

# Ancient China

Like many of the earliest **civilisations**, such as ancient Egypt, and ancient Greece, ancient China had its roots in farming.

By about 8000 BCE, people were growing crops such as rice and millet (a type of grain similar to wheat) in the fertile valley of the Yellow River. Over time, villages formed out of these farming settlements, some eventually became cities. Beliefs and art forms developed, and over generations, China's **society** became very highly organised. Its written language was common across the country, as were its social and cultural values. China developed into one of the world's most culturally rich and significant civilisations, and it continues to be to this day.



## chapter 15

Source 1 Hundreds of terracotta warriors were found in the tomb of Emperor Qin Shi Huang of the Qin Dynasty.

### 15A

How did geographical features influence the development of ancient China?

- 1 Ancient China had geographical features that protected and isolated its society from contact with others. How do you think this might have influenced China's development?

### 15B

What shaped the roles of key groups in ancient China?

- 1 Ruling dynasties headed the society of ancient China. These were powerful families that passed down their wealth and status to the next generation. What might have led to the downfall of one dynasty and the emergence of another?

### 15C

How did beliefs, values and practices influence ancient Chinese lifestyles?

- 1 Emperor Qin Shi Huang of the Qin Dynasty (221–206 BCE) was buried in a tomb 'protected' by terracotta soldiers. What does this tell us about the ancient Chinese belief in the afterlife?

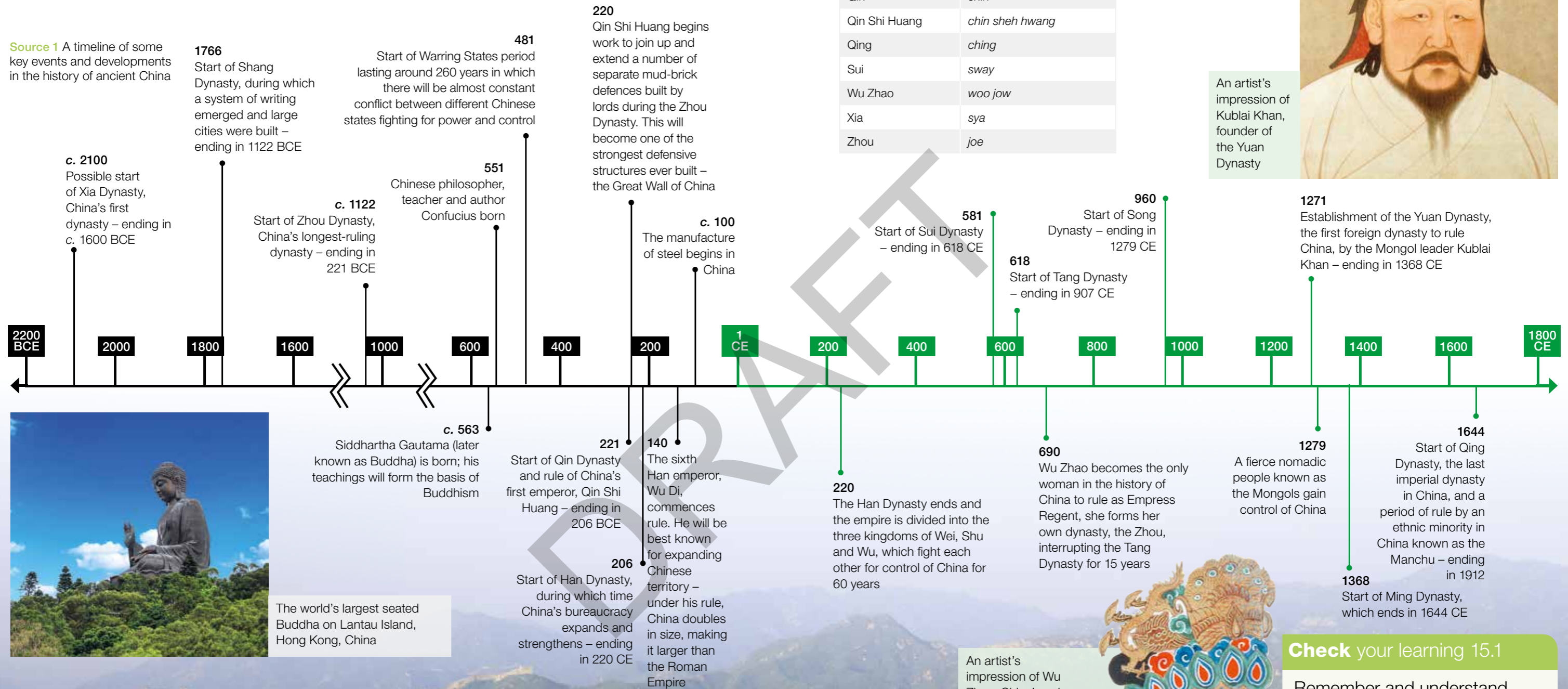
### 15D

How did contacts and conflicts change ancient China?

- 1 Ancient China invented, or first used, the magnetic compass, gunpowder and printing. These inventions are widely agreed to have changed not only ancient Chinese society, but the world. Why do you think this is the case?

# 15.1 Ancient China: a timeline

**Source 1** A timeline of some key events and developments in the history of ancient China



The world's largest seated Buddha on Lantau Island, Hong Kong, China

Pronunciation guide	
Chinese name	English pronunciation
Qin	chin
Qin Shi Huang	chin sheh hwang
Qing	ching
Sui	sway
Wu Zhao	woo jow
Xia	sya
Zhou	joe



An artist's impression of Kublai Khan, founder of the Yuan Dynasty

An artist's impression of Wu Zhao, China's only empress



## Check your learning 15.1

### Remember and understand

- 1 When and what was the Warring States period? What happened during this period?
- 2 Who was the first emperor of China and which world famous structure was he responsible for building?
- 3 Which was the first foreign dynasty to rule in China and who started it?

## 15.2 Landscape and climate

Modern China is the world's third largest country after Russia and Canada. It covers an area of 9.6 million square kilometres. Despite its size, China began as a small settled area in the Yellow River valley. From small beginnings, it grew to just over half its current size by 220 BCE. Much of ancient China's history was shaped by its geographical features. These features acted as natural barriers that kept China isolated from the rest of the world for many thousands of years.

### China's river systems

China has two major river systems – the Yellow River and the Yangtze River. The early people in China settled mostly along these two rivers. Different settlements were ruled by individual kings. These rivers were essential to the development of ancient Chinese society.

The Yangtze is 6380 kilometres long, making it the third longest river in the world. It floods each year and leaves fertile soil along its banks. The Yangtze was not an easy river to cross, and for this reason there were many times in the history of ancient China where it operated as a political boundary between northern and southern China. The riverbanks were the sites of several battles during the history of ancient China.

The region of the Yangtze became very important to ancient China's economy, especially during the time of the Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE). The development of irrigation systems along the Yangtze made agriculture very stable and productive. Eventually, this region became one of the wealthiest and most developed parts of the country.

The Yellow River is 5464 kilometres long, making it the sixth longest river in the world. The banks along the Yellow River are low. Because of this, settlers in ancient China often saw their homes destroyed year after year during flood season. For this reason, the early people of ancient China called the Yellow River 'the Great Sorrow'. Eventually, however, the people learned techniques to control flooding.

The Yellow River basin is mostly flat, which makes it ideal for growing crops such as millet (a type of grain). Much of the Yangtze basin and surrounds, on the other hand, are better suited to growing rice and tea.

**Source 2** A section of the Yangtze riverbank used to grow rice crops



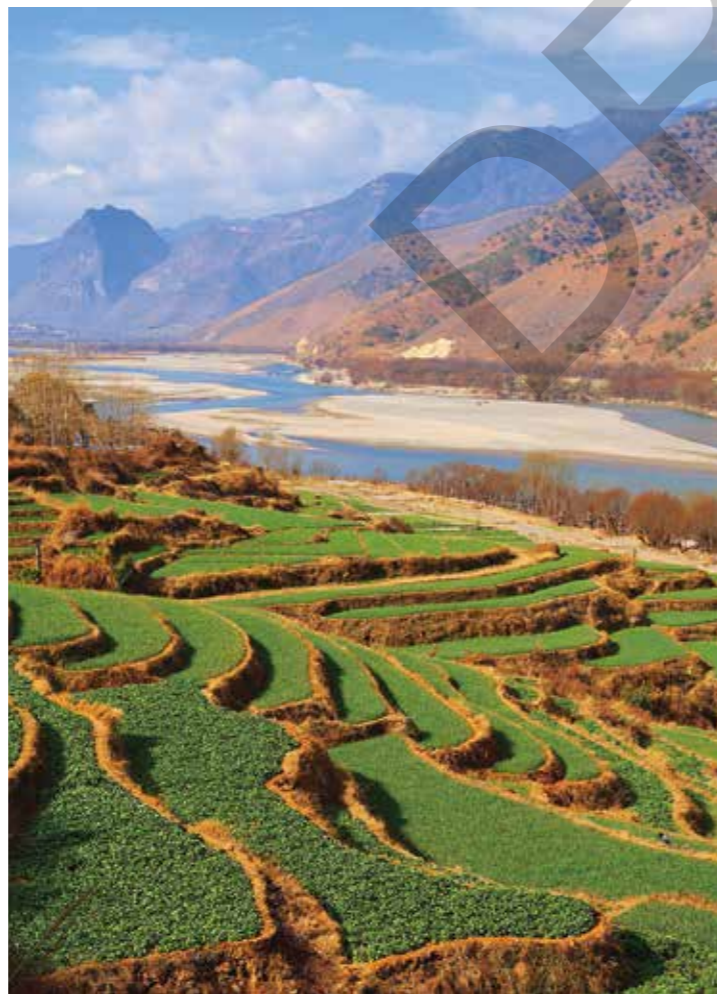
**Source 1** A section of China's Great Wall showing some of the steep mountain terrain

### Natural barriers and geographical features

China's natural barriers to the west, south and east helped to protect the ancient Chinese people from invasion and kept them very isolated. The largest ocean on Earth, the Pacific, is to its east. To the south are dense tropical forests of modern-day Burma, Laos and Vietnam. To the west and north-west are huge deserts.

To the south-west is one of ancient China's most impressive physical barriers – the towering Himalayas, which are home to several of the highest mountain peaks in the world. The Himalayas are extremely cold in winter and extremely hot in summer, which in the past made it almost impossible for invaders to cross them and reach China.

