

## SECTION 3

# India and China

### Guide to Reading

#### Main Ideas

- The caste system was a set of rigid social categories in Indian society.
- Like other empires, Chinese dynasties followed a rise-and-fall pattern.

#### Key Terms

caste system, Hinduism, reincarnation, Buddhism, Mandate of Heaven, Dao, filial piety, Confucianism

#### People to Identify

Aryans, Siddhartha Gautama, Asoka, Qin Shihuangdi, Confucius

#### Places to Locate

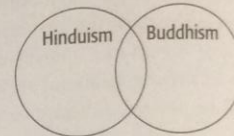
India, Indus River, Hindu Kush, Deccan Plateau, China, Gobi

#### Preview Questions

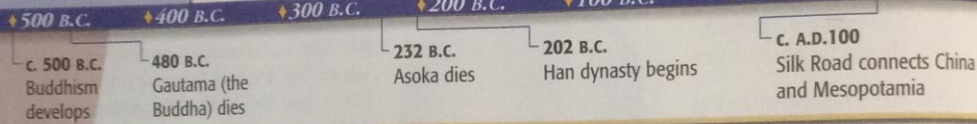
- How did the caste system influence the lives of people in ancient India?
- Why was the Mandate of Heaven important to Chinese rulers?

#### Reading Strategy

**Compare and Contrast** As you read this section, prepare a Venn diagram like the one below to show the similarities and differences between Hinduism and Buddhism.



#### Preview of Events



Confucius

## Voices from the Past

Confucius wanted to promote good government in China. Confucius said:

“If the people be led by laws, and uniformity be imposed on them by punishments, they will try to avoid the punishment, but will have no sense of shame. If they be led by virtue, and uniformity be provided for them by the rules of propriety, they will have the sense of shame, and will become good.” He also said, “Let the ruler be filial and kind to all people; then they will be faithful to him. Let him advance the good and teach the incompetent; then they will eagerly seek to be virtuous.”

—*The Chinese Classics*, James Legge, 1893

Confucianism, an ancient Chinese philosophy, sought to spell out the principles that would create stability and order in society.

### Early Civilization in India

India is a land of diversity. Today, about 110 languages and more than 1,000 dialects (varieties of language) are spoken in India. Diversity is also apparent in India's geography. The Indian subcontinent, shaped like a triangle hanging from the southern ridge of Asia, is composed of a number of core regions, including mountain ranges, river valleys, a dry interior plateau, and fertile coastal plains.

As in Mesopotamia and Egypt, early civilization in India emerged in river valleys. Between 3000 B.C. and 1500 B.C., the valleys of the **Indus River** supported a flourishing civilization. It extended hundreds of miles from the Himalaya, the highest mountains in the world, to the coast of the Arabian Sea. Archaeologists have found the remains of more than a thousand settlements in this region. Two

of the ruins, about 400 miles (643.6 km) apart, were sites of what once were the major cities of Harappa (huh•RA•puh) and Mohenjo-Daro (moh•HEHN•joh DAHR•oh). An advanced civilization—known as Harappan or Indus civilization—flourished in these cities for hundreds of years.



**The Arrival of the Aryans** Eventually, floods, an earthquake, changes in climate, and even a change in the course of the Indus River weakened the once-flourishing civilization in the Indus River valley. Invaders brought its final end.

Around 1500 B.C., a group of Indo-European nomadic peoples began to move out of their original homeland in central Asia. Known as the **Aryans**, they moved south across the **Hindu Kush** mountain range into the plains of northern India. They invaded and conquered the Harappans and created a new Indian society based on Aryan culture and institutions.

Like other nomadic peoples, the Aryans excelled at the art of war. Between 1500 and 1000 B.C., the Aryan peoples gradually advanced eastward from the Indus Valley, across the fertile plain of the Ganges River. Later they moved southward into the **Deccan Plateau**.

Eventually they extended their control throughout all of India.

**Society in Ancient India** The conquest by the Aryans had a lasting impact on Indian society. Out of the clash between conqueror and conquered came a set of social institutions and class divisions that has lasted in India, with only minor changes, to the present day.

The **caste system** of ancient India was a set of rigid social categories that determined not only a person's occupation and economic potential, but also his or her position in society. There were five major divisions of Indian classes (known as castes in English) in ancient times.

The priestly class, whose members were known as the Brahmins, was usually considered to be at the top of the social scale. They were in charge of the religious ceremonies that were so important in Indian society. The second caste was the Kshatriyas (KSHA•tree•uhz), or warriors. The third-ranked caste in Indian society was the Vaisyas (VYSH•yuhz), or commoners. The Vaisyas were usually the merchants who engaged in commerce.

