UNIT 3

Asia’s Classical Age

1500 B.C.
About 1500 B.C. Aryan migrations begin

1200 B.C.

1122 B.C.
The Zhou claim the Mandate of Heaven in China

900 B.C.
Between 1500 B.C. and A.D. 100, the foundations of Asia’s major civilizations were laid. Political, social, and economic changes created traditions that have lasted for thousands of years. Asia’s Classical Age also saw the rise of new religions and new ideas about life. These continue to play a role in the way people live in Asia and in other parts of the world.

The emperors of ancient China greatly affected the way of life of the people. In this miniature painting Emperor Mou of the Zhou dynasty travels in fine style.
An Ancient Tale
retold by Cheng Hou-tien

illustrated by Jean Hirashima

Before people learned to write, storytellers held an honored place in most ancient civilizations. Storytellers guarded people's history and legends. They kept stories alive by passing them on by word of mouth. Later, scribes wrote down some of the stories that had been passed down by storytellers. Through these stories we can learn about the values, customs, and traditions of ancient people.

Now read a retelling of an ancient tale from China. In this story six brothers show their loyalty to their father and to one another in spite of danger and the threat of death. Generation after generation of Chinese people learned the importance of loyalty from stories like this.
Long ago, in ancient China, lived an old farmer with his six sons. The first son was clever. The second son could stretch his arms to either end of the world. The third son had a head so hard, steel bounced off it. The fourth son had skin like iron. The fifth son could withstand the greatest heat.

And the sixth son, why he was able to stretch his legs for inches and feet and yards—and for miles and miles.

One day the old farmer fell ill. None of the doctors could cure him.

“There is only one way to save your father,” said one. “You must get the pearl from the king’s palace, boil it in water, and give your father the water to drink.”

First Son said, “Second Son, stretch out your arms and get the pearl.”

Second Son reached out across the plains into the city, where the palace was, and into the king’s window and drew out the pearl. The brothers boiled the pearl and gave their father the water to drink, and the old man got better.

When the king discovered that his precious pearl was missing, he was furious. He sent his soldiers to find it. They went from door to door. When First Son opened the door and the soldiers saw the pearl, they seized it.

And they arrested First Son and brought him before the king.

“Off with his head!” cried the king.

First Son could not stand the thought of dying without seeing his father one more time.

“Please let me see my father before I die,” he begged. The king allowed him to go.

When the old farmer learned that his son was to be beheaded, he was very sad. “But wait,” said Third Son. “Let me go and take my brother’s place.”

The next day, it was Third Son who put his head on the block. The executioner lowered the ax, but the head remained. The people laughed and jeered.

The king was angry. He ordered his soldiers to run him through with a knife. Third Son was frightened.

“Please let me see my father before I die,” he said.

The king allowed him to go. When the brothers heard the news, it was suggested that Fourth Son go back instead. This, Fourth Son did.

And the next day, when the soldiers brought the knife down on him, the blade snapped in two, like a bamboo stick.

“Throw him into boiling water,” cried the king. “That will finish him off.”
"Please let me go home and see my father before I die," Fourth Son pleaded.

The next day, when Fifth Son was thrown into boiling water, to the great surprise of all around, he merely called for more heat and began to sing.

The king sputtered and railed. "Throw him into the sea! No one escapes from its depth," he cried.

"I accept my fate," said Fifth Son. "But before I die, please let me go home and see my father."

Fifth Son hurried home and told what had happened.

"Never mind," said First Son. "Sixth Son will take your place. He can never drown."

Sixth Son returned to the palace in his brother's place. He was taken out to sea and dropped overboard. The soldiers watched him disappear. They saw bubbles form on the surface of the water and were sure he had drowned.

But Sixth Son was far from gone. He stretched and stretched his legs until he was standing on the ocean floor. There, he found many precious jewels. When he rose to the surface, the surprised soldiers brought him to the king.

Sixth Son presented the king with the jewels he had found. The jewels pleased the king and he decided to spare the boy's life.