Only China's northern border is less protected by geographical features. Over 2000 years ago, work began (and was later continued) to protect much of this frontier with a huge defensive structure – the Great Wall of China (see Source 1).



### Check your learning 15.2

#### Remember and understand

- 1 Why did the ancient Chinese call the Yellow River 'the Great Sorrow'?
- 2 How did the development of irrigation systems affect the people living by the Yangtze?
- 3 Explain how geographical features helped to isolate China from the rest of the world for a long time.

#### Apply and analyse

- 4 What impact do you think ancient China's isolation would have had in shaping the society of the people who lived there?

#### Evaluate and create

- 5 Which of China's surrounding barriers (natural and built) do you think would have posed the greatest challenge for an invading force? Justify your opinion. Suggest what an invading force might have had to do to overcome this obstacle.

## 15A rich task

# China's geographical features

China is the third largest country in the world, with a land area of about 9.6 million square kilometres. Close to 70 per cent of its land surface consists of rugged mountains, plateaus and hills. The other 30 per cent is made up of river basins and lowland plains, which is where most of the Chinese people settled.



**Source 1** Geographical features in China such as mountains and rivers had a big influence on where people settled

### skilldrill: Historical significance

#### Analysing a map

Maps are geographical representations of all or part of the Earth's surface. They show a group of features in terms of their relative size and position. They use a system of symbols, governed by a set of conventions (accepted rules), to communicate a sense of place. You may think that maps are only useful in geography, but they are also an important source of primary information for historical inquiries. It is therefore important to understand and analyse maps, so that you can use information from them as evidence in your historical inquiry.

Use the list below to help you understand the information provided on maps:

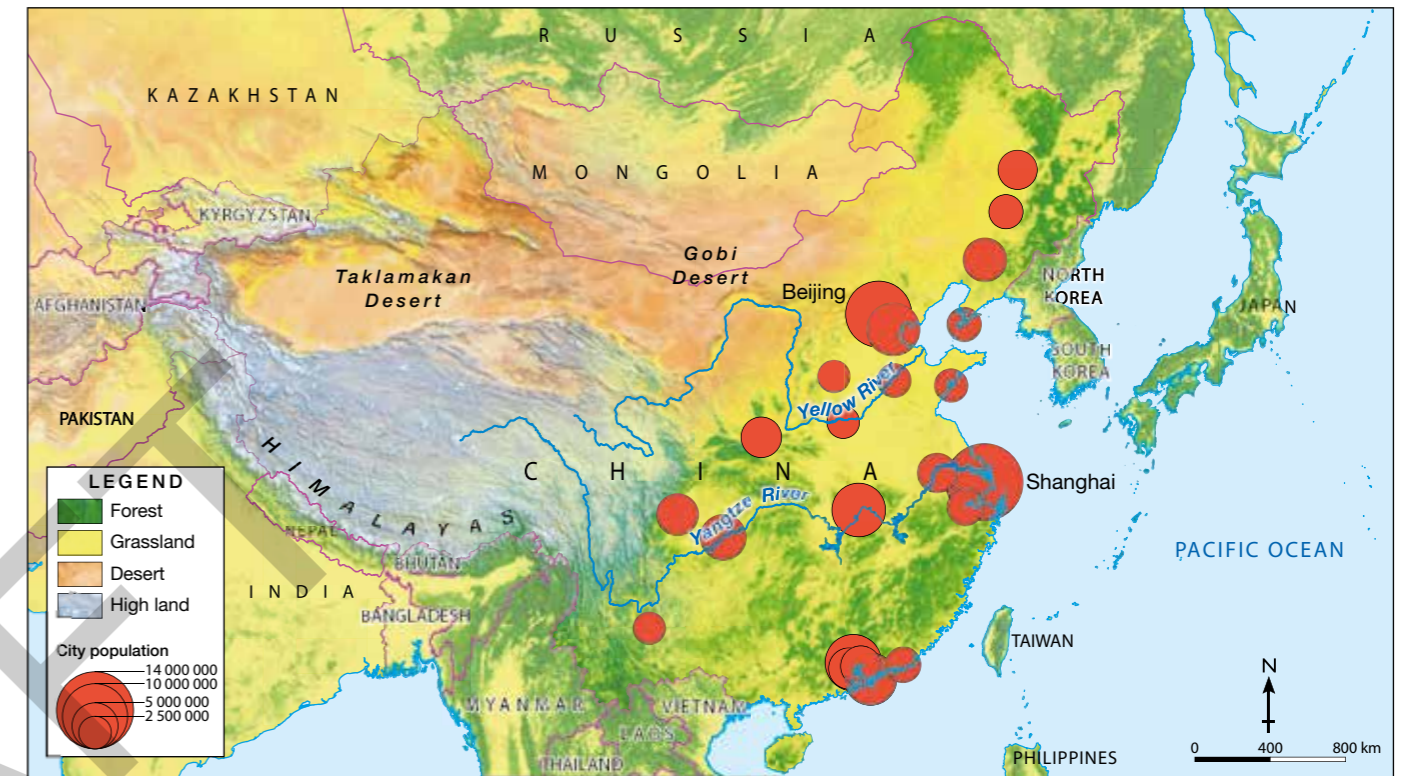
- **Orientation** – It is a convention for cartographers (map makers) to place a north point on maps. This helps the reader to work out position and direction.
- **Title** – Like a newspaper headline, the title of a map should tell the reader 'what', 'where' and 'when' about the map. The date should help the reader fit the map into its proper chronological period. Note: the date in the title may not be the date the map was constructed.
- **Legend** – This is a key that explains the symbols used by the cartographer. To visualise reality, you need to be able to convert various shapes, colours and textures into the features they represent.
- **Scale** – This is the proportion of map to ground. It helps the reader to judge actual distances. Scale is most often shown as a linear measure (e.g. 1 centimetre on the map represents 100 kilometres of actual distance).
- **Grid** – Maps often show parallels of latitude and meridians of longitude, so that the area can be placed in its proper geographic location on the globe.

For a detailed description of this skill, refer to page XX of 'The history toolkit'.

#### Apply the skill

- 1 Look carefully at Source 2 and use the legend to identify the different landscapes and physical features of modern-day China. Jot down all your observations in point form.
  - a Note the different landscapes and geographical features shown on the map. How many are there? Which of these features act as natural barriers?

PHYSICAL FEATURES OF PRESENT-DAY EAST ASIA, INCLUDING CHINA



Source 2

Source: Oxford University Press

- a Which areas of the map would have been the best sites for farming in ancient China? Why?
  - b Do you think the areas of cropland today are different from those in ancient China? Why?
  - c Which geographical feature do you think was most influential in the development of ancient Chinese society? Why?
- 2 Using the information you have gathered from the map, write a paragraph of 150 words explaining what you conclude about the geographical features of China. How have they influenced settlement patterns and borders?

### Extend your understanding

- 1 Create your own map of East Asia.
  - a In your notebook, copy (or trace) the main elements of the map in Source 2. Include the main countries and their borders, major rivers, deserts and mountains. Make sure you also include BOLTSS – border, orientation, legend, title, scale and source.
  - b Use an atlas or an online map to locate the Great Wall of China. Think of an appropriate symbol or legend to represent this feature, and then add it to your map.
- 2 Look again at Source 2. Start at any point on the Chinese border. Extend a ruler from this point, in any direction, to another point on China's border. This represents the journey you will travel. In order, list all the physical features and landscapes you will cross as part of your journey. Conduct extra research if you need to. Which feature do you think will represent the greatest challenge, and why?

# 12.3 Chinese dynasties

For thousands of years, ancient Chinese society was ruled by a succession of **dynasties**. A dynasty is a system of government in which rulers pass on their titles and power to a member of their family, usually when they die. Dynasties often began after a battle for power between rival warlords or kingdoms; the ‘winner’ became the new emperor and started a new dynasty. The palace complexes in which ruling families lived were highly organised social units. Everybody from the emperor down to the humblest servant had a role to play. This order within the palace complex was also reflected in general society.

The top social group in ancient China was the imperial family – the ruler’s immediate family and relatives. For much of China’s history, these families were part of ongoing dynasties. Imperial families were a very wealthy and privileged group. Before 221 BCE, Chinese rulers were known as kings. After this time, rulers became known as **emperors**. All Chinese emperors, except for one, were male.

## The Shang Dynasty (c. 1766–1122 BCE)

The Shang were one of the first ancient peoples to settle along the banks of the Yellow River. They learned to use chariots and conquered the entire Yellow River valley. They began China’s first dynasty, which went on to rule China for over 600 years.

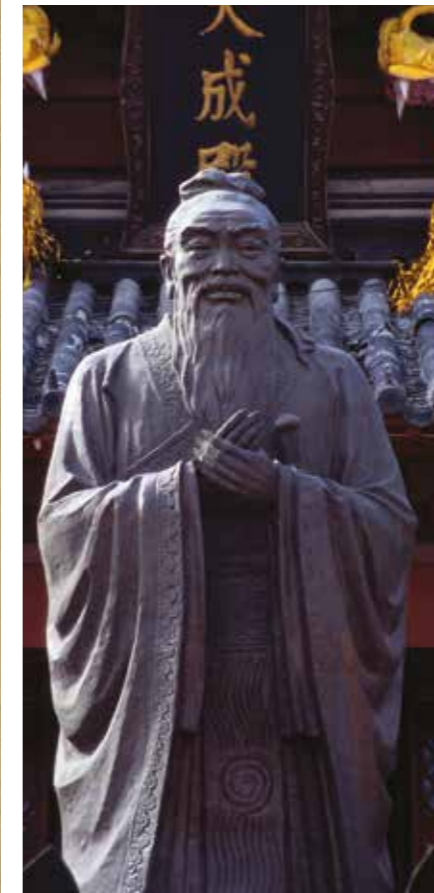
The Shang built China’s first cities. Their largest city was the capital, Anyang. The Shang divided their cities into sections for different craft workers. Potters, for example, lived in one section, while weavers lived in another. Most Shang, however, were farmers who lived outside the city walls and grew wheat, rice and millet in fields along the river. The Shang rulers, who owned all the land, introduced a system that allowed local people to live and work on the land in return for taxes (in the form of money, military support or food). This system became known as **feudalism**.