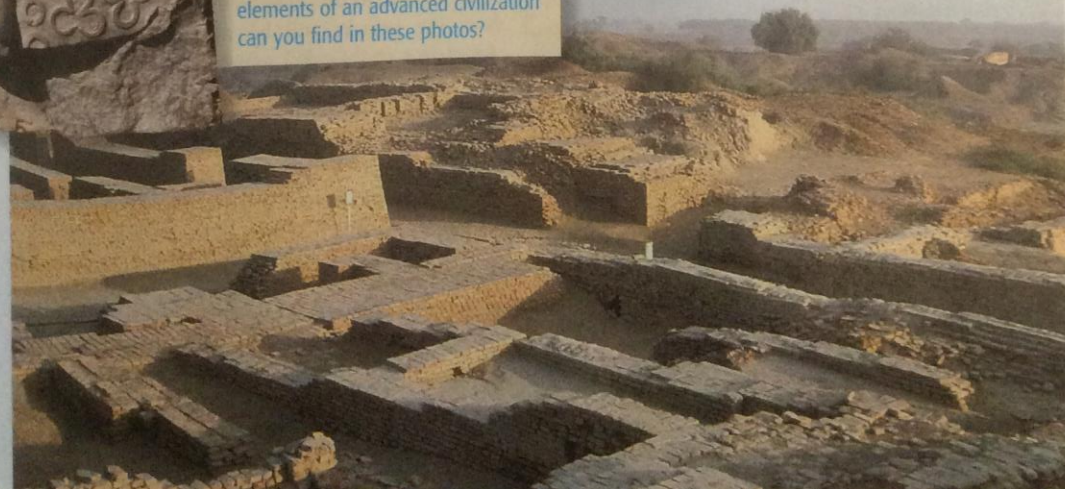
Below these three castes were the Sudras (SOO•druhzh), who made up the great bulk of the Indian population. Most Sudras were peasants, artisans, or people who worked at other forms of manual labor. They had only limited rights in society.

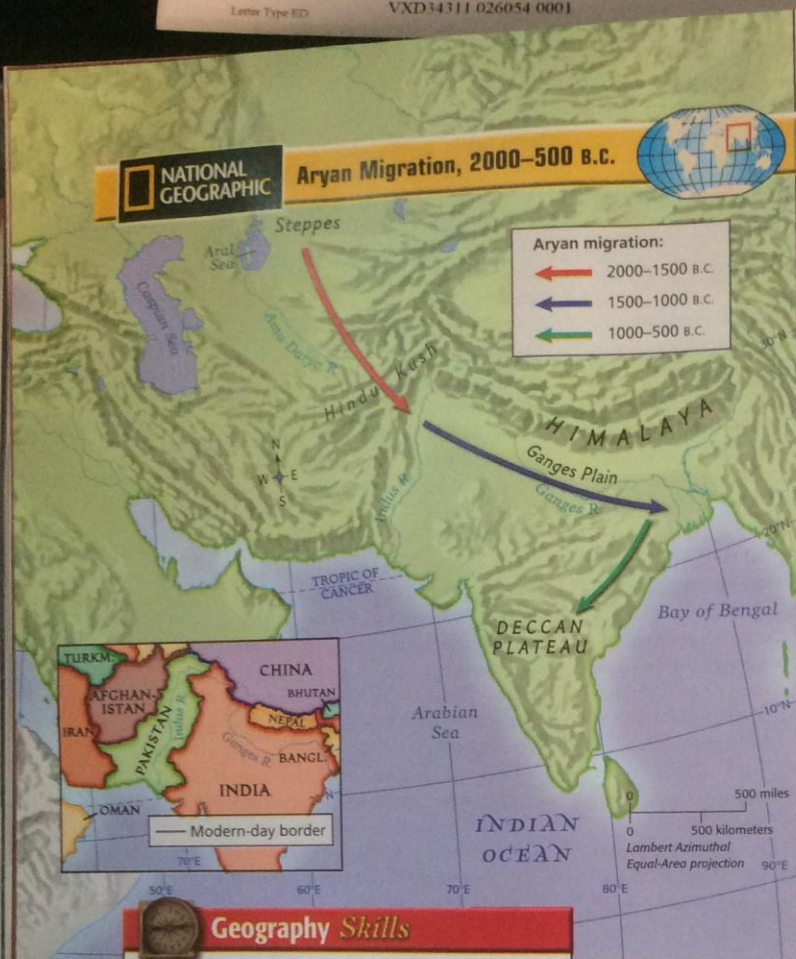
At the lowest level of Indian society—and in fact not even considered a real part of the caste system—



### Picturing History

A priest-king and the restored city of Mohenjo-Daro are pictured. **What elements of an advanced civilization can you find in these photos?**





### Geography Skills

The Aryans were nomadic peoples who moved through India. Eventually, they controlled most of India.

