

Historic Traditions

Prepare to Read

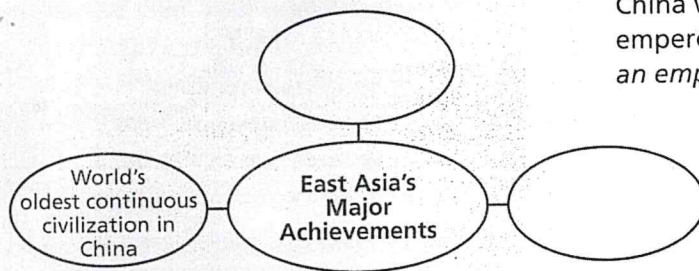
Objectives

In this section you will

1. Learn about civilizations of East Asia.
2. Learn how Chinese culture influenced the rest of East Asia.
3. Find out how East Asia was affected by Western nations.

Taking Notes

As you read this section, look for details about major achievements throughout East Asia's history. Copy the concept web below, and record your findings in it.



Target Reading Skill

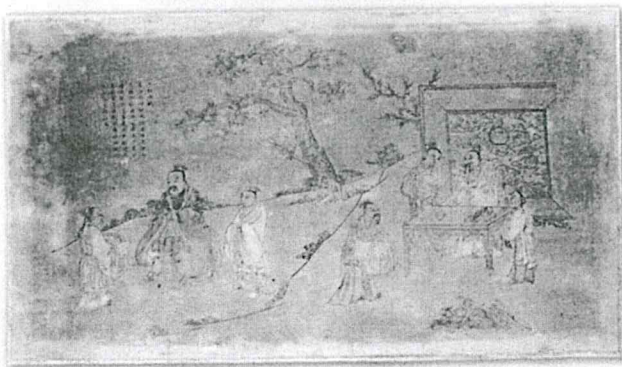
Use Context Clues

When you come across an unfamiliar word, you can sometimes figure out its meaning from clues in the context. The context refers to the surrounding words and sentences. Sometimes the context will define the word. In this example, the phrase in italics tells what an emperor is: "Ancient China was ruled by an emperor—a *male ruler of an empire*."

Key Terms

- **emperor** (EM pur ur) *n.* a male ruler of an empire
- **dynasty** (DY nus tee) *n.* a series of rulers from the same family
- **clan** (klan) *n.* a group of families with a common ancestor
- **cultural diffusion** (KUL chur ul dih FYOO zhun) *n.* the spreading of ideas or practices from one culture to other cultures
- **communist** (KAHM yoo nist) *adj.* relating to a government that controls a country's large industries, businesses, and land

In this painting, Confucius is shown standing with his students.



More than two thousand years ago, one of the most important thinkers of ancient times gave this advice:

“Let the ruler be a ruler and the subject a subject.

A youth, when at home, should act with respect to his parents, and, abroad, be respectful to his elders. He should be earnest and truthful. He should overflow in love to all, and cultivate the friendship of the good.

When you have faults, do not fear to abandon them.”

These words are from the teachings of Confucius (kun FYOO shus), who lived in China about 500 B.C. He taught that all individuals have duties and responsibilities. If a person acts correctly, the result will be peace and harmony. Confucius's ideas helped to guide Chinese life for hundreds of years.

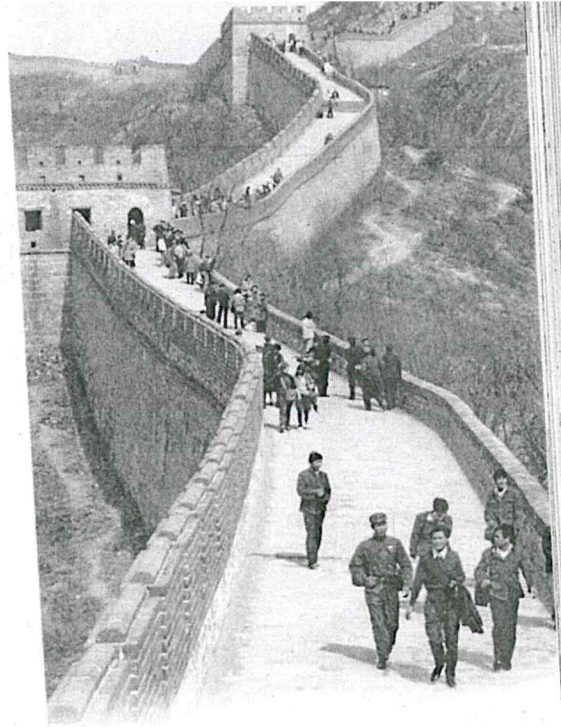
Civilizations of East Asia

Regions of Asia and Africa produced civilizations earlier than China's. A civilization has cities, a central government, workers who do specialized jobs, and social classes. Of the world's early civilizations, however, only China's has survived. This makes it the oldest continuous civilization in the world. Korea and Japan are not as old, but they, too, have long histories.

China's Middle Kingdom For much of its history, China had little to do with the rest of the world. The Great Wall of China first started in the 600s B.C. as many small unconnected walls between warring states. Over time, it became a symbol of China's desire to keep the world at a distance. In fact, Chinese leaders had such pride that they named their country the Middle Kingdom. To them, it was the center of the universe.

Ancient Achievements The Chinese had reason to believe that their civilization was the greatest in the world. They invented paper, gunpowder, silk weaving, the magnetic compass, the printing press, and clockworks. Chinese engineers were experts at digging canals, building dams and bridges, and setting up irrigation systems. Chinese scientists made major discoveries in mathematics and medicine.

Dynasties in China Starting in ancient times, China was governed by an **emperor**—a male ruler of an empire. An empire is an area of many territories and people that are controlled by one government. A series of emperors from the same family is a **dynasty**. Chinese history is described in terms of dynasties. The chart below lists major dynasties of China.