The last Shang king was a cruel ruler. Around 1122 BCE, a people from western China overthrew the king and conquered the Shang kingdom and started a new dynasty. They were known as the Zhou.

**Source 1** Emperor Wu Di of the Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), attended by two courtiers (attendants)



**Source 2** A cracked oracle bone discovered in the ruins at Anyang, China. Oracle bones such as this were used to predict events and have told historians much about key groups in ancient Chinese society – particularly during the Shang Dynasty (c. 1766–1122 BCE).



**Source 3** A bronze statue of Confucius at Confucius Temple in Nanjing, China

## The Zhou Dynasty (c. 1122–256 BCE)

The Zhou went on to build a large empire in China and ruled for over 800 years. To rule their empire, Zhou kings strengthened the system of feudalism developed by the Shang. They divided their kingdom into hundreds of smaller states. Each state was ruled by a noble who promised loyalty to the king, and agreed to pay taxes on the land and send the king soldiers in times of war. The nobles, in turn, divided their land among the peasants, who were allowed to live and farm on it as long as they paid taxes in the form of grain and agreed to serve as soldiers in times of war.

### The Warring States period

From around 700 BCE, the Zhou kings struggled to maintain control over the nobles, who began to build their own armies and use them to take over smaller states. Between 481 and 221 BCE, the states were almost constantly at war with one another. For this reason, it became known as the Warring States period. In the beginning, around 200 states were at war with one another, but by 300 BCE only seven warring states came to dominate. They were the Qin, Han, Wei, Zhao, Qi, Chu and Yan.

During this time of civil war (a war between groups within the same country), a great teacher appeared in China by the name of Confucius (551–479 BCE). Confucius was saddened by the fighting, and tried to show people how to live together in peace. His teachings went on to have a lasting influence on Chinese Society.

By 256 BCE, the Zhou king lost power and the kings of the seven warring states each ruled in their own right. They continued waging war until the Qin conquered the other states in 221 BCE and reunified China as one empire.

## The Qin Dynasty (221–206 BCE)

Ying Zheng, ruler of the state of Qin, defeated the last of the six other states in 221 BCE. He declared himself the first emperor of a unified China. To mark the occasion, he changed his name to 'Qin Shi Huang', which meant 'first magnificent god of the Qin'. (See *Significant individual* in this chapter.)

Although the Qin Dynasty did not last for as long as many other Chinese dynasties, it is significant because of the many long-lasting reforms it introduced, such as a strong centralised government, the standardisation of weights and measures, and a unified monetary system. It also standardised the Chinese script, and developed an extensive network of roads and canals, which improved trade between the provinces.



**Source 4** A bronze *ban liang* coin – which was part of the unified monetary system introduced during the Qin Dynasty

## The Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE)

The Han Dynasty was one of China's longest ruling dynasties, lasting for four centuries. It was broken only by a brief takeover by the Xin Dynasty between 8 and 25 CE. It began when a rebel army, led by the popular but poor peasant Liu Bang, overthrew the remains of the Qin Dynasty.

Liu Bang became the first Han emperor, renamed Gao Zu. His sense of fairness and his reforms eased much of the suffering and fear the Qin had imposed on the people. He set up an academy for examinations where those who studied could become eligible for appointment to positions in society based on merit (talent and skill) rather than who their parents were. In fact, the centralised and efficient state created in China under the Han Dynasty provided a model for China for the next 2000 years. It saw a new emphasis placed on reward for effort. Social status became linked to learning.



**Source 5** A 17th-century artist's impression of Han emperor Ngai (6–1 BCE) presiding over his court

## Other achievements of the Han Dynasty

During the Han Dynasty, China's first full-time army was created. The arts and sciences flourished and there were many inventions. Trade increased, boosting the size of many cities. The Han capital, Chang'an (now Xi'an), built after Qin Shi Huang died, remained China's capital for 1000 years.

A census was conducted in China in 2 CE. It confirmed a population of 55 million, about eight times that of the ancient Roman Empire.

Prosperity and strength peaked under the sixth Han emperor, Wu Di (see Source 1), who lived from 140 to 87 BCE. By then, Confucianism was almost China's official 'religion'. Education was encouraged and a new social class was emerging. These were men whose qualifications and abilities earned them a career in the public service. Their status was gained through learning, not wealth or birth. For instance, the chancellor appointed in 124 BCE, Gongsun Hong, had once been a pig breeder.

### Check your learning 15.3

#### Remember and understand

- 1 How did dynasties usually begin and end in ancient China?
- 2 Which dynasty was responsible for building the city of Anyang, and how long was this dynasty in power for?
- 3 Explain how the Warring States period began.
- 4 In what year did an ancient Chinese ruler first call himself 'emperor'?

#### Evaluate and create

- 5 Conduct some further research into one of the Chinese emperors mentioned in this section. Use what you have learned (and your imagination) to write an account of a day in the life of this emperor.

# 15.4 Significant individual: Qin Shi Huang

## Early life

As a child, Qin Shi Huang was known as Ying Zheng. He was born in the state of Qin in north-western China in 259 BCE. At the age of 13 he was formally declared the king of Qin, which at the time was the most powerful of all the Chinese states. As a child, Zheng ruled Qin with the help of a regent (a person who acts as head of state if the true ruler is too young, too ill or missing).

In 238 BCE, at the age of 21, Zheng took power in his own right. During the Warring States period, Zheng used the military strategy and force of his generals and troops, along with espionage and bribery, to ultimately overpower all the other six kingdoms. By the time he had taken control and united these states in 221 BCE, he was 38 years old. The victory unified a country that had been divided by wars between rival kingdoms for 260 years and created a unified empire. In the same year, Ying Zheng declared himself China's first emperor and changed his name to 'Qin Shi Huang', meaning 'first magnificent god of the Qin'.

## The empire's new government

To strengthen his hold over his new empire, Qin Shi Huang divided the conquered states into 36 prefectures (administrative divisions), each with a governor in charge who answered to him. He forced the nobles who had ruled over the states to live near him at the capital, Xianyang. There he could watch over and control them.

Qin Shi Huang did much to organise, unify and protect the new empire. He was an autocrat (ruler with total power) but a very clever manager. Before Qin Shi Huang, each state had its own code of laws. Qin Shi Huang set up one code for all of China. He also built good roads connecting the provinces to his capital. The code of laws and system of roads helped to keep the empire united. He also planned and began work building the Great Wall of China.

**Source 2** An artist's impression of emperor Qin Shi Huang travelling in a litter (a vehicle consisting of a couch, often covered or curtained for privacy, suspended on poles and carried by servants)



**Source 1** An artist's impression of Qin Shi Huang, painted during the 19th century



**Source 3** Some of the thousands of excavated terracotta warriors guarding the tomb of Qin Shi Huang

## Qin Shi Huang's iron rule

Despite his many positive achievements, Qin Shi Huang was also a very fierce leader who was feared by his people. He took steps to prevent rebellion in his empire. Believing that knowledge about the past was dangerous, as were ideas that encouraged free and independent thinking, he banned the teachings of Confucius. He ordered books and writing that did not support his ideas to be burned. Scholars found reading the works of Confucius were killed or enslaved. About 460 scholars were buried alive for the crime of owning banned books.

Qin Shi Huang also taxed the people heavily and forced them to serve in the army and work on his projects.

Such behaviours eventually angered his people. Qin Shi Huang began to fear he would be killed. Perhaps because of this, he became more isolated and more obsessed with his death. He began to drink substances that he hoped would give him eternal life, such as mercury, which we now know is poisonous.

He died while on a journey during a hot summer in 210 BCE. He was buried in an elaborate tomb, prepared for him during his life. He was 'protected' by an army of over 7000 life-size terracotta soldiers, horses and chariots.

## Qin Shi Huang's key achievements

- Introduced a common currency, common weights and measures, and a common language throughout China (based on the same 3000 characters)
- Built grand public buildings and palaces
- Made significant progress on the planning and construction of the Great Wall of China
- Built a network of canals and bridges to connect the provinces
- Ordered carts to be built with the same wheel axle width in order to make travelling on roads within the empire easier

**Source 4** A selection of Qin Shi Huang's key achievements during his reign

## Check your learning 15.4

### Remember and understand

- 1 Where and when was Qin Shi Huang born?
- 2 What is a regent?
- 3 What were some of the first things Qin Shi Huang did in order to organise and strengthen his new empire?

### Apply and analyse

- 4 Draw a concept map based on Source 4, expanding on some of the effects you think Qin Shi Huang might have had on China.
- 5 Given that he introduced so many reforms, why do you think Qin Shi Huang was so fearful for his life?
- 6 List at least three reasons why you think Qin Shi Huang is regarded as a historically significant figure.

# 15.5 Key groups in Chinese society

Ancient Chinese society was based on a strict social **hierarchy**. This social structure was reinforced by the ideas of Confucius, who taught that a society could not be successful without strict social order and discipline. People in each social group knew what was expected of them and how to respect one another. The Chinese also strongly believed in the wisdom of the elders and, because of this, older people were greatly respected.

At the top of the social hierarchy was the ruler and his family. From 221 BCE, the ruler was known as the emperor. Below the imperial family there were four social groups – the nobles and officials; farmers; artisans and craftsmen; and merchants and traders.

## The emperor and imperial family

The ruling families of ancient China lived in luxurious palaces. The emperor owned all the land, but might choose to give some to nobles.

Food (including meat) was plentiful for imperial families, as were treasures and embroidered or painted silk garments. Leisure time might be spent drinking tea or rice wine, while being entertained by palace dancers and musicians, or playing board games.

## The *shi* – nobles and officials

Nobles often included the emperor's relatives, top army commanders, very wealthy landowners and conquered lords of former kingdoms. They, too, led privileged lives, often in palaces of their own. Sometimes their 'homes' were located within the emperor's palace complex. There they mingled with government officials who administered laws and managed tax collections. There were also concubines (women kept for the entertainment and pleasure of the emperor) and eunuchs (men who had their testicles removed as boys and were often employed to guard rulers' wives). One or two highly trusted eunuchs might be advisers and confidants of an emperor.

Officials were another group that held high social status in ancient China. Boys whose families could afford to send them to school began their education at an early age in the hope of becoming officials. To do so they were required to pass a difficult exam. If they did not pass, however, they were usually still able to find jobs as they were considered well educated.