- Interpreting Maps** What geographical feature enabled the Aryans to end their nomadic lifestyle?
- Applying Geography Skills** Examine the pattern of Aryan migration. Why do you think the Aryans followed such a route?

were the Untouchables. The Untouchables probably made up about 5 percent of the total population of ancient India. The Untouchables were given menial, degrading tasks that other Indians would not accept, such as collecting trash and handling dead bodies. They were not considered human, and their very presence was considered harmful to members of the other classes.

**Reading Check Summarizing** What are the names of the castes in Indian society?

## Hinduism

Two of the world's great religions, Hinduism and Buddhism, began in India. **Hinduism** had its origins in the religious beliefs of the Aryan peoples who settled in India after 1500 B.C. Evidence about the religious beliefs of the Aryan peoples comes from the Vedas, collections of hymns and religious ceremonies that were passed down orally through the centuries by Aryan priests and then eventually written down.

Early Hindus believed in the existence of a single force in the universe, a form of ultimate reality or God, called *Brahman*. It was the duty of the individual self—called the *atman*—to seek to know this ultimate reality. By doing so, the self would merge with *Brahman* after death.

By the sixth century B.C., the idea of reincarnation had appeared in Hinduism. **Reincarnation** is the belief that the individual soul is reborn in a different form after death. After a number of existences in the earthly world, the soul reaches its final goal in a union with *Brahman*.

Important to this process is the idea of karma, the force generated by a person's actions that determines how the person will be reborn in the next life. According to this idea, what people do in their current lives determines what they will be in their next lives. In the same way, a person's current status is not simply an accident. It is a result of the person's actions in a past existence.

The system of reincarnation provided a religious basis for the rigid class divisions in Indian society. It justified the privileges of those on the higher end of the scale. After all, they would not have these privileges if they were not deserving. At the same time, the concept of reincarnation gave hope to those lower on the ladder of life. The poor, for example, could

hope that if they behaved properly in this life, they would improve their condition in the next.

How does one achieve oneness with God? Hindus developed the practice of yoga, a method of training designed to lead to such union. (In fact, yoga means "union.") The final goal of yoga was to leave behind the cycle of earthly life and achieve union with Brahman, seen as a kind of dreamless sleep.

Most ordinary Indians, however, could not easily relate to this ideal and needed a more concrete form of heavenly salvation. It was probably for this reason that the Hindu religion came to have a number of humanlike gods and goddesses, including three chief ones: Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver, and Siva (SIH•vuh) the Destroyer. Many Hindus regard the multitude of gods as simply different expressions of the one ultimate reality, Brahman. However, the various gods and goddesses give ordinary Indians a way to express their religious feelings. Hinduism is the religion of the vast majority of the Indian people.

**Reading Check Comparing** How do karma and yoga relate to reincarnation?

## Buddhism

In the sixth century B.C., a new doctrine, called **Buddhism**, appeared in northern India and soon became a rival of Hinduism. Buddhism was the product of one man, **Siddhartha Gautama** (sih•DAHR•tuh GOW•tuh•muh). Born around 563 B.C., Siddhartha Gautama is better known as the Buddha, or "Enlightened One."

In his lifetime, Siddhartha gained thousands of devoted followers. People would come to him seeking to know more about him. They asked, "Are you a god?"

"No," he answered.

"Are you an angel?"

"No."

"Are you a saint?"

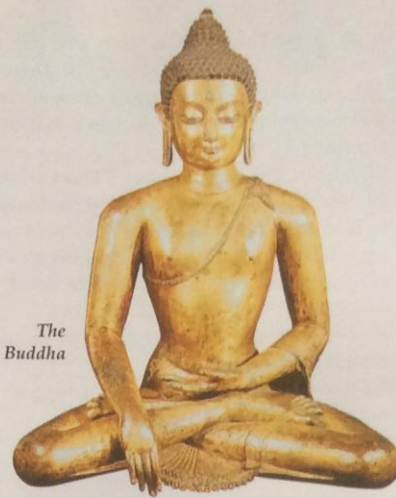
"No."

"Then what are you?"

The Buddha replied, "I am awake."

The religion of Buddhism began with a man who claimed that he had awakened and seen the world in a new way.

Siddhartha denied the reality of the material



The Buddha

world. The physical surroundings of humans, he believed, were simply illusions. The pain, poverty, and sorrow that afflict human beings are caused by their attachment to things of this world. Once people let go of their worldly cares, pain and sorrow can be forgotten. Then comes *bodhi*, or wisdom. (The word *bodhi* is the root of the word *Buddhism* and of Siddhartha's usual name—Gautama Buddha.) Achieving wisdom is a key step to achieving nirvana, or ultimate reality—the end of the self and a reunion with the Great World Soul.

