had broken out. These were crushed, but in 184 CE a secret society called the Yellow Turbans led a countrywide revolt. As the central government collapsed, **warlords** became the absolute rulers of their own local areas. Their armies massacred many peasants during the years that it took to smash the revolt. When they finally defeated the Yellow Turbans, the warlords fought each other for the throne of China. By 220 CE the Han dynasty was finished and China began centuries of civil war, division and suffering.

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warlords generals from powerful landowning families

7.9.2 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 Why did the Han rulers establish colonies of Chinese in newly conquered lands?
- 2 Which social class benefited and which suffered as a result of wars waged to expand the empire? How would members of those classes have regarded colonisation and war?
- 3 How did Wang Mang try to help the peasants and how did the ruling classes regain control?
- 4 What events brought about the end of the Eastern Han dynasty?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 5 Study **SOURCE 3**. Why did the Han adopt cavalry as a major part of their army?
- 6 Read **SOURCES 4** and **5**.
 - a What social problems do the sources describe?
 - b What are the perspectives of the writers of each source?
 - c What evidence do the sources provide for the motives of peasants who rebelled against Han rule.

7.9 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

IDENTIFYING CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

- 1 Working in small groups, discuss why you think peasant rebellions were able to overthrow dynasties but were unable to change the system that caused their problems.

ANALYSING CAUSE AND EFFECT

- 2 Using the sources and information in this subtopic, explain what caused rebellions such as that of the Red Eyebrows and the Yellow Turbans.
- 3 Imagine you are a leader of either of those rebel movements. Design a poster to encourage peasants to join your rebellion.

7.10 The heritage of China

7.10.1 Some great Chinese inventions

There are many legacies of ancient China. One of the most significant was the system of rule by emperors, which persisted until 1911. Even in modern times, Chinese leaders have continued to exercise powers that are not very different from those of the emperors. China's heritage also includes traces of the ancient past such as the Great Wall and the amazing discoveries from Qin and Han tombs. Perhaps the most remarkable part of China's heritage is the scale of discoveries and inventions that originated in ancient China, in many cases long before similar developments occurred in the western world.

Many things we take for granted today were invented by the people of ancient China. Here is a list of some of the more important ones:

- paper
- printing
- decimal system
- wheelbarrow
- seismograph
- matches
- gunpowder
- parachute
- kung fu/wushu
- cast iron
- ink
- helicopter rotor and propeller
- horse collar
- silk
- kite
- rocket
- compass
- umbrella
- printed book
- fan
- abacus
- origami
- cannon
- bomb
- acupuncture
- spinning wheel
- iron plowshare
- paper money
- chopsticks.

Compass

The Chinese invented the magnetic compass. Compasses were first used to ensure houses were built facing a direction that was in harmony with nature.

Paper and printing

The inventions of paper and printing were to have an enormous impact on people's lives. The earliest paper was made by mixing rags, rope, bark and even fishing nets in a watery solution and crushing the material down to a wet pulp (see **SOURCE 2**).

The disintegrating fibres were used to create sheets of paper, which were used for many things including umbrellas, clothing, toilet paper, curtains, money and wallpaper. Paper revolutionised communication. Traditionally silk had been used for writing, but it was expensive. Paper was cheaper, so more people could afford to use it for writing.

Following the invention of block printing (see **SOURCE 3**) in 750 CE, every Chinese scholar and public servant bought copies of the most important books for their shelves. With paper, records could be kept and instructions sent more easily and more often. Today we still rely heavily on paper for communication.

SOURCE 1 An ancient compass



SOURCE 2 Paper-making in ancient China



SOURCE 3 Printing in ancient China



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7.10.1 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 For what purpose were compasses first used in China?
- 2 What material was traditionally used for writing in China and what was gained from the invention of paper?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 3 Look at **SOURCE 1** and suggest how this early compass worked.
- 4 What can you tell from **SOURCES 2** and **3** about early Chinese methods of paper-making and printing?

7.10.2 Also made in China

Today we are used to buying all sorts of goods that are made in China. But how many people realise that long ago China led the world in inventions such as gunpowder and in developments in medicine, earthquake detection and even a favourite hobby of many people's childhoods, flying kites?

Gunpowder

From very early times the Chinese searched for a drug that would give the emperor eternal life. By accident they discovered gunpowder. At first, gunpowder was used in fireworks for entertainment and in religious ceremonies. Later it was used in making simple bombs. Lengths of heavy bamboo were loaded with gunpowder and a fuse set in the side. When cast iron was developed, pipes were loaded to create the first cannons. The Chinese then developed cannons that fired arrows with individual rockets attached — the first multi-stage rocket. Flame-throwers, mines and hand grenades were also used by Chinese armies.