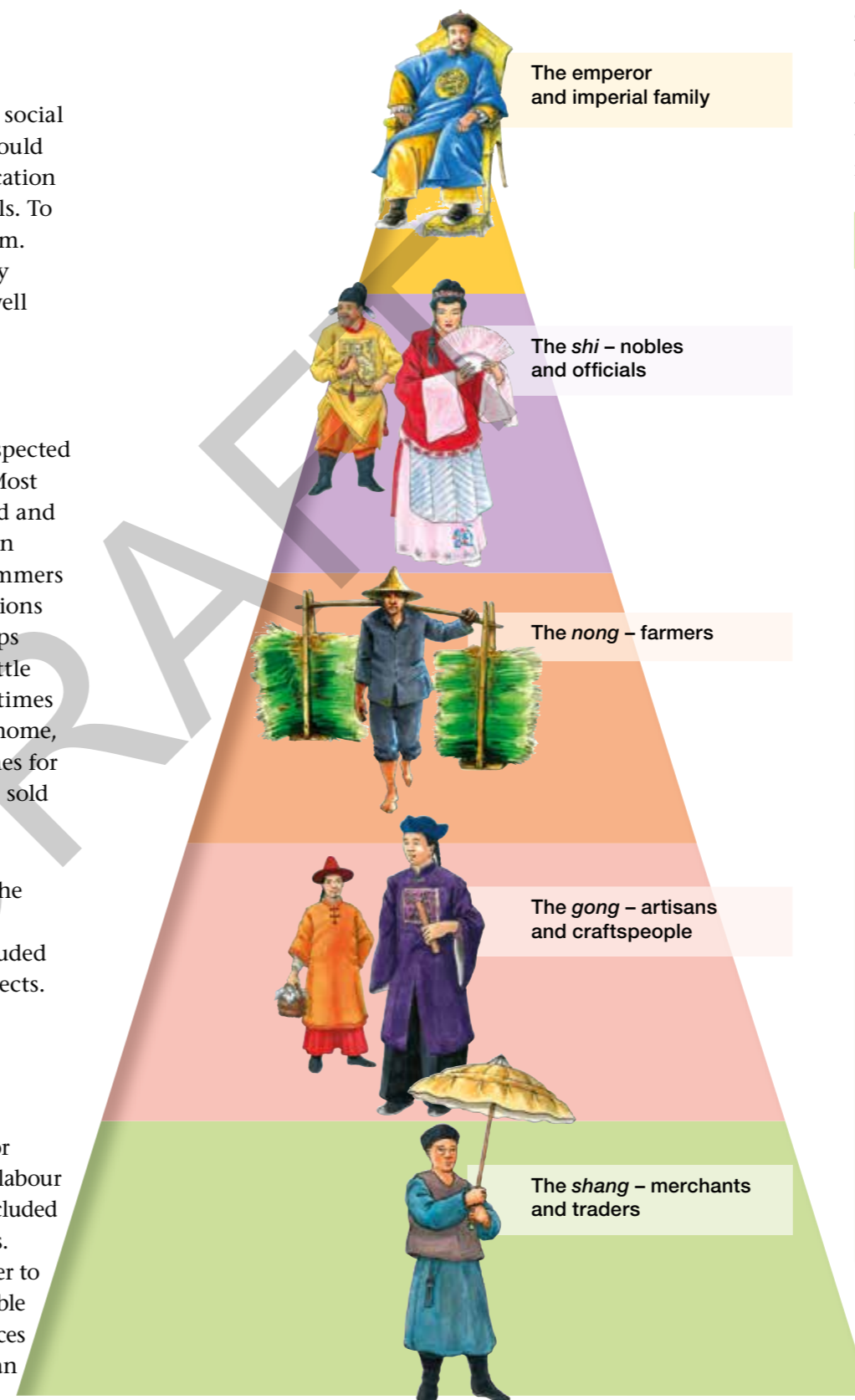
## The *nong* – farmers

Farmers were a poor group, but were highly respected for the work they did to feed the population. Most farmers led simple lives. They worked very hard and rarely had a day off. Men worked in the fields in very harsh conditions, during both the hot summers and the bitterly cold winters. The harsh conditions could also ruin their crops and land. If the crops were ruined, poor farming families had very little to survive on during the winter. Women sometimes helped in the fields but mainly worked in the home, sewing and weaving cloth. This provided clothes for the family. Some of the things they made were sold to earn extra money.

Farmers could live on the land in return for working on it. They also paid heavy taxes (in the form of crops, such as rice) and provided other services when required. These might have included serving as soldiers or working on building projects.

## The *gong* – artisans and craftspeople

**Artisans** and craftspeople were also a mostly poor group, but were well regarded for their skills and labour in producing what people needed. This group included painters, carpenters, potters and jewellery makers. Their skills were usually handed down from father to son. Successful and highly skilled artisans were able to expand their businesses by taking on apprentices and additional workers. Artisans earned more than farmers but less than merchants.



## The *shang* – merchants and traders

The merchant class included traders, animal breeders and moneylenders. They were a wealthy group, but were considered the lowest social class in ancient China. People believed that they did not contribute to the good of the whole society but only worked for their own gain. Some merchants would buy land to farm to improve their social status.

### Check your learning 15.5

#### Remember and understand

- 1 Why did the ancient Chinese have so much respect for their elders?
- 2 How did the ideas of Confucius reinforce the strength of the social hierarchy in ancient China?
- 3 In your notebook, match the Chinese words that describe social roles (*nong*, *gong*, *shang*, *shi*) with these occupations: merchant, farmer, calligrapher, jewellery maker.
- 4 What other jobs might farmers in ancient China have been asked to do?

#### Apply and analyse

- 5 Do you think farmers, though poor, felt valued within ancient Chinese society? Explain your answer.

#### Evaluate and create

- 6 In small groups, present a role play for the class about some aspect of life in ancient China that clearly shows the roles and responsibilities of different social groups. Share the tasks involved in planning the presentation: writing the script, preparing a backdrop, creating costumes and rehearsing.
- 7 Select any two figures from Source 1. With a partner, write a short dialogue between the characters. Present it to the class orally. Your dialogue should reflect the differences between the social roles of the figures you select, not only in the words used but also the tone of voice and body language.

**Source 1** The social hierarchy of ancient China and the key social groups within it



# 15.6 Women in ancient China

Women in ancient China were seen as being lower than men in the social hierarchy. They were expected to do what their fathers and husbands said. Women who pushed against these restrictions were described in ancient Chinese records as ‘crowing hens’.

Women were rarely educated (wealthy women might receive some education) and had to marry the man their fathers chose. They also had to accept that their husband might have other wives and mistresses.

Poorer women typically cooked, cleaned, wove cloth, raised the many children they were expected to have, and helped out on the land if they were married to farmers.

## Wu Zhao

One woman who did not conform to social expectations in ancient China was Wu Zhao, the only woman to rule the empire. She is a significant and historically important individual for this reason. She was born in 624 CE, during the Tang Dynasty (618–907 CE). Her family was rich and well connected socially. She was beautiful and clever.

At 14, she became a junior **concubine** of the emperor Taizong. Her beauty and intelligence soon attracted his attention, and his son's. She was given privileges, which gave her insights into court procedures.

In 649 CE, the emperor died, so Wu Zhao was sent to live in a Buddhist nunnery, as was common practice for childless concubines. She almost certainly would have lived out her days there had it not been for the interest of Taizong's son. He was now emperor Gaozong. He brought her back to the court as a more senior concubine, where she gave birth to two sons and a daughter.

The events that followed are contested by different historians. Some argue that her fierce ambition drove her to kill her baby daughter. She then blamed the murder on the empress and the most senior concubine. The emperor Gaozong believed Wu Zhao's

### keyconcept: cause and effect

## Foot binding

In ancient China, girls' feet were bound because tiny feet improved a woman's social status – and hence the status of her family. Bound feet, for a time, were essential for a ‘good’ marriage. Tiny feet were considered beautiful and were thought to make a woman walk more femininely. The practice began among the wealthy but became more widespread. A poor girl might have her feet bound to improve her family's social prospects.

Bones in a girl's feet were broken and the feet were tightly strapped until she was fully grown. The U-shaped foot had all its toes but the big toe curled under the sole. The foot might be 10 centimetres long.

The effect of foot binding was to inflict great pain on a woman and leave her with lifelong disabilities. Walking more than a few metres was impossible. Poor women with bound feet had no choice but to work, so often did so on their hands and knees. Footbinding also made women dependent on their husbands and families, as they could not go very far beyond their home on their own.

For more information on the key concept of cause and effect, refer to page XX of ‘The history toolkit’.



**Source 1** The bound foot of a Chinese woman, photographed in 1992. Foot binding was abolished in the early 20th century, but was still illegally practised in some areas.



**Source 2** This shoe was once worn by a wealthy Chinese woman.

### Wu Zhao's key achievements

- Introduced labour-saving techniques such as improved irrigation schemes to increase farming productivity
- Reduced taxes for farmers as an incentive to increase food production
- Introduced a system of workplace promotion based on merit, not social position or wealth
- Promoted the role of women as active contributors to society
- Established Buddhism as the preferred state religion and had many Buddhist temples built

**Source 3** Some key achievements of Wu Zhao



story and made her his new empress. The other two women had their hands and feet cut off and were thrown down a well.

In 660 CE, Gaozong had a stroke, so Wu Zhao took over many of his duties. She had the intelligence, experience and skills to do so. When he died in 683 CE, she appointed one of her sons, Zhongzong as emperor, but he was too independent for her liking, so she forced him to give up the throne. She then appointed another son, Ruizong, over whom she had more control.

By 690 CE, Wu Zhao decided to stop being the ‘power behind the throne’. She crowned herself empress regent and set up her own dynasty, the Zhou. This briefly interrupted the Tang Dynasty. In her old age, she was pressured to give the throne back to her son Zhongzong. She died in 705 CE, after controlling the empire for almost half a century.

## Check your learning 15.6

### Remember and understand

- 1 Who was Wu Zhao? Why is this person such a significant figure in Chinese history?
- 2 What social role could a poor woman expect in life in ancient China? Why?

### Apply and analyse

- 3 Draw a timeline to record some of the significant events in Wu Zhao's life.