The Great Wall of China

Chart Skills

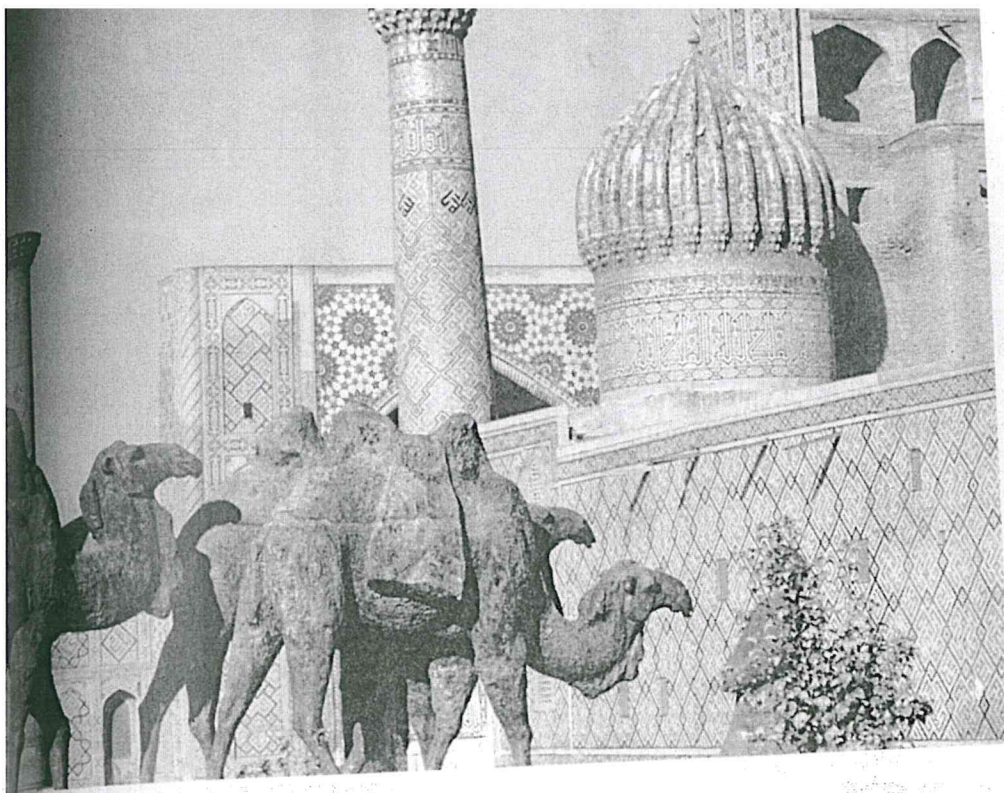
The chart below shows major dynasties of China. They ruled China from ancient times to A.D. 1911.

Identify Which dynasty was the first to develop the Chinese calendar?

Sequence Which was developed in China first—paper money or iron tools?

Major Dynasties of China

Major Dynasty	Major Achievements
Shang (c. 1766–c. 1122 B.C.)	Well-developed writing, first Chinese calendar, bronze casting.
Zhou (c. 1122–c. 256 B.C.)	Writing laws, iron tools and plows in use.
Qin (221 B.C.–206 B.C.)	First great Chinese Empire. Much of the Great Wall built.
Han (206 B.C.–A.D. 220)	Government based on Confucianism. Buddhism introduced.
Tang (A.D. 618–A.D. 907)	Sculpture and poetry flourish.
Song (A.D. 906–A.D. 1279)	Block printing and paper money developed. Gunpowder first used.
Ming (A.D. 1318–A.D. 1644)	Porcelain, the novel, and drama flourish.
Qing (A.D. 1644–A.D. 1911)	Increased trade with Europe. Last Chinese dynasty.



Samarkand, Uzbekistan
A Silk Road caravan is the subject of a sculpture near the Registan, an ancient square in Samarkand. Samarkand was a major city along the Silk Road, an ancient trade route crossing Central Asia that linked China and Europe.

Apply Information
Based on what you know about Central Asia's location, how can you be certain the Silk Road was a land route?

Meeting Place of Empires

Long ago, Central Asia was a meeting place for ancient cultures and peoples. Located between East Asia and Europe, Central Asia was a crossroads for trade caravans and conquering armies. Over time, dozens of ethnic groups settled there. Each group brought new ideas and ways of living.

The Silk Road More than 2,000 years ago, a trade route called the Silk Road linked China and Europe. The Silk Road brought Central Asia into contact with East Asia, Southwest Asia, and Europe. For hundreds of years, caravans brought Chinese silk and Asian spices to the West. They carried items such as glass, wool, gold, and silver to the East. Along with goods, the traders exchanged ideas and inventions. Cities like Samarkand (sam ur KAND), in present-day Uzbekistan (ooz BEK ih stan), grew up at oases along the route and became wealthy centers of trade and learning.

Invasion and Conquest The Silk Road generated wealth, but it also attracted invaders. Waves of conquerors fought to control Central Asia. Although some ruled for hundreds of years, each group was eventually replaced by new invaders.

Each conqueror left a mark on the region. For example, about A.D. 700, a Muslim empire spread across large stretches of Central Asia. The Muslims had the greatest impact on the culture of the region. Many of the people of Central Asia adopted Islam. Today, most people in this region are Muslims.

Links Across Time

Lands for Empires In the 1200s, much of Central Asia was part of the largest land empire the world has ever known. Genghis Khan (GEN kahn), a leader of the Mongols, united his nomadic people into a strong fighting force. He conquered much of China and then swept west over Central Asia. At his death in 1227, his empire extended from the Sea of Japan to the Caspian Sea.