Siddhartha preached this message in a sermon to his followers in the Deer Park at Sarnath (outside India's holy city of Banaras). It is a simple message based on the Four Noble Truths:

1. Ordinary life is full of suffering.
2. This suffering is caused by our desire to satisfy ourselves.
3. The way to end suffering is to end desire for selfish goals and to see others as extensions of ourselves.
4. The way to end desire is to follow the Middle Path.

This Middle Path is also known as the Eightfold Path, because it consists of eight steps:

1. *Right view* We need to know the Four Noble Truths.
2. *Right intention* We need to decide what we really want.
3. *Right speech* We must seek to speak truth and to speak well of others.

**HISTORY**  
*Online*

**Web Activity** Visit the *Glencoe World History—Modern Times* Web site at [wh.mt.glencoe.com](http://wh.mt.glencoe.com) and click on **Chapter 1—Student Web Activity** to learn more about Buddhism.

4. **Right action** The Buddha gave five precepts: "Do not kill. Do not steal. Do not lie. Do not be unchaste. Do not take drugs or drink alcohol."
5. **Right livelihood** We must do work that uplifts our being.
6. **Right effort** The Buddha said, "Those who follow the Way might well follow the example of an ox that arches through the deep mud carrying a heavy load. He is tired, but his forward-looking gaze will not relax until he comes out of the mud."
7. **Right mindfulness** We must keep our minds in control of our senses.
8. **Right concentration** We must meditate to see the world in a new way.

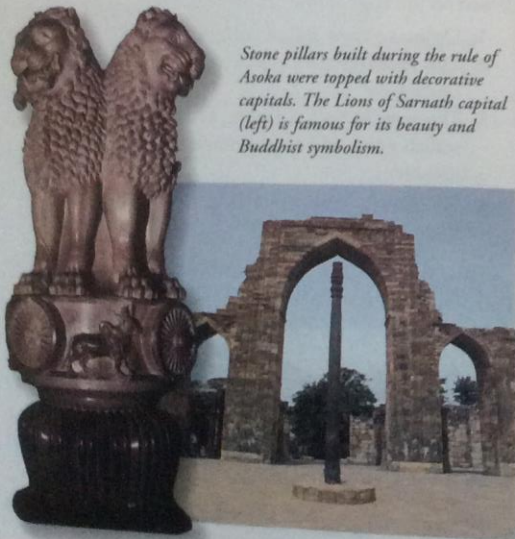
Siddhartha accepted the idea of reincarnation, but he rejected the Hindu division of human beings into rigidly defined castes based on previous reincarnations. He taught instead that all human beings could reach nirvana as a result of their behavior in this life.

**Reading Check** **Contrasting** How does Buddhism differ from Hinduism?

## New Empires in India

For most of the time between 325 B.C. and A.D. 500, India was a land of many different states. Two major empires, however, were able to create large, unified Indian states.

The first of these empires, the Mauryan Empire in northern India, lasted from 324 to 183 B.C. The



Stone pillars built during the rule of Asoka were topped with decorative capitals. The Lions of Sarnath capital (left) is famous for its beauty and Buddhist symbolism.

Mauryan Empire flourished during the reign of **Asoka** (uh•SHOH•kuh), who ruled from 269 until 232 B.C. Asoka is generally considered to be the greatest ruler in the history of India.

After his conversion to Buddhism, Asoka used Buddhist ideals to guide his rule. He set up hospitals for both people and animals. He sent missionaries to China and other parts of Asia, thus introducing Buddhism to those areas.

Asoka was more than a kind ruler, however. His kingdom prospered as India's role in regional trade began to expand. India became a major crossroads in a vast commercial network.

One of the most important parts of that network was the route known as the **Silk Road**, so called because silk was China's most valuable product. The Silk Road reached from the city of Changan in China across central Asia to Mesopotamia, covering a distance of about 4,000 miles (6,436 km). People used camels to transport goods through the mountains and deserts of the Silk Road, winding up at Antioch, a port city on the Mediterranean Sea. At Antioch, luxury goods from the West were traded for luxury goods from the East, which were then shipped across the Mediterranean to Greece and Rome.