### Evaluate and create

- 4 Conduct some further research into the ancient Chinese practice of foot binding. Using this research (as well as what you have learned from this section about women's roles in ancient China), with a partner, write and perform a dialogue between a poor farmer and his wife. The man wants his young daughter's feet to be bound. Empathise as you do this – think as people would have thought then, not as you think today. Be careful not to judge people by modern-day standards.

**Source 4** An artist's impression of Wu Zhao

## 15B rich task

## Qin Shi Huang

During the last years of the Zhou Dynasty (475–221 BCE), known as the Warring States period, the influence of the Zhou weakened and separate states developed. For 260 years there was almost constant conflict between these states, each of which sought to become the most powerful.

As you have learned in this chapter, in 221 BCE the Qin king Ying Zheng was victorious and founded the Qin Dynasty. He changed his name to Qin Shi Huang and became one of the most famous – and infamous – emperors of ancient China. His main goal was to reunite China and restore peace and order. He achieved this, and much more, during his 11 years in power, yet the methods he used to do so are not considered admirable by all historians.



Source 1 Qin Shi Huang

## skilldrill: Historical significance

## Presenting a written point of view

A written point of view is a response to an issue or question that outlines your position on it. A good point of view will persuade the audience to agree with the position that is presented.

To write an effective point of view, use the following process.

**Step 1** Make sure you have a very clear overall contention. Your contention is the overall position you are taking in your written piece; that is, what you are trying to get your audience to believe about the topic. For example, if you are writing about the issue or question of whether Qin Shi Huang was a good leader, your contention could be:

- Qin Shi Huang was a good leader.

OR

- Qin Shi Huang was not a good leader.

**Step 2** Once you have decided on your overall contention, you need to plan the three main arguments you will put forward to support your contention. For each argument, you should also brainstorm related facts, evidence and examples.

**Step 3** You are now ready to write your point of view. Use the following scaffold as a guide for structuring your piece.

For a detailed description of this skill, refer to page XX of 'The history toolkit'.

## Introduction

- Begin with a sentence or two that introduces the issue or question you are writing about.
- Provide some background information about the issue or question you are writing about.
- Include a clear and strong statement of your overall contention.
- Provide an outline of your three main arguments.

## First body paragraph

- Begin with a clear topic sentence that outlines your *first* argument. (For example: 'First, Qin Shi Huang was a great leader because ...')
- Use the rest of the paragraph to provide the facts, evidence and examples that back up the argument you expressed in the topic sentence.

## Second body paragraph

- Begin with a clear topic sentence that outlines your *second* argument. (For example: 'Second, Qin Shi Huang was a great leader because ...')
- Use the rest of the paragraph to provide the facts, evidence and examples that back up the argument you expressed in the topic sentence.

## Third body paragraph

- Begin with a clear topic sentence that outlines your *third* argument. (For example: 'Third, Qin Shi Huang was a great leader because ...')
- Use the rest of the paragraph to provide the facts, evidence and examples that back up the argument you expressed in the topic sentence.

## Conclusion

- Write a concluding statement that sums up the contention.
- Provide a summary of your key arguments.
- End with a strong last sentence that links points and leaves your reader with a lasting impression.

## Apply the skill

**1** Using information from *Significant individual: Qin Shi Huang* earlier in this chapter and from additional sources, brainstorm all the positive and negative changes implemented by Qin Shi Huang in a table like the one shown. An example of each has been provided for you.

Positive changes	Negative changes
Began building the Great Wall of China	Taxed his subjects heavily

**2** Highlight or underline three from each column that you believe are the most significant changes implemented by Qin Shi Huang.

**3** Your task is to write your own effective point of view in response to the following statement: 'Qin Shi Huang did what was necessary to make China strong.'

- Do you agree or disagree? Decide on your overall contention. For example, 'Qin Shi Huang united China, but he caused unforgivable suffering in the process', or 'Qin Shi Huang helped make China a strong empire'.
- Develop a plan for each of your three body paragraphs. Use the changes you highlighted in the table to develop the topic sentences that outline your arguments. In point form, brainstorm related facts, evidence and examples to back up each topic sentence.

**1** Work with another student in your class who took a

## Extend your understanding

position different from yours. Share and compare your arguments. Identify the evidence that supports each argument. With your partner, make a final decision about which position is the most convincing.

**2** Imagine that you are Qin Shi Huang near the end of his life, when he had become isolated, fearful and obsessed with his death. As Qin Shi Huang, write a letter that recounts some of the key moments of your leadership and explains some of your more controversial decisions (such as banning the teachings of Confucius).

# 15.7 Religious beliefs and practices

The civilisation of ancient China was influenced by a complex mix of beliefs, values and traditions. Some, such as Taoism, were religious; others, such as Confucianism, were more to do with behaviour. Closely tied in with these were many rituals influencing how people were buried, how they arranged their homes, how they drank their tea, and much more.

Ancestors had been worshipped by the Chinese since the Shang Dynasty, as had many gods and goddesses. Like the deities of many other civilisations, Chinese gods were believed to control the forces of nature, such as weather and natural disasters. People tried to keep their ancestors and the gods happy. Natural events – such as floods, earthquakes or crop failure – were taken as a sign that the gods were displeased. Rituals to ensure they remained happy included offerings of food and flowers at altars and the burning of incense.

Three dominant influences on ancient China's beliefs and values were Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. Judaism, Christianity and Islam were also introduced to China at various stages over its history, but were nowhere near as widespread.

## Confucianism

Confucius (c. 551–479 BCE) was born at a time of civil war in China. As a man, his fear was that this conflict would tear China apart. He developed a set of ideas, called Confucianism, that he thought would help. Confucianism was not a religion but a code of behaviour.

Confucius believed that people should be helpful, kind and honest. He told people to obey their rulers, honour their ancestors and respect ancient traditions. He said that rulers must be fair to their people. Confucius also taught that the family was the most important group in Chinese society. He said that family members should take care of one another. He taught that older members of the family should always be respected.

Confucius died in 479 BCE, but his students kept his teachings alive. Later, Confucianism spread throughout much of Asia. Today, people in China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Taiwan and other Asian countries follow the teachings of Confucius. Many of his sayings are known all around the world.



Source 1 An artist's impression of Confucius advising on the best course of action for a criminal offence



Source 2 Statue of Lao-Tzu



Source 3 A statue of Buddha carved from rock, Fengxian Temple, Longmen Caves

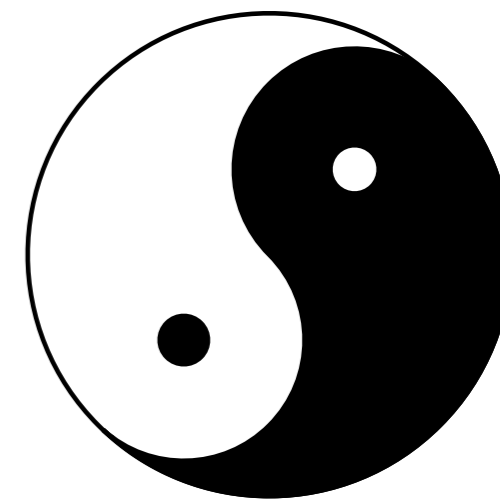
## Taoism

Taoism (or Daoism) began with the teachings of Lao-Tzu (600–531 BCE). Lao-Tzu believed that, to live forever, people had to become one with the life force (the Tao or 'the Way'). This effort required constant change to balance within oneself the *yin* (female) and *yang* (male) forces that he believed made up everything in the world. Two things helped this spiritual struggle. The first was meditating, usually at shrines built in beautiful natural spots. The second was exercise, such as *kung fu* and *t'ai chi*. Today we still see both of these aspects of Taoism reflected in the lifestyle of the Chinese.

## Buddhism

Travellers from India brought Buddhism to China during the 1st century CE, via the Silk Road. By the middle of the 5th century CE, it was the state religion in China. It was begun by a wealthy Indian prince, Siddhartha Gautama, who was born around 563 BCE. He was upset by the suffering and poverty he saw as a young man, so he turned his back on his inherited wealth to search for more spiritual meaning. He called this process looking for 'the truth'.

The state of nirvana (in Buddhism, the final spiritual state) he sought was one where there was no more hurt or pain. A person who reached it, as he did, became one with the universe, or Buddha, which means 'the enlightened one'. That person was then freed from all the bad things about being human, such as wanting to kill, cheat or lie. To reach nirvana, a person might have to be **reincarnated** (to be reborn and live again in another form) many times. Each life lived, with its unique experiences, taught the person more.



Source 4 The yin–yang symbol. Yin and yang are concepts central to many branches of classical Chinese philosophy and spiritualism, including Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism. Yin and yang are seen as two equal but opposite forces that together control the world. They have to be in balance. The yin includes things that are cold, closed, dark and still; the yang, things that are hot, open, bright and active.

## Check your learning 15.7

### Remember and understand

- 1 In your own words, explain the values that Confucius believed should influence the behaviour of individuals, families and governments.
- 2 Who was Siddhartha Gautama? Why did he choose the life he did, and why is he now known as 'Buddha'?

### Evaluate and create

- 3 Buddha's birthday is celebrated by Buddhists around the world. The date varies from year to year: 10 May (2011), 28 May (2012), 17 May (2013) and 6 May (2014). Conduct some research to find out how this event was typically celebrated in ancient China. Write a paragraph that describes continuities and changes in the way this event was celebrated in the past compared to now.

# 15.8 Everyday life

Confucian philosophy heavily influenced the daily lives and values of the Chinese people, especially from the Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) onwards. Confucius believed that China's people were all members of a big family. They should behave towards each other and towards their ruler as would be expected in a family. This meant being respectful, moral, fair, obedient, courteous and self-disciplined.

## Family structure

The family was the basic social unit of ancient China. It included all generations and in-laws. Older people were treated with great respect, especially by younger family members. The oldest male was considered the head of the family. Often he took more than one wife to increase the chances of having many sons. If rich, he also had concubines. His decisions had to be obeyed, including who his daughters would marry.

A woman's status improved if she had sons. Daughters had little value. Girls spent their childhood learning to cook, weave cloth and help around the house. When a girl married, she had to live in her husband's house. The girl also had to obey her mother-in-law.

Sons were highly valued in ancient China as they carried on the family name. If they were from a wealthy family, boys received a good education. Even poorer families would try to send their sons to temple schools. Boys usually lived their whole lives in the same house. If they were the eldest son, they would eventually become the head of the household.