Medicine

Acupuncture appears to have been used in China since the third century BCE. Needles were understood to block or stimulate the flow of yin and yang to certain areas of the body. The ancient Chinese were also the first to understand blood circulation and by 200 CE were using an **anaesthetic** based on hemp. Possibly the first human **dissection** was carried out on the body of a criminal in 16 CE by a doctor and a skilled butcher. Human dissection was soon banned, though, as it conflicted with the Confucian belief in the purity of the body.

Seismographs

Zhang Heng invented the world's first seismograph — an instrument for detecting earthquakes — in 132 BCE. An earth tremor caused a ball to be released from a dragon's mouth and fall into a toad's mouth farthest away from the earthquake epicentre. This showed the emperor the direction of the disaster.

SOURCE 4 Gunpowder was first used in fireworks.



SOURCE 5 Zhang Heng's seismograph



acupuncture a medical practice in which long, sharp needles are inserted under the skin as a means of diagnosing, relieving or curing illness

anaesthetic drug to deaden pain

dissection systematic cutting up of body for medical study

Kites

Kites were first made out of bamboo and silk, and later paper. They were used mostly during festivals, but they were also used in battle to frighten enemies (by creating unusual sounds through the strings) and to send signals to the troops. Kites were even used for fishing and for scaring birds away from crops.

SOURCE 6 Kites like this could also be seen in ancient China.



7.10.2 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 How did the Chinese discover gunpowder?
- 2 In what medical advances did China lead the world?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 3 Look at **SOURCES 4, 5** and **6**. Choose one of these ancient Chinese inventions and conduct research on the internet to prepare a PowerPoint presentation that asks and answers the following questions:
 - a When was it first discovered?
 - b How was it made?
 - c How did it work?
 - d How was it used?
 - e What effect did it have on people's lives?
 - f Is the invention used today and, if so, how is it now used?

7.10.3 Conserving China's cultural heritage

The United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is the world body responsible for identifying natural and cultural sites in all countries that are of such great value that they must be conserved. These sites include the remains and heritage of ancient civilisations. UNESCO maintains a list of these World Heritage Sites, which you can view on its website. You will not be surprised to find that China has more UNESCO-listed sites than almost any other country and that the Mausoleum of Qin Shihuang (see **SOURCE 7**) and the Great Wall of China are among the listed sites.

SOURCE 7 Terracotta soldiers and horses at the Mausoleum of Qin Shihuang



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7.10.3 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 What is the role of UNESCO?
- 2 Name two UNESCO World Heritage listed sites in China.

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 3 In **SOURCE 7**, what evidence can you see of measures that have been taken to conserve the objects that were excavated from around the tomb of China's First Emperor?

7.10 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

DETERMINING HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

- 1 Compare the various ancient Chinese inventions described in this section and decide on one of them that you think had the biggest impact on people in its time and on future generations. Write an advertisement for it.
- 2 Visit the UNESCO World Heritage List. For either the Mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor or the Great Wall find out:
 - a what criteria were used to justify its World Heritage listing
 - b what concerns UNESCO has about developments that could reduce its value
 - c what UNESCO believes China is doing or must do to protect and conserve the site.

7.11 SkillBuilder: Analysing different perspectives

online only

How do we analyse the different perspectives of people in ancient China?

Primary sources often give different perspectives because not everyone will have seen an event or problem from the same point of view. It is important to analyse different perspectives, especially for bias and propaganda when trying to determine what happened in the past.



Go to your learnON course to access:

- An explanation of the skill (Tell me)
- A step-by-step process to develop the skill, with an example (Show me)
- An activity to allow you to practise the skill (Let me do it)
- Questions to test your application of the skill (Applying skills)

7.12 Review

online only

This final subtopic provides a range of opportunities for you to review and respond through:

- i revising and checking your historical knowledge
- ii demonstrating your ability to apply historical concepts and skills.

Go to your learnON course to access:

- A key chronology of events relevant to the topic
- A summary of the key knowledge presented in the topic
- A 'Big Questions' activity
- A multiple choice topic test
- Short answer or extended writing responses



on Resources

Interactivity

Ancient China timeline

Create a visual timeline of key events in ancient China.

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UNCORRECTED PAGE PROOFS