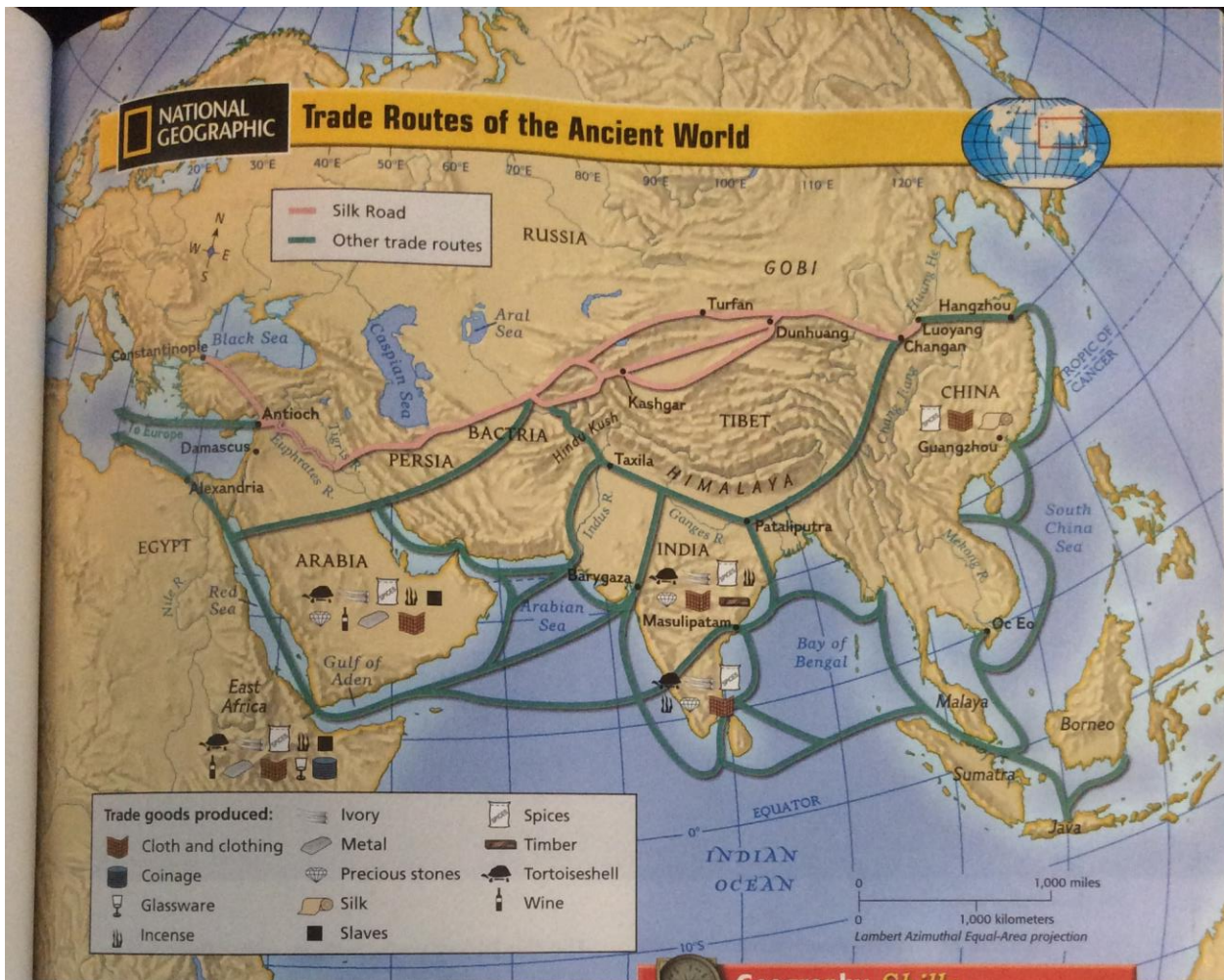
After Asoka's death in 232 B.C., the Mauryan Empire began to decline, and in 183 B.C., it collapsed. India then fell back into disunity until a new empire arose. This new empire, the Gupta Empire, flourished from A.D. 320 until the late fifth century when the invasion of the Huns reduced its power.

**Reading Check** **Evaluating** Why was Asoka considered a great ruler?

## Early Chinese Civilizations

Of the great civilizations discussed so far, China was the last to come into full flower. By the time the first Chinese dynasty began to emerge as an organized state, the societies in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and India had already reached an advanced level of civilization. One likely reason for China's late arrival was its isolation from the emerging centers of culture elsewhere in the world. Basically, China was forced to develop on its own.

**The Shang Dynasty** The Shang dynasty (about 1750 to 1122 B.C.) created the first flourishing Chinese civilization. Under the Shang, China developed organized government, a system of writing, and advanced skills in the making of bronze vessels.



The Chinese believed they could communicate with supernatural forces to obtain help in worldly affairs. To do so, they made use of oracle bones. These were bones on which priests scratched questions asked by the rulers, such as: Will the king be victorious in battle? Will the king recover from his illness? Heated metal rods were then stuck into the bones, causing them to crack. The priests interpreted the shapes of the cracks as answers from the gods. The priests wrote down the answers, then the bones were stored. The inscriptions on the bones have become a valuable source of information about the Shang period.