"How is it that you have escaped sure death again and again?" asked the king. When the king heard the story, he sent for the other five brothers and said, "You boys are a fine example of devotion to family. China is proud of you."

And he held a banquet for the old farmer and his six sons at the palace, which hundreds of people attended.

As you read about the ancient peoples of Asia, you will learn more about loyalty. You will also learn about values, customs, and traditions that developed long ago in Asia and have continued through the centuries.
Zhou rulers had no authority during the Warring States Period. Yet they continued to hold the Mandate of Heaven. Then the Qin (CHIN) claimed the Mandate in 221 B.C. and ruled until 207 B.C. During this short time the Qin dynasty united the warring city-states and created China’s first great empire.

Rule of Shi Huangdi

The person who brought the Qin to power was only 13 years old when he became their king. An enemy described the young king as having “the chest of a bird of prey, the voice of a jackal, and the heart of a tiger.” The king wanted to do great things for himself. Even the name he took upon becoming king of the Qin showed his desire to succeed. The title king did not sound powerful enough for him, so he called himself Qin Shi Huangdi (CHIN SHEE HWALING-DEE), “First Emperor of Qin.” And this was before he had an empire!

Shi Huangdi ruled with great cruelty. Those people foolish enough to challenge Shi Huangdi were executed along with their families. This warned others to obey.

Shi Huangdi based his cruel form of leadership on a set of teachings far different from those taught by Confucius. This set of teachings was called Legalism. Legalism taught that people obeyed their rulers out of fear, not out of respect. People who obeyed received rewards. Those who did not obey were punished. To the Legalists, harsh treatment of people was the only way to bring peace and wealth to China.

Shi Huangdi thought of the teachings of Confucius as a challenge to his authority. The ruler ordered all writings about Confucianism destroyed. If teachers refused to follow...
QIN DYNASTY AND THE SEVEN WARRING STATES

HUMAN-ENVIRONMENT INTERACTIONS
Seven warring states joined together under the Qin dynasty.
- In what directions would the Qin most likely have traveled to expand their empire?

To be sure that his subjects learned little of ideas other than his, Emperor Shi Huangdi ordered book burnings throughout his empire. This painting, by Hung Wu, from a later period, shows just one of the many book burnings.

his orders, they were killed. One person of the times noted that Shi Huangdi placed “violence above kindness and justice.”

Why was Legalism important to Shi Huangdi?

UNITING CHINA
Shi Huangdi claimed the Mandate of Heaven in 221 B.C. He then quickly moved to unite the Chinese city-states under his rule. He knew he could unite China only by crushing the authority of every noble. To reach his goal, Shi Huangdi first attacked the city-states and seized all their weapons. He next divided China into military districts and named people he trusted to govern each one. In doing so, he created the empire he had longed for.

Once in control, Shi Huangdi ordered the noble families to leave their homelands and move to China’s capital city. In this way he broke the ties of loyalty between nobles and peasants. Now the peasants owed their loyalty to no one but the emperor. Shi Huangdi created a strong army made up of hundreds of thousands of peasants. Using this fighting force, he pushed the borders of the empire farther south and east.

Why did Shi Huangdi break ties of loyalty between nobles and peasants?
**The Great Wall**

Shih Huangdi had built a large empire. Now he faced another challenge. Communicating with and traveling to distant places in the empire was difficult. How could he control such a large empire? Immediately Shih Huangdi put plans into action to keep his empire together.

Like the Zhou rulers before him, Shih Huangdi used China's peasant farmers to build public works. His many workers built more than 4,000 miles (6,437 km) of roads. Even the distant parts of the empire were linked to the center of the Qin government. "For the first time he has united the world," one person said of Shih Huangdi.

Of all Shih Huangdi's building projects, one stands out as the largest and most costly. It was the Great Wall, a wall unlike any other in the world. Built to protect China from outsiders, the Great Wall stood 30 feet (9 m) high, with 40-foot (12-m) towers. The wall was so thick that two wagons could pass each other while traveling on top of it.