## Food and medicine

Rice started being grown for harvest in the Yellow River valley around 7000 years ago. It was eaten as a food, and was also made into wine. In the cooler, drier north, millet (a grain) and sorghum (a cereal grass) were harvested. Wheat took much longer to become part of the Chinese diet. In fact, it was not until about 1500 years ago that it became a popular food (second only to rice). Farmers often grew their own vegetables to accompany rice meals, whereas the wealthy might buy these at a market.

Meat was typically eaten only on special occasions – chicken at first, then pork and, later still, beef and mutton. All meats were expensive, and therefore were only a common dish for the wealthy. Chinese diets were also influenced by beliefs. Some forms of Buddhism, for instance, prohibited eating meat. For many, protein came from foods such as tofu (soy bean curd).

## Tea drinking

Tea has been drunk in China for over 2000 years. It was first drunk as a medicine or a stimulant. During the Tang Dynasty (c. 618–908 CE), it became more of a social tradition – a formal way of relaxing and mixing with others.

### keyconcept: evidence

## Very old noodles

About 2000 BCE, an earthquake devastated the small village of Lajia in the Yangtze River valley. Over time, its remains were buried with ash, sediment and dirt. When excavating this village, archaeologists were surprised to find what they believed was a very old meal. It had been preserved in an upturned bowl. Scientific analysis confirmed what scholars expected – proof that these were very old noodles! It also confirmed that the noodles were made from millet. For more information on the key concept of evidence, refer to page XX of 'The history toolkit'.



Source 1 These noodles, discovered in the Yangtze River valley, are 4000 years old.

## Feng shui

*Feng shui* means 'wind and water' in Chinese. The practices of *feng shui* developed from the Chinese belief that people should plan their living spaces in harmony with the energy of the natural world (including the *cosmos*).

Good *feng shui* meant placing settlements and buildings so they faced a particular way (for good energy). It also meant arranging things, such as furniture and mirrors, in a particular way within rooms. In ancient times, this arrangement was believed to protect against evil spirits.

Today, good *feng shui* is said to promote good health, prosperity in business and happy relationships. Many people today consult experts to find out how to design their houses and furnish their rooms for good *feng shui*.

## Martial arts

The martial arts (called *Wushu*) began in ancient China. At first, it was a type of self-defence practised by its soldiers. It has since become a unique part of China's culture, and its various forms are now also practised by many people around the world.

*Kung fu* is the code of skills from which a great many styles of martial arts, such as karate, have developed. It is perfected only with years of intense practice, study, meditation and self-discipline. Like so many aspects of Chinese lifestyle, it is shaped by a belief in the need for harmony and balance.



Source 3 A competitor at the *Wushu* championships in China, 2006, demonstrating *kung fu* skills



Source 2 A Taoist priest making tea

A *kung fu* master learns to use the *ch'i*, described as the energy force of the universal power. This gives someone who is small and slight the ability to smash through a pile of bricks with a bare hand or a head. It also gives masters great athletic ability.

## Check your learning 15.8

### Remember and understand

- 1 Explain how the practice of drinking tea changed over time in China.
- 2 How did belief systems influence the eating of meat for some in ancient China? What substitute food was commonly eaten to provide protein?
- 3 What was *feng shui* and how was it influenced by Chinese beliefs?

### Apply and analyse

- 4 Explain how training in *kung fu*, or other martial arts, would have benefited a professional soldier in ancient China.

# 15.9 Warfare

The first permanent army in ancient China did not form until the Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE). During this dynasty, China was often at war, enlarging its empire and engaging in fights with northern tribes. Han rulers required all able-bodied men between the ages of 23 and 56 to enlist in the army for two years. They were also expected to serve again if there was a military emergency such as an uprising or an attack. Some also had to perform guard duties (for example on the Great Wall of China).

Until the Han Dynasty, armies were made up of ordinary men (mostly farmers). They were called up for military service as the need arose. These farmer-soldiers were not trained. For some, the only exposure they had to battle skills and tactics was what they learned 'on the job' when called up. Soldiers did not receive pay, but they were fed and given weapons and a uniform. While on army service, they kept fit by wrestling, throwing stones and playing games similar to football and polo.

## Battle tactics and weapons

During the Shang Dynasty (1766 BCE–1122 BCE), battles were fought mainly using chariots. Ancient records indicate that farmers had to plough their fields all in the same direction so that chariot wheels could more easily cross farmland in the event of a battle. A great deal of archaeological evidence about the chariots and weapons that were used has been uncovered at sites in China.

Later, the cavalry (soldiers who fought mounted on horseback) and armed foot soldiers played a greater role. By the late 4th century BCE, the cavalry was the strongest component of the army. Fighting on horseback was greatly helped by the Chinese invention of the stirrup around 350 CE. It enabled riders to sit more securely on a fast-moving horse while using their weapons.

Early weapons, such as spears and daggers, were typically made of bronze; later, iron was used. Most weapons of the Shang and Zhou Dynasties were made of bronze, which is a mix of either copper and tin or copper and zinc. Weapons made from bronze included battleaxes, spears, swords and halberds (spears combined with axe blades).



Source 1 The skeleton of a Shang Dynasty charioteer and the fossilised remains of his chariot



Source 2 The remains of a crossbow (and bolt heads) from the Han Dynasty



Source 3 A modern Chinese kite

The crossbow was invented in ancient China and used 2500 years ago. It fired bolts (metal arrows) with great force up to about 200 metres (see Source 2). It had sufficient speed and force to penetrate armour.

The kite was another Chinese invention, first used about 2500 years ago (see Source 3). Some early kites were made to spy on the enemy or to send messages. An ancient document states that kites big and strong enough to hold small children were once used by a Han general to disperse the enemy. The kites were floated up through the fog around the enemy camp. The children they carried were told to play tunes that would make the enemy homesick, and thus retreat.

## Armour

The first armour of Chinese soldiers was made from wood or bamboo. Later, small overlapping pieces of leather or iron were joined together with fabric ties or metal studs. This made upper-body armour both sturdy and flexible. Helmets were also worn by soldiers from the Han Dynasty onwards.



Source 4 One of the 'terracotta warriors' guarding Qin Shi Huang's tomb, which provides evidence of armour worn by soldiers during the Qin Dynasty

### keyconcept: significance

#### The art of war

Around 500 BCE, during the Warring States period, a military leader named Sun Tzu wrote a manual called *The Art of War*. This text outlined strategies to be used in warfare. Its principles and tactics are so insightful that they have gone on to influence many modern disciplines around the world, such as business tactics, legal procedures and sporting strategies. This makes the text a highly significant ancient document.

Legend has it that Sun Tzu demonstrated the effectiveness of his strategies to the king of the then independent state of Wu by quickly training 100 women in the palace as soldiers.

For more information on the key concept of significance, refer to page XX of 'The history toolkit'.

### Check your learning 15.9

#### Remember and understand

- 1 During which dynasty did China's first permanent army form? How was it made up?
- 2 What duties and activities might a Han soldier have to carry out?
- 3 How were battles typically fought during the Shang Dynasty?

#### Apply and analyse

- 4 Study Source 4, looking particularly at the soldier's armour. Suggest any ways it could have been modified with materials and methods available in ancient times to provide its wearer with more protection. Draw labelled sketches. Justify your design solution.
- 5 What evidence does Source 2 provide to support the commonly stated view that wounds from a crossbow bolt were horrific?

#### Evaluate and create

- 6 Study Source 3. Suggest how the kite would need to be modified to serve a military purpose. Decide if such a feat could have been possible, or is simply legend. Justify your opinion.

# 15.10 The Great Wall of China

One of the strongest defensive structures ever built is known as the Great Wall of China. It is also the world's longest. The wall started out as a number of separate mudbrick structures built by lords during the Zhou Dynasty. The first emperor, Qin Shi Huang, began the task of joining these walls and extending them in 220 BCE. This was needed to keep out invading tribes to the north (known as Mongols). The structure we see today was largely completed during the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644 CE). That was when the watchtowers and cannons were added. Today, the Great Wall is a **World Heritage Site**.

## Check your learning 15.10

### Remember and understand

- 1 What is the actual length of the Great Wall of China?
- 2 How many kilometres does it cover as the crow flies?
- 3 What was the original purpose of the Great Wall?
- 4 What was used to fill the internal sections of the Great Wall?

### Evaluate and create

- 5 What do you think is the most effective aspect of the Great Wall's design as a military defensive structure? Give reasons for your opinion.

**Source 1** An artist's impression of the construction of the Great Wall of China

## 15C How did beliefs, values and practices influence ancient Chinese lifestyles?

As the crow flies, the wall covers a distance of 2700 kilometres, but its actual length is closer to 6500 kilometres because it twists and turns across so much mountainous terrain. This is roughly the same distance as driving from Melbourne to Perth and back again.

The Great Wall is between 5 and 9 metres thick and as high as 7.5 metres in certain sections. The road built on top (between the outer walls that enclose it) is about 6 metres wide.

Battlements (raised sections of wall built to provide protection) run along both sides of the wall and also around the perimeter of every watchtower.

Thousands of watchtowers were built along the length of the wall, each about 12 metres high. They were built close enough together for messages to be sent between them. This was done using fires (by night), smoke (by day), as well as drums and flags.

The Great Wall was built in sections. The two outer walls were built first. The space between them was then filled, reinforced and finally paved.

Bamboo or timber scaffolding was set up to help workers construct the walls from packed earth, and later, stone blocks, bricks and clay tiles.

Those who were enlisted to build the wall included soldiers, farmers, slaves and convicted criminals. Working conditions were extremely harsh and fatal accidents were common. Guards forced the builders to work hard and stopped anyone from escaping. Historians think that at least 100000 men died building the wall. Their dead bodies were often buried under or inside the wall itself, or close by.

The internal sections of the wall were filled with earth, sand and rocks – along with the bodies of thousands of workers who died during the wall's construction. The fill was carried into position by hand. As a section of fill built up, vertical slats of bamboo or wood were hammered into the ground to hold it in place.

# 15.11 Death and funeral customs

It was very important to the ancient Chinese that their ancestors be honoured and remembered after death. It was just as important for all proper rituals to be followed for those who died. Rituals included gift-giving at grave sites and the home shrine. If this was not carried out, it was feared that the dead person's spirit might become angry and cause bad things to happen to those left on earth.