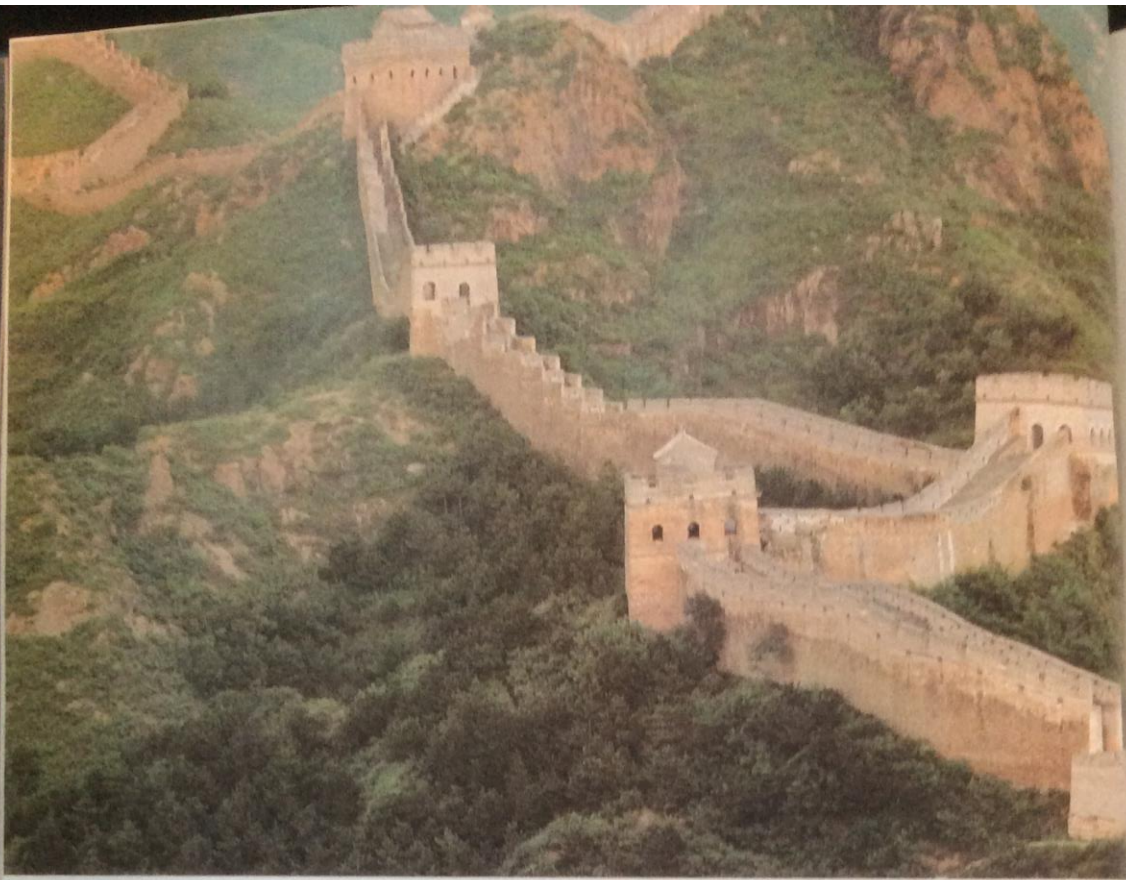
**The Zhou Dynasty** During the Zhou dynasty (1045 to 256 B.C.), China began to adopt many of the features that characterized Chinese civilization for centuries. Especially important politically was the Mandate of Heaven.

**Geography Skills**

Trade in the ancient world brought many cultures and kingdoms together. The Silk Road was one of the main routes of trade, allowing people and camels to move goods across 4,000 miles (6,436 km).

- 1. Interpreting Maps** How was the Silk Road different from the other trade routes of the ancient world?
- 2. Applying Geography Skills** What pattern do you see behind the location of the ancient trade routes?

The Zhou dynasty claimed that it ruled China because it possessed the **Mandate of Heaven**. The Zhou believed that Heaven—which was an impersonal law of nature—kept order in the universe through the Zhou king. Thus, he ruled over all humanity by a mandate, or authority to command, from Heaven. The king, who was chosen to rule because of his talent and virtue, was then responsible for ruling the people with goodness and efficiency.



*The Great Wall of China*

The Mandate of Heaven, however, was double-edged. The king was expected to rule according to the proper "Way," called the **Dao** (DOW). It was his duty to keep the gods pleased in order to protect the people from natural disaster or a bad harvest. If the king failed to rule effectively, he could be overthrown and replaced by a new ruler.

The Mandate of Heaven was closely tied to the pattern of dynastic cycles. From the beginning of Chinese history to A.D. 1912, China was ruled by a series of dynasties. The Zhou dynasty, as we have seen, lasted for almost eight hundred years. Others did not last as long, but the king of each dynasty ruled with the Mandate of Heaven.