The Great Wall stretched for almost 1,500 miles (2,414 km) across northern China, twisting and turning over mountains and through valleys, marshes, and deserts. Yet, in spite of its size, the Great Wall was built in just seven years. Only through the hard work of China's peasant farmers was this possible.

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**For the first time he has united the world.**

Said of Shih Huangdi

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**Learning from Diagrams**

This cross-section diagram of the Great Wall shows how the wall was made.

- Why do you think builders used a variety of materials to build different parts of the wall?

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The Great Wall of China, though much of it has been rebuilt, still looks much as it did during Shih Huangdi's day. The wall is the world's longest human-made structure.
The cost of building the wall was high in terms of human life. More than 500,000 workers died during the building of the wall. Some were buried between its stones. Nature gave China the Huang He, its “river of sorrows.” Shi Huangdi gave China the Great Wall, its “wall of tears.”

What was the purpose of the Great Wall of China? Why has it been called the “wall of tears”?

The introduction of standardized coins during the Qin dynasty made buying and selling easier. The hole in the middle of this coin allowed it to be strung together with others.

**A Program of Standardization**

Public works such as walls and roads helped protect and unite China. So, too, did Shi Huangdi’s program of standardization. **Standardization** means making all things of a certain type alike. The use of standardized coins, weights, and writing throughout China helped make trade and communication easier. Use of the same standards helped the many peoples of the empire think of themselves as one.

To oversee his huge empire, Shi Huangdi created a bureaucracy. A **bureaucracy** is a network of appointed government officials. Each official was in charge of the day-to-day

The tomb of Shi Huangdi is located near the present-day city of Xian (SEE•AHN), formerly Chang’an (CHANG•AHN), in the Wei He Valley. The lavish tomb originally stood 15 stories tall and covered about 3 acres. However, what makes it so unusual is not its size, but the army of clay soldiers that protects it. More than 6,000 life-size clay soldiers and 1,400 chariots surround the tomb. The warriors seem alive and ready for battle. No two soldiers look alike. Many hold real crossbows, spears, and swords. Shi Huangdi wanted his clay army to guard him in death, just as his real army had guarded him in life.

For centuries Shi Huangdi’s clay army lay buried. Work is still being done to uncover more soldiers.

The Emperor’s Clay Army

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While Shi Huangdi was bringing standardization to China, other civilizations around the world were changing as well. The long-lasting Egyptian Empire in northern Africa had lost its independence. The kingdom of Kush, however, was growing because of a successful iron-making industry. Europe had recently seen a time of empire building. Now it was in the midst of a time of scientific and mathematical advances. In the Americas, the Mayas were creating new hieroglyphics and experimenting with new ways of building.

governing of his part of the empire. In this way Shi Huangdi made sure that even the most distant places in the empire would not slip from his control.

The emperor believed that the bureaucracy he had formed would allow the Qin to rule for “ten thousand generations.” However, unhappiness spread among the peasants. In time they began to fight back against their cruel rulers. The Qin dynasty ended not long after Shi Huangdi’s death.

The Qin ruled for just a short time, but they had a great influence on China’s civilization. Under Shi Huangdi, the Qin created the position of emperor. The Qin also united the Chinese states into a single empire under a strong central government. At the same time, they caused humans to suffer in ways few could have imagined.

What was an important result of standardization and the creation of a bureaucracy?

**Lesson 2 Review**

**Check Understanding**

1. **Recall the Facts** What emotion did Legalists think brought leaders the loyalty of those they ruled?
2. **Focus on the Main Idea** How did Shi Huangdi unify China?

**Think Critically**

3. **Cause and Effect** What effect do you think placing “violence above kindness and justice” had on the people Shi Huangdi ruled?
4. **Personally Speaking** Do you think Shi Huangdi should be remembered more for uniting China or for causing human suffering? Explain your answer.
5. **Past to Present** How can modern technology help leaders keep order in large countries?

**Show What You Know**

**Poster Activity** Divide a sheet of posterboard into two columns. In one column, list the qualities of Shi Huangdi that helped him unite China. In the other column, list those that made it more difficult. Some qualities may appear in both columns.