## Burial practices

The ancient Chinese believed that the burial site (or tomb) in which a dead body was buried became the place where the spirit of the dead person resided. People were usually buried with a range of items they might need in the afterlife, such as food, clothing, mirrors (for light) and weapons.

Rulers had more elaborate tombs than ordinary people. Goods such as furniture and chariots might be included among their tomb goods. So, too, might their wives, and any concubines who had no children. These women were often buried alive. Later, the practice was to replace living people with models, made from wood or clay.

## The tomb and mummy of Xin Zhui

The best-preserved **mummy** in the world was found in China in 1971 (see Source 1). It was so well preserved doctors were able to conduct an autopsy (a medical examination of a corpse) to find out how the woman died.

The woman, Xin Zhui, had been married to a wealthy Han ruler. She died from a heart attack about 2200 years ago at approximately 50 years of age. She was 158 centimetres tall and overweight. When found, her skin was soft, her hair was completely intact, and her limbs were flexible. The blood in her veins was still red. Her body had been wrapped in many layers of silk after being dipped in a liquid that still puzzles scientists today.

Her tomb was extremely well-constructed and protected. It had not been robbed and still contained about 1000 items. These included lacquerware (objects such as combs and vases), silks, musical instruments and many containers of food (many types of meat, as well as grains, eggs and fruits). There were also 162 small-scale wooden servants to serve her in the afterlife.



Source 1 The mummified remains of a wealthy Chinese woman, Xin Zhui, born in 100 BCE during the Han Dynasty

## The tomb of Liu Sheng and Dou Wan

Three years earlier, another tomb had revealed the bodies of other Han royals – Liu Sheng, the son of the Han emperor Jing Di, and one of his wives, Dou Wan (see Source 2). They died around 100 BCE and were buried with nearly 300 objects and 12 horses. Their remains had been totally encased in jade suits shaped to look like armour. Jade was believed to have magical properties that would stop the body decomposing.



Source 2 The jade burial suit of Dou Wan, wife of the Han prince Liu Sheng. It contains 2156 jade pieces and 703 grams of gold thread.

### The rituals to be observed after the death of a person in ancient

- 1 **China**  
The dead person's family made it known by loud weeping and moaning, and by hanging up messages, that a relative had died. They put on white clothing. The coarseness of the cloth and how long it was worn depended on how close the mourner was to the dead person.
- 2 The corpse was washed, dressed and laid out in the home, sometimes for up to one week. People would call to pay their respects, give gifts to the family and provide offerings for the dead person. Offerings typically included money and small paper models of household items.
- 3 The offerings were burned so the corpse could 'receive' them in the afterlife.
- 4 A stone plaque was placed near the family shrine in honour of the person.
- 5 After religious procedures (which varied depending on the religious beliefs of the dead person), the corpse was placed in a coffin. Music was played to calm the dead person's spirit.
- 6 The coffin was carried in a procession before burial or cremation. Most ancient Chinese were buried and followed the rules of *feng shui* to determine where the gravesite was located and how the remains were placed in the grave.

Source 3 The rituals of a typical funeral in ancient China

### Check your learning 15.11

#### Remember and understand

- 1 Why did the ancient Chinese believe it was important to remember and honour their ancestors?
- 2 Use the information in Source 3 to write a short 'eye-witness' account of a funeral in ancient China.
- 3 Explain why the ancient Chinese buried goods and food within the tombs of dead rulers.

#### Evaluate and create

- 4 Write a brief newspaper article, suitable for inclusion in your local newspaper, on the discovery of the tomb and mummy of Xin Zhui. Include comments on what this find reveals about burial traditions in ancient China.

## 15C rich task

## The legend of Mulan

The legend of Mulan is a heroic story from China that tells the tale of a brave girl who leaves home to fight for her king and nation. There have been many versions of the story over the centuries, and poems, songs and films about Mulan celebrate her courage and her honourable actions.

According to the legend, Mulan disguised herself as a man to join the army in place of her father, who was too old to fight but had no son to serve in his place. Over 12 years, she served in the army – travelling long distances, facing harsh weather and confronting death. After her years of service, the king offered her great honours, but she refused them, preferring instead to return to her home and her aging parents.

We do not know whether Mulan was in fact a real person. The legend was first recounted in the *Ballad of Mulan*, a poem composed between 500 and 600 CE. This poem was included in a 12th-century CE music collection and has been embraced in popular culture since then. An excerpt from the poem follows.

## Source 1

Mulan weaves, facing the door.  
You don't hear the shuttle's sound,  
You only hear Daughter's sighs.  
They ask Daughter who's in her heart,  
They ask Daughter who's on her mind  
'No one is on Daughter's heart,  
No one is on Daughter's mind.  
Last night I saw the draft posters,  
The [King] is calling many troops,  
The army list is in twelve scrolls,  
On every scroll there's Father's name.  
Father has no grown-up son,  
Mulan has no elder brother.  
I want to buy a saddle and horse,  
And serve in the army in Father's place.'

In the East Market she buys a spirited horse,  
In the West Market she buys a saddle,  
In the North Market she buys a long whip.  
At dawn she takes leave of Father and Mother,  
In the evening camps on the Yellow River's bank ...  
She crosses passes and mountains like flying.  
Northern gusts carry the rattle of army pots,  
Chilly light shines on iron armour.  
Generals die in a hundred battles,  
Stout soldiers return after ten years.

On her return she sees the Son of Heaven [king],  
The Son of Heaven sits in the Splendid Hall.  
He gives out promotions in twelve ranks  
And prizes of a hundred thousand more.  
The [king] asks her what she desires.  
'Mulan has no use for a minister's post.  
I wish to ride a swift [horse]  
To take me back to my home.'

When Father and Mother hear Daughter is coming  
They go outside the wall to meet her ...  
'I open the door to my east chamber ...  
I take off my wartime gown  
And put on my old-time clothes.'  
Facing the window she fixes her cloudlike hair ...  
She goes out the door and sees her [fellow soldiers]  
Her comrades are all amazed and perplexed ...  
They didn't know Mulan was a girl.

Excerpts from the *Ballad of Mulan (Ode of Mulan)*



Source 2 A still from the 1998 Disney animated film *Mulan*



Source 3 A 10th-century painting of Mulan

## skilldrill

## Recognising values in primary sources

To recognise and describe **values** in a **primary source**, you need to look beyond the literal meaning of the source and see what you can infer and interpret.

Remember, primary sources are those that were written or created during the time being investigated.

- Step 1** Think about what you already know about the values that existed in the society at the time the primary source was created.
- Step 2** Turn your attention to the primary source itself. What ideas or themes are presented in the source? What is presented as good or important? What underlying message is being conveyed about the people or events being described?
- Step 3** Make connections between the inferences you have drawn about the primary source and your existing knowledge about the social, political and religious values that existed in the society during the period in which the primary source was created.

You should then be able to offer your interpretation of how particular values are represented in a primary source.

## Apply the skill

- 1** Follow the steps outlined above to identify the values expressed in sources about Mulan. Think about what you have learned in this chapter about the social, political and religious values in ancient China. Next, think about how these related to family loyalty, national loyalty, the role of women in society and what was considered heroic. Finally, think about what the legend of Mulan reveals about each of these values. Copy this table into your notebook and record your ideas.

## What the story of Mulan reveals about the importance of:

Family loyalty
National loyalty
The role of women in society
Heroic qualities

## Extend your understanding

- 1** Write a paragraph explaining why you think the legend of Mulan is still popular today. You may wish to compare Mulan to other heroines (real or fictional).
- 2** Look at Sources 2 and 3. Can you identify any of the values listed in the table in these two images of Mulan? Write down your findings for each image.
- 3** Rewrite the legend of Mulan in the form of a short story. Make her a modern-day hero by setting your story in the present.



# 15.12 World-changing inventions

Sir Francis Bacon, a 17th century CE English philosopher, scientist and author, said that there were three inventions that had changed the world – the magnetic compass, gunpowder and printing. All of these were invented, or first used, in China. These inventions not only changed Chinese **society**, but also the societies the Chinese in contact with. These, and many other, ancient Chinese inventions and discoveries influenced travel and exploration, wars (and their outcomes) and the spread of information.

## The magnetic compass

The Chinese invented the magnetic compass around 250 BCE. It revolutionised the way in which sailors and navigators plotted their courses at sea. Until then, consulting the stars was the only way of working out direction at sea. The invention came about because the Chinese noted that a magnetic rock, called a lodestone, always pointed the same way (north–south) when suspended or floated. Fine metal pointers, when rubbed on the stone, were found to have the same magnetic property. These were used as the first compass needles.

## Gunpowder

Around 850 CE during the Tang Dynasty, a Chinese scientist made a mixture he hoped would give him everlasting life. Unfortunately, it exploded, burning his beard. This scientist had accidentally stumbled on a process for making gunpowder. Fifty years later it was being used by the Chinese as a powerful weapon in warfare. One weapon, called the ‘heaven-rumbling thunderclap fierce fire erupter’, used gunpowder to fire containers of toxic gas at enemy soldiers. The discovery of gunpowder also led to the development of the world’s first fireworks in China during the Song Dynasty (960–1279 CE).



Source 1 A magnetic compass made by the ancient Chinese



Source 2 The ancient Chinese are credited with inventing fireworks.



Source 3 The Chinese kept the process for making silk secret for thousands of years.



Source 4 This Buddhist text was printed around 868 CE, using the block-printing method. Known as the *Diamond Sutra*, it is the world’s first printed book. It was printed 500 years before the first book (the Bible) in Europe.

## Paper and printing

The Chinese first wrote on silk or strips of bamboo. By the end of the 1st century CE, a thin paper made out of mashed bamboo and mulberry bark was being used. Later, paper pulp was made by mashing together bark, rags, hemp stalks and water. Bamboo trays were dipped into the pulp mixture until fine grids were fully coated, creating a thin sheet of paper. The paper mixture was allowed to partially dry on the grid before being gently peeled off and hung up to dry. European papermakers used this method until the 1800s CE.

Woodblock printing was invented in China in the early 200s CE. Flat wooden blocks were carved so that the lines or characters to be printed stood higher than the rest of the block. When paper (or cloth) was pressed onto the inked block, only these higher parts printed. The details to be printed were carved in reverse so they would print the right way on the paper (see Source 4).