No matter how long the dynasties lasted, all went through a cycle of change. A new dynasty established its power, ruled successfully for many years, and then began to decline. The power of the central government would begin to collapse, giving rise to rebellions or invasion. Finally, the dynasty collapsed and a new dynasty took over, beginning another dynastic cycle.

**The Qin Dynasty** The collapse of the Zhou dynasty was followed by two hundred years of civil war. A new dynasty, known as the Qin, then created an era of Chinese unity. The Qin dynasty was founded by **Qin Shihuangdi** (CHIN SHUR•HWONG•DEE), meaning "the First Qin Emperor."

Qin Shihuangdi, a person of much ambition, unified the Chinese world, but his major foreign concern was in the north. In the vicinity of the **Gobi** resided a nomadic people known to the Chinese as the Xiongnu (SYEN•NOO), who often made raids into Chinese territory. Qin Shihuangdi's answer to this problem was to strengthen the existing system of walls to keep the nomads out.

Today we know Qin Shihuangdi's project as the Great Wall of China. However, the Great Wall that we know today from films and photographs was built 1,500 years after the rule of Qin Shihuangdi. Some of the walls built by Qin Shihuangdi do remain standing, but many of them were constructed of loose stone, sand, or piled rubble, and disappeared long ago.



- Han Empire at greatest extent, A.D. 210
- Regions under Han protectorate, 59 B.C.—A.D. 23
- Great Wall in Han period
- Modern-day border



**Geography Skills**

Han emperors continued the expansion of the Chinese Empire, reaching into modern Vietnam and moving further west than ever before.

- 1. Interpreting Maps**  
Using the map's scale, calculate the length of the Great Wall.
- 2. Applying Geography Skills**  
Why do you think the Han expanded into modern Vietnam rather than move west?

This is not to say, of course, that Qin Shihuangdi's wall was not a massive project. It required the efforts of thousands of laborers. Many of them died while working there and, according to legend, are now buried within the wall. The wall enabled the First Qin Emperor to enjoy some success in fighting off the threat of the nomads, but the victory was only temporary.

**The Han Dynasty** The First Qin Emperor was also the last of his dynasty. A new dynasty—the Han—then established an empire that lasted over four hundred years (202 B.C. to A.D. 220).

China under the Han dynasty was a vast empire. The population increased rapidly—by some estimates rising from about twenty million to over sixty million at the height of the dynasty. The large population created a growing need for a bigger and more efficient bureaucracy to keep the state in proper working order.

During the glory years of the Han dynasty, China extended the boundaries of its empire far into the

sands of central Asia and southward along the coast of the South China Sea into what is modern-day Vietnam. Chinese culture appeared to be unrivaled, and its scientific and technological achievements were unsurpassed.

**Reading Check Explaining** Why did the First Qin Emperor build walls across northern China?

**The Family in Ancient China**

Few social institutions have been as closely identified with China as the family. As in most agricultural societies, in ancient China the family served as the basic economic and social unit. However, the Chinese family took on an almost sacred quality as a symbol of the entire social order.

At the heart of the concept of family in China was the idea of **filial piety**. The word *filial* refers to a son or daughter. *Filial piety*, then, refers to the duty of members of the family to subordinate their needs and desires to those of the male head of the family.



Thus, the term describes a system in which every family member had his or her place. The concept is important in Confucianism, as you will see later in this section.

What explains the importance of the family in ancient China? The need to work together on the land was a significant factor. In ancient times, as today, farming in China required the work of many people. Children, too, were essential to the family's needs. They worked in the fields during their early years. Later, sons were expected to take over the burden of physical labor on the family plots and provide for the well-being of their parents.

Male supremacy was a key element in the social system of ancient China, as it was in the other civilizations that we have examined. The male was considered so important because he was responsible for providing food for his family. In ancient China, men worked in the fields. They also governed society

and were the warriors, scholars, and government ministers. Women raised the children and worked in the home.

**Reading Check Explaining** Why were males considered to be superior to females in Chinese families?

## The Importance of Confucius

The civilization of China is closely tied to **Confucius** (in pinyin, Kongfuzi), a philosopher who lived in the sixth century B.C. Confucius traveled the length of China observing events and seeking employment as a political counselor. He had little success in his job search and instead became a teacher to hundreds of students who sought his wise advice. Some of his students became ardent disciples of their teacher and recorded his sayings. Until the twentieth century, almost every Chinese pupil studied his sayings. This made **Confucianism**, or the

## SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & SOCIETY

### Papermaking in Han China

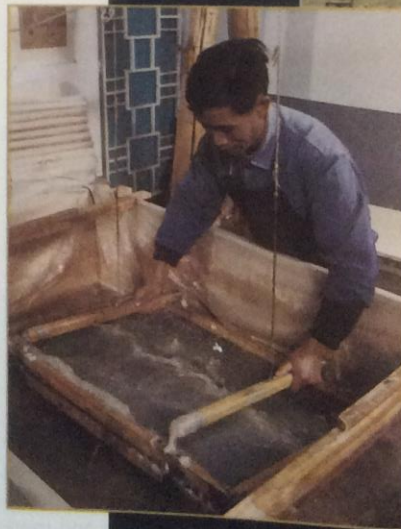
The ancient Chinese were responsible for four remarkable inventions that were crucial to the development of modern technology: the magnetic compass, paper, printing, and gunpowder. How to make paper was one of their early discoveries.