## Silk

Perhaps ancient China’s best-known discovery is silk-weaving. Legend has it that the wife of Huang Di (the man credited with inventing ancient China’s writing system and calendar) was the first to work out how to unravel silk cocoons. She is said to have accidentally dropped a cocoon in water. This enabled her to unravel the thread (see Source 3).

Through its export of silk cloth (and later silk-making techniques) to markets such as ancient Rome, ancient China became very wealthy. Its knowledge of silk-making gave it great status in ancient trading markets.

## Other inventions and discoveries

This section only mentions a few of the many inventions and discoveries that changed the way people lived in ancient China. Other inventions that we all still use today include the wheelbarrow, mechanical clocks, porcelain (which became known as ‘china’ in the West), matches, umbrellas, kites and paper money. Through Chinese trade and contact with other societies, many of these innovations were spread more widely. With time, they have been passed down to societies in the world today.

### Check your learning 15.12

#### Remember and understand

- Name three ways in which the modern world has been influenced by ancient China’s inventions and discoveries.
- Explain the process of woodblock printing.
  - How did the ancient Chinese make paper?

#### Evaluate and create

- Choose four of the inventions and discoveries discussed or mentioned in this section. Conduct further research to locate images of primary sources of evidence that have been found for each of these innovations. Create a digital exhibition, suitable for display at your local museum, that provides visual and written information about each invention or discovery. Include:
  - how and when it is thought to have been invented or discovered
  - where, when, how and by whom each primary source of evidence was invented or discovered.

# 15.13 Change through conflict and trade

## Conflict

Conflict helped to shape the political and social structure of ancient China. Conflicts were prompted by internal tensions and foreign threats. Internally, conflict marked the beginning and end of China's dynasties – and the regimes that each introduced. It also prompted the creation of a permanent professional army during the Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE). Later, China was invaded by foreign peoples such as the Mongols and the Manchus.

## Trade

Although internal trade along China's rivers and vast network of canals had existed for some time, trade beyond China's borders did not begin until the Han Dynasty.

## The Silk Road

In 138 BCE, the Han emperor Wu Di ordered his army general, Zhang Qian, to travel west to form an alliance with the Yuezhi people against another tribe in the area, the Xiongnu. The Xiongnu were then attacking the western fringes of Wu Di's empire.

Along the way, the Xiongnu captured Zhang Qian. He and his fellow travellers were thrown into prison

where they stayed for 10 years. Zhang Qian escaped, but by then the people had no more interest in fighting or alliances. So Zhang Qian returned home.

When he returned home Zhang Qian told Wu Di about regions that, until then, China did not know about. He told of different customs, animals and products. This news prompted Wu Di to send further missions west along the same path that Zhang Qian had taken, both for trade and political reasons.

In time, merchants and other travellers followed Zhang Qian's route, pushing on even further until the trails stretched from Chang'an (now known as Xi'an in central China) to the Mediterranean Sea (see Source 1). This route became known as the **Silk Road** because of the highly successful silk trade that ran along it.

The Silk Road was a network of routes over land and sea. These routes connected Asia to the Mediterranean world and Europe. There were even offshoots along the way to places such as India and Africa. Stretching over 6500 kilometres, the Silk Road ran through some of the harshest terrain on Earth – mountains, hot deserts and bitterly cold steppes.

Merchants typically travelled the Silk Road in caravans (long lines of camels). Along the way, they traded with the isolated communities who had lived

THE BROAD ROUTE OF THE SILK ROAD



Source 1

Source: Oxford University Press



Source 2 Silkworms, a mulberry leaf and the cocoons from which silk thread is made

## Transfer of ideas, goods and disease

Apart from the trade in goods, the Silk Road also became very important for the spread of new technologies, religions and philosophies to other societies between the East (east Asia) and the West (then the Mediterranean world). Many of the inventions and discoveries of the ancient Chinese, mentioned earlier, were shared by Silk Road traders. For example, China's silk-making secrets were passed to the West this way. China also benefited from the introduction of new metalworking technologies.

Travellers along the Silk Road were exposed to many different cultures. That is how Buddhism was introduced to China. Unfortunately, this trade route was also the means by which terrible diseases such as the bubonic plague were spread to new populations.

The Silk Road trade routes were a significant factor in the development of civilisations in ancient China, India, Persia, Europe and Arabia. Trade along the Silk Road boomed, and new cities, towns and forts sprang up along the way.

in the region since about 1000 BCE. These local people, in turn, might trade with others further along the route. While silk was the major trade item along this route for China, many other goods were also traded (see Source 3).

## Silk

Silk was ancient China's most important trade product. For a long time, only the Chinese knew how to make it. It is spun from the cocoons of silkworms, which feed on mulberry leaves. It became highly prized, particularly by the ancient Romans, who exchanged large amounts of gold for it. It was such a valuable resource to the Chinese that people were executed if caught stealing silkworm eggs or cocoons.

Trade in silk and other goods boosted the economies of societies involved and exposed them to new products. Some, such as silk, became 'indicators' of social status.



Source 3 Some of the goods that were traded and exchanged between ancient China and other societies along the Silk Road

## Check your learning 15.13

### Remember and understand

- 1 Draw a flow chart to depict the steps that led to the beginnings of the important east-west trade route known as the Silk Road.
- 2 Through what modern countries do the main routes of the Silk Road pass?

### Evaluate and create

- 3 In groups, compile a travel journal that records what Chinese merchants travelling from Chang'an

(Xi'an) to the Mediterranean Sea might have seen and done while travelling along the Silk Road. Use what you have learned together with information you have collected on the Internet. Your account will be fictitious, but you should base each entry on facts. Remember to write your travelogue from the point of view of an ancient merchant, not your own. Include sketches and photographs of places and things you see on your journey.

## 15D rich task

# Ancient Chinese inventions

The ancient Chinese had highly-developed knowledge and technologies for their time. In many ways, they were far more advanced than other civilisations in the ancient world. They were also very inventive people. They are responsible for inventing or developing many items that we take for granted today. These inventions changed not only Chinese society but societies all over the world.

Throughout this chapter, you have learned about a number of ancient Chinese inventions and discoveries, including the magnetic compass, gunpowder and printing. These are just some of the many inventions and discoveries that changed the way people lived in ancient China. Others include:

- the wheelbarrow
- the mechanical clock
- matches
- chopsticks
- the umbrella
- the kite
- silk weaving
- porcelain (also known as 'china')
- acupuncture – a treatment that involves pushing small needles into the body so as to correct any imbalance in energy flows in the body.



Source 1 Modern matches



Source 2 A mechanical watch

### skilldrill: Historical significance

## Creating and delivering an audiovisual presentation

It is likely as part of your school work you have already created many presentations (probably using PowerPoint) and had some practice at presenting these to your class. But how effectively have you done this? There are some common problems with PowerPoint presentations – some relate to the design of PowerPoint itself, and some to your presentation skills. Use the following steps to help you avoid some common problems and make your presentations as good as they can be.

### PowerPoint design

- Plan your presentation carefully so it has a clear beginning, middle and end.
- Make sure you present the content in clear, concise dot-point form, *not* huge slabs of information.
- Do not fill up your PowerPoint slides with a lot of pictures. Include only visuals that relate to the content on that particular slide. Make sure each visual has a caption that explains why it is relevant to the presentation.
- Use graphics, sound, video, animations and transitions only if they add value to the point being made, not just because you think they will look good.
- Use a design that ensures your audience can clearly see and read the slides. You need enough contrast between the text colour and the background colour on the slide, and make sure your font size is large enough.

### Presentation skills

- When delivering a PowerPoint presentation to an audience, do not just stand up and read out the text on each slide. Instead, you should be talking in a way that develops and expands the points on each slide. Carefully plan in advance what you are going to talk about during each slide. Record this plan on cue cards, and refer to these cue cards during your speech to remind you of what to say.
- One thing at a time! At any moment, what is on the screen should be the thing you are talking about. Your audience will quickly read every slide as soon as it is displayed. If there are four points on the slide, they will have read all four points while you are still talking about the first point. Plan your presentation so just one new point is displayed at any given moment. Click to go to the next point only when you are ready to talk about that next point.
- Speak clearly – not too fast, not too slow. Vary your tone and pitch to make your presentation more interesting.
- Make eye contact with different members of your audience. Do not just look down at your cue cards!

For a detailed description of this skill, refer to page XX of 'The history toolkit'.

### Apply the skill

- 1 Prepare and deliver a PowerPoint presentation for your class on an ancient Chinese invention of your choice. You are free to use one of the inventions listed here or carry out some research to find a Chinese invention that you would rather talk about.
- 2 Your presentation should be well researched and based on relevant and reliable sources. For detailed information on this skill, refer to page XX of 'The history toolkit'.
- 3 Your presentation should be no longer than 7 minutes and cover the following points (if information is available):
  - a the person or group credited with inventing the item
  - b when the item was first invented
  - c where in China it was invented
  - d what impact the invention had in ancient China and on the rest of the world.
- 4 Your presentation should also follow the bullet points outlined under the headings PowerPoint design and Presentation skills.

## Extend your understanding

- 1 As the students in your class, including you, give their audiovisual presentations, you will all do peer reviews. This means you will assess each other's work in a constructive way. Your aim is to give positive feedback and provide helpful advice for improvement.
  - a Copy the following peer assessment form into your notebook, or ask your teacher to photocopy it for you. Alternatively, your teacher may like to give you more detailed marking criteria to use. You will need one form per student whose work you are reviewing.
  - b As students present their work, complete the form.

### PEER-ASSESSMENT FORM

Name of presenter:						
Name of peer assessor:						
	<b>Marking criteria</b>					<b>General comments</b>
	<b>1 = outstanding; 5 = unsatisfactory</b>					
1 Content of presentation	1	2	3	4	5	
2 PowerPoint design	1	2	3	4	5	
3 Presentation skills	1	2	3	4	5	

- 2 Once your presentation has been peer assessed, it is time to gather the feedback from the other students and consider what they have to say. Read the peer assessments of your work by your classmates carefully and seriously. Then complete the following self-assessment form.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT FORM

Name:		
1 Content of presentation	a	The content of my presentation was good because ...
	b	I could have improved the content of my presentation by ...
2 PowerPoint design	a	The design of my presentation was good because ...
	b	I could have improved the design of my presentation by ...
3 Presentation skills	a	My presentation skills were good because ...
	b	I could have improved my presentation skills by ...