The oldest piece of paper found in China dates from the first century B.C. Made from hemp fibers, it was thick, rough, and useless for writing. That was not a problem for the ancient Chinese, however, because they preferred to write on bamboo or silk.

Paper with writing on it dates from around A.D. 100. By this time, the Chinese had figured out how to make paper of better quality. After hemp or linen rags were soaked in water, they were mixed with potash and mashed into a pulp. A frame with a fine bamboo mesh was lowered into this vat of pulp. When the frame was removed, it held a thin sheet of pulp. Any extra water was removed before the sheets of paper were hung up to dry.

The art of papermaking spread westward from China beginning in the eighth century A.D. First India and then the Arab world developed the technique. The Arab cities of Baghdad, Damascus, and Cairo all had large papermaking industries. Paper was shipped from these centers to the West, but Europeans did not begin their production of paper until the twelfth century.

**Describing** *What did the Chinese use to make paper?*



A contemporary artisan demonstrates ancient papermaking techniques.



Bamboo is lifted out of China's Mekong River.

system of Confucian ideas, an important part of Chinese history.

Confucius believed that the universe was made in such a way that if humans would act in harmony with its purposes, their own affairs would prosper. Much of his concern was with human behavior. The key to proper behavior was to behave in accordance with the Dao (Way).

Two elements stand out in the Confucian view of the Dao: duty and humanity. The concept of duty meant that all people had to subordinate their own interests to the broader needs of the family and the community. Everyone should be governed by the Five Constant Relationships: parent and child, husband and wife, older sibling and younger sibling, older friend and younger friend, and ruler and subject. Each person in the relationship had a duty to the other. Parents should be loving, and children should revere their parents. Husbands should fulfill their duties, and wives should be obedient. The elder sibling should be kind, and the younger sibling respectful. The older friend should be considerate, and the younger friend deferential. Rulers should be benevolent, and subjects loyal.

The Confucian concept of duty is often expressed in the form of a "work ethic." If each individual worked hard to fulfill his or her duties, then the affairs of society as a whole would prosper as well.



An army of life-sized terra-cotta soldiers was found in Qin Shihuangdi's tomb.

Above all, the ruler must set a good example. If the king followed the path of goodness and the common good, then subjects would respect him, and society would prosper.

The second key element in the Confucian view of the Dao is the idea of humanity. This consists of a sense of compassion and empathy for others. It is similar in some ways to Christian ideas but with a twist. Christians are taught, "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you." Confucius would say, "Do not do unto others what you would not wish done to yourself." Confucius urged people to "measure the feelings of others by one's own."

**Reading Check** **Describing** Describe the meaning of duty and humanity in the Confucian view of the Dao.

## SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT

### Checking for Understanding

1. **Define** caste system, Hinduism, reincarnation, Buddhism, Mandate of Heaven, Dao, filial piety, Confucianism.
2. **Identify** Aryans, Siddhartha Gautama, Asoka, Silk Road, Qin Shihuangdi, Confucius.
3. **Locate** India, Indus River, Hindu Kush, Deccan Plateau, China, Gobi.
4. **Explain** the importance of filial piety to the Chinese. How does the concept of filial piety relate to the Confucian view of how society should function?
5. **List** the five major classes in Indian society and describe the role each class played in Indian society.

### Critical Thinking

6. **Analyze** how the Hindu system of reincarnation supported the Indian caste system.
7. **Taking Notes** Using an outline format, describe the Confucian ideas of the Five Constant Relationships.
  - I. The Five Constant Relationships
    - A. Parent and Child
      1. parents should be loving; children should revere their parents
    - B.
    - C. Older Sibling and Younger Sibling
    - D.
    - E. Ruler and Subject
      1. rulers should be benevolent; subjects loyal

### Analyzing Visuals

8. **Examine** the photo of Qin Shihuangdi's tomb shown above. These soldiers were to accompany the emperor to the next world. What does this burial site tell us about what people valued and believed during the Qin dynasty?

### Writing About History

9. **Expository Writing** Write an essay in which you compare and contrast the influence of the caste system on Indian society to the influence of filial piety on Chinese society. How do both the caste system and filial piety help to organize relationships between individuals? How are the two systems the same and how are